

Legislative  
Assembly  
of Ontario



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(Hansard)**

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Lundi  
3 décembre 2018

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Clerk: Todd Decker

Président : L'honorable Ted Arnott  
Greffier : Todd Decker

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LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY  
OF ONTARIO

Monday 3 December 2018

ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE  
DE L'ONTARIO

Lundi 3 décembre 2018

*The House met at 1030.*

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

*Prayers.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott):** I wish to acknowledge this territory as a traditional gathering place for many Indigenous nations, most recently the Mississaugas of the New Credit.

This being the first sitting Monday of the month, I ask everyone to join in the singing of O Canada. Today, we have with us in the Speaker's gallery the St. Joseph's College School senior vocal class from the riding of University–Rosedale to help us sing our national anthem.

*Singing of O Canada.*

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

INTRODUCTION OF VISITORS

**The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott):** I would like to draw to the attention of members that we have with us in the Speaker's gallery today a delegation from the People's Congress of Hebei, China, led by the executive vice-chairman of the Hebei standing committee, Mr. Fan Zhaobing. Please join me in welcoming our special guests to the Ontario Legislature today.

*Applause.*

**Mr. Joel Harden:** I want to give a huge note of thanks to our friends from the March of Dimes, the spinal cord injury association of Ontario and all the participants at the lovely breakfast this morning. Thank you for being here. Thank you for hosting us. Welcome to your House.

**Hon. Monte McNaughton:** I'd like to welcome, from the great riding of Lambton–Kent–Middlesex, a long-time friend and business executive, Connie Graham. Welcome to Queen's Park.

**Mr. Peter Tabuns:** It gives me pleasure to welcome Chloë Robert, trustee with the Conseil scolaire Viamonde. Welcome to Queen's Park, Chloë.

**Miss Kinga Surma:** I would like to introduce my mom, Margaret Surma, my dad, Miroslaw Surma, and my wonderful brother, Konrad Surma, who are joining us today in the House—

*Applause.*

**Miss Kinga Surma:** —and Nick Sklar and James Langstaff. Yes, give them a round of applause.

**Mr. Gilles Bisson:** I would like to welcome Louis Clausi, all the way from Timmins, who is here with us today. He's also the local president of the OECTA unit up in our area.

**Mr. Vincent Ke:** Sitting in the members' gallery, I would like to introduce my good friends: Mr. Liu, Bin; and his lovely wife Yang, Jing. This is their first time visiting Queen's Park. Welcome, and I hope you enjoy your visit.

**Mr. Jeremy Roberts:** At the risk of being repetitive, I must also warmly welcome Mr. and Mrs. Surma to the Legislature. While they may be the parents of the wonderful member from Etobicoke, they are residents of the wonderful riding of Ottawa West–Nepean. It's great to have them here.

**Hon. Lisa MacLeod:** Not to be outdone by the member from Etobicoke or the member from Ottawa West–Nepean, I am going to introduce the Surmas because they live around the corner from me.

ORAL QUESTIONS

AUTOMOTIVE INDUSTRY

**Ms. Andrea Horwath:** My question is to the Acting Premier. On Friday, I had a chance to meet with workers at GM as they came on shift. They took a big hit last week, but they know that they have the skill and talent to build some of the best cars in the world, even if the government party doesn't seem to think so, and they want to fight GM's decision to shut down operations in Oshawa.

Their question to me was, "Why is the government so determined to throw in the towel?" Can the Deputy Premier tell us?

**Hon. Christine Elliott:** Minister of Finance.  
1040

**Hon. Victor Fedeli:** Certainly, when Premier Ford was there when this first occurred, he immediately acknowledged that it is a difficult time for workers at the General Motors Oshawa assembly plant and for the thousands of workers at hundreds of auto parts suppliers across Ontario, and their families and friends.

It is disappointing that GM failed to see the competitive advantage that Oshawa's highly trained staff brought to the operations in Oshawa. Of course, GM says that this move is part of a global restructuring. That is why we need to make sure the world knows that after 15 years of job-killing policies, Ontario is open for business.

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

**Ms. Andrea Horwath:** Speaker, there is a huge amount at stake here. GM employs thousands of people directly but there are thousands more who work in companies that supply GM.

*Interjection.*

**Ms. Andrea Horwath:** Notwithstanding the government not allowing me to get my question out, municipal and business leaders are estimating that the ripple effect could lead to 20,000 job losses in Oshawa and the Durham region. The Premier may be resigned to letting those jobs go to Mexico and China, but we think they are worth fighting for.

At a time when people in Oshawa are looking for leadership, Speaker, why is this government throwing in the towel?

**Hon. Victor Fedeli:** Speaker, Premier Ford immediately authorized Employment Ontario to deploy our Rapid Re-employment and Training Service program to provide impacted local workers with targeted local training and job services to help them regain employment as quickly as possible.

We've also asked the federal government to immediately extend employment insurance eligibility to ensure the impacted workers in the auto sector can fully access EI benefits when they need them the most, and to work with their US counterparts to remove all tariffs that are impacting auto parts suppliers so that we can remain competitive as the Oshawa assembly plant closes its doors.

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

**Ms. Andrea Horwath:** Speaker, what they told me is that they want good jobs and they want their government to fight for those good jobs.

Over decades, the people of Oshawa have built a world-class auto industry, a university that produces cutting-edge research and technology, and a skilled workforce that is second to none. General Motors might think that they can walk away from that, but the Premier's job is to tell them that they are wrong, and to use every tool at his disposal to keep those jobs in Oshawa and keep work in that community. Why is the government so determined to side with GM's plan to abandon Oshawa?

*Interjections.*

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

Minister?

**Hon. Victor Fedeli:** Speaker, we've been working since day one to reverse 15 years of bad policies. I appreciate the leader's comments, but the NDP continue to want the highest carbon tax in the world. They want Ontario to be a place where it's unaffordable to make cars, unaffordable to buy cars and unaffordable to drive cars. So when the NDP come in here and say they're fighting for the workers, we know two things: (1) They don't have a plan, and (2) their policies would kill the automotive sector.

I can appreciate the leader is here to make her comments, but it did take her almost a week to get to the plant, and she did refuse a briefing by Minister Smith.

#### GOVERNMENT ACCOUNTABILITY

**Ms. Andrea Horwath:** Speaker, my next question is also to the Acting Premier—

*Interjection.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott):** Member for King-Vaughan, come to order.

**Ms. Andrea Horwath:** —who really should understand—

*Interjection.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott):** Member for King-Vaughan, come to order.

**Ms. Andrea Horwath:** —that 70% of GM's new investment is going to be in green cars—

*Interjection.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott):** The member for King-Vaughan is warned.

**Ms. Andrea Horwath:** —in electric vehicles and in autonomous vehicles. But this is a question for the Acting Premier regarding leadership and the Premier's standards for his staff.

On Friday, Alykhan Velshi worked his last day as an executive at Ontario Power Generation. He was fired and given up to half a million dollars in severance in what he called "unusual circumstances." Will the government finally admit that those unusual circumstances were that the Premier's chief of staff, Dean French, called OPG to demand that he be fired after a single day on the job?

**Hon. Christine Elliott:** To the Minister of Energy.

**Hon. Greg Rickford:** Hydro One is responsible for its own staffing decisions, and they've made their own staffing decisions and we respect that.

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

**Ms. Andrea Horwath:** Speaker, on Friday the Globe and Mail reported that, once again, the Premier's chief of staff was intervening in the electricity sector, this time to land a job for Anthony Haines, the former CEO of Toronto Hydro, a man the Premier just happened to work closely with for many years.

Can the government tell us what the Premier's chief of staff is up to these days?

**Hon. Greg Rickford:** As I said previously, Hydro One is responsible for their own hiring decisions.

Following years of outrageous Liberal scandals and \$6-million salaries, the government for the people has taken measures to improve accountability and transparency. At Hydro One, this includes a legislative provision to approve a responsible and reasonable compensation package for the CEO and the board selected, which we will be proceeding with in the near future.

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

**Ms. Andrea Horwath:** Well, it sounds like it depends on what kind of a people you are. If you're a friend of Doug Ford's, you get a job; if you're not a friend, you lose a job.

**The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott):** I ask the Leader of the Opposition to refer to the Premier by his ministerial title—by "Premier."

**Ms. Andrea Horwath:** Speaker, the fact of the matter is that intervening in the hiring process is actually a violation of the government's agreement with Hydro

One—that is the reality—especially if he’s intervening to land a job for an associate of the Premier.

Why is the Premier’s chief of staff, Dean French, intervening in this process?

**Hon. Greg Rickford:** Following years of outrageous Liberal scandals and the \$6-million salary of its former president and CEO, the government for the people has taken measures to improve accountability and transparency at Hydro One. This includes a legislative provision to approve a responsible and reasonable compensation package framework for the CEO and the board of directors selected, and we’re proceeding with that now.

#### GOVERNMENT ACCOUNTABILITY

**Ms. Andrea Horwath:** Speaker, my next question is also to the Acting Premier. But I have to say, after years of scandals, Ontarians certainly deserve much better than more of the same.

Mr. Haines had a troubling record at Toronto Hydro, pushing privatization while his salary grew 32% to \$1.1 million a year, and the Premier, then a Toronto councillor, was his staunch defender.

Does the Acting Premier think it is appropriate for the Premier’s chief of staff to meddle in the hiring process to get Mr. Haines a job?

**Hon. Christine Elliott:** Minister of Energy.

**Hon. Greg Rickford:** As a private corporation, the board of Hydro One is responsible for their own hiring decisions. Following years of outrageous Liberal scandals and a \$6-million salary for its CEO, the government for the people has taken measures to improve accountability and transparency at Hydro One. This includes a legislative provision to approve a responsible and reasonable compensation framework for the CEO and the board of directors selected, which we are proceeding with now as we speak.

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

**Ms. Andrea Horwath:** Speaker, the people of Ontario want to know that when it comes to important positions like this one, the person who’s hired was actually the best person for the job, not the best friend of the Premier.

Why is the Premier’s chief of staff meddling in the hiring process to get Mr. Haines the job?

**Hon. Greg Rickford:** It was abundantly clear that a government for the people needed to take measures to improve transparency and accountability at Hydro One, and we moved forward with a legislative provision to approve a responsible and reasonable compensation package for the CEO and the board selected.

You want to talk about a political party who really wanted to get involved in the operational decisions of a company? Talk about part of their campaign platform, to cancel 7,000 jobs in the beautiful riding of Pickering–Uxbridge. That’s not a decision made available to that leader, and it wouldn’t have been, had she become Premier.

We stood up for those workers. We stood up for an asset that provides 60% of Ontario’s hydro. We’re going to do that every single day.

1050

#### POLICE SERVICES

**Mr. Randy Pettapiece:** My question is for the Minister of Community Safety and Correctional Services.

Mr. Speaker, Ontario’s government for the people was elected with a mandate to improve public safety across this province and to provide the brave men and women of our police services with the tools and resources they need to perform their duties safely and effectively. After 15 years of Liberal neglect, our government is making investments in the key priority of keeping communities safe. Earlier this year, our government announced a \$182-million investment to replace aging OPP facilities with nine new detachments province-wide.

Could the minister please update the members of this Legislature on how these new OPP detachments will improve public safety in Ontario?

**Hon. Sylvia Jones:** I really appreciate the question from the member from Perth–Wellington because I know that he understands how important public safety is to our communities and to our Premier.

It was a great pleasure, on Friday, to go to Clinton and join my friends and colleagues the Minister of Education and the Minister of Infrastructure to announce Clinton’s new OPP detachment. It will ensure that our front-line officers have the resources they need to do their job, to serve their community. The infrastructure is going to make a real difference to the community of Huron, and I was pleased to be part of it on Friday.

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

**Mr. Randy Pettapiece:** Thank you very much, Minister, for that answer and for your continued advocacy when it comes to ensuring the safety of our province.

Projects like the new OPP detachments are key to ensuring the safety of our province and providing the much-needed support to our brave men and women in uniform. For far too long, it seemed that wherever you would go in our province, the key government buildings and infrastructure projects would be left in a state of disrepair.

Could the minister elaborate on the role that the Minister of Infrastructure played regarding the impact that infrastructure projects like this will have for our communities like Clinton and across the province?

**The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott):** Minister of Infrastructure.

**Hon. Monte McNaughton:** I’d like to thank the member for Perth–Wellington for his strong leadership in these projects and others.

Mr. Speaker, infrastructure for the people means giving our police forces, including the brave men and women of the OPP, the tools they need to keep all of our communities safe. I was pleased to join the Minister of Community Safety and Correctional Services and the Minister of Education in announcing a \$20-million investment in a new OPP detachment in Clinton, Ontario. I would also like to thank the Bird Construction crew for working with the

local workforce in building the detachment, which is strategically located next to the fire hall and EMS.

Our government was elected with a strong mandate to rebuild this province. Whether it's the Clinton OPP detachment, new Groves Memorial Community Hospital, the expansion of Credit Valley Hospital or the rebuild of the West Lincoln Memorial Hospital, we will make life better for the people of Ontario.

#### ONTARIO PROVINCIAL POLICE

**Mr. Kevin Yarde:** My question is for the Acting Premier. We're going to continue along the same line as the question from our leader, so all I can say is, here we go again.

Late Thursday, the government announced that Ron Taverner had been chosen as the new commissioner of the Ontario Provincial Police. Among others, Chris Lewis, the former commissioner of the OPP, has serious concerns about this appointment, calling it "simply not right and not what's best for the organization." Like many, he has raised concerns about the new commissioner's close relationship with the Premier.

Can the Acting Premier tell us who was on the selection committee and how they arrived at their selection?

**Hon. Christine Elliott:** Minister of Community Safety and Correctional Services.

**Hon. Sylvia Jones:** Through you, Speaker: I think the only accurate part of that question was, yes, on Thursday afternoon we were proud to announce that Ron Taverner will become the new OPP commissioner in the province of Ontario.

As many of us know, the incoming commissioner has a 50-year history on the front lines of policing. All weekend I have been answering calls from front-line officers saying, "Thank you. You have done exactly what we need."

The choice was made by an independent commissioner, and it was approved by cabinet on Thursday. I'm proud of the OPP commissioner, and I look forward to working with him in the coming years.

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

**Mr. Kevin Yarde:** That was the answer I expected to get: no answer. When it comes to keeping families safe and running a police force of 9,000—

*Interjections.*

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

Restart the clock. The member can put his question.

**Mr. Kevin Yarde:** When it comes to keeping families safe and running a police force of 9,000 people, the people of Ontario need to know the best person was hired for the job. When a former OPP commissioner raises serious concerns about the hiring process, they cannot simply be dismissed.

Mr. Speaker, will the government commit to a transparent and impartial review of the hiring process for this incredibly important job?

**Hon. Sylvia Jones:** Clearly, the member opposite doesn't want to take my word for it, so allow me to share some of the quotes.

Bruce Chapman, president of the Ontario police association: "I've known Superintendent Ron Taverner for 30-plus years. He's a hard-working, progressive and dedicated officer. Ron is a great choice to lead" the OPP.

Mark Saunders, Chief of Police from the Toronto Police Service: "After serving Toronto Police for more than 50 years, there are few people who will leave behind a legacy so rich in community service as Ron Taverner.... I wish him every success as he begins a new chapter with" the OPP.

I could go on and on, but the point is that this independent selection committee made an excellent choice, and we are proud to stand behind him and so are the OPP.

*Interjections.*

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

*Interjection.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott):** Minister of Natural Resources and Forestry, come to order.

Start the clock. Next question.

#### ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION

**Mr. Sheref Sabawy:** My question is for the Minister of the Environment, Conservation and Parks. Ontario is blessed with magnificent forests, lakes and rivers. Those of us who call Ontario home could not ask for a better place to live, work and raise a family. The quality of life enjoyed by our people, as well as the success of our businesses, depend on having clean air to breathe, safe water to drink and well-protected lands and parks. Ontarians recognize the role we play and the responsibility we all share to protect and preserve the province we know and love.

Can the minister tell this House what role Ontario has played to ensure we all have a healthy environment to enjoy?

**Hon. Rod Phillips:** Mr. Speaker, through you to the member for Mississauga—Erin Mills: Thank you for that question. As the member knows, as the House knows, we introduced our Made-in-Ontario Environment Plan on Thursday. That plan will ensure that we protect and conserve our air, our water and our land; that we fight climate change; and that we reduce urban litter and waste.

But the member is quite right: Ontario has a history in terms of the environment. In fact, with regard to climate, Ontario since 2005 has reduced its emissions by 22%. This is at the same time as the rest of Canada has increased it by 3%.

The plan that we presented on Thursday is a plan that balances a healthy economy and a healthy environment. It does not impose a job-killing tax on Ontarians, but it does protect our environment and it does fight climate change.

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

**Mr. Sheref Sabawy:** The minister makes some great points about the progress this province has made. Every time we filled up our tanks, we were met with increasing gas prices. Every time we turned up our heat, we knew it would cost us more. Families felt a burden they should



never have to feel: deciding between putting food on their tables and heating their homes. It is time that Ontarians receive some recognition for the sacrifices they have made and the ones they continue to pay for every day.

Can the minister highlight for us how our plan focuses on striking the right balance between a healthy environment and a strong economy?

1100

**Hon. Rod Phillips:** Again, thank you to the member for the question. Our made-in-Ontario plan is a great plan because it was built by Ontarians—over 8,000 Ontarians contributed, over 150 stakeholders made contributions to discussions, and we looked at the best global plans in terms of how to approach this. That's why we will be able to say that our plan, through a straightforward and understandable common-sense approach, is going to take Ontario to the Paris targets that our nation agreed to. We will see reductions of 30% from 2005 levels by 2030.

Our plan is thoughtful. Our plan also deals with litter. Our plan also deals with waste. It deals with pollution in our rivers and lakes. It deals with our air. It deals with excess soil. It deals with a range of issues that Ontarians are concerned about—again, a plan that balances a healthy economy and a healthy environment.

#### CLIMATE CHANGE

**Mr. Peter Tabuns:** My question is to the Minister of the Environment. Last week, the government revealed a climate change plan that forces taxpayers to give large emitters millions of public dollars. Instead of making polluters pay, Ontario's taxpayers must now pay the polluters. How is this fair?

**Hon. Rod Phillips:** Our plan strikes a balance. It's a balance that the opposition may not understand. Our plan, in a sensible, common-sense way, takes the hard work that Ontarians have put in and adds that additional 8%—18 megatonnes—of greenhouse gas reductions that will get us to the Paris targets that our national government agreed to.

For months now, the NDP have talked about a plan and targets and asked us where they are. Our plan and our targets are on the table as of Thursday. Where are theirs?

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

**Mr. Peter Tabuns:** The NDP supports climate change action that is fair, effective and transparent. The Premier's plan is not fair, because instead of making polluters pay, the Premier is forcing the people to pay polluters. The plan is not effective, because Australia already tried this and it didn't work; greenhouse gas emissions there are going up, not down. And this plan is not transparent, because it has no details about how the Premier will decide which insiders will get these payments.

Will the minister withdraw this plan and replace it with a fair, effective and transparent plan that does not force taxpayers to give millions of dollars to big polluters?

*Interjections.*

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

Minister.

**Hon. Rod Phillips:** Our made-in-Ontario plan does take the best ideas from around the world, including the New York Green Bank, where we will get \$4 of private money for every \$1 of public investment.

For the first time, there will be a comprehensive impact assessment about climate change so that we can understand the impacts on communities. We will work with communities and we'll work with individuals to deal with the impacts of climate change, unlike what the opposition suggests.

Mr. Speaker, as I said, they've been calling for a plan; they've been calling for targets. Our targets are the Paris targets. Our plan is a sensible plan that gets to those reductions. Their plan is a carbon tax. Their plan punishes families: \$150 a tonne and 30-cent increases in gasoline—that's the NDP plan.

#### SERVICES EN FRANÇAIS

#### FRENCH-LANGUAGE SERVICES

**M<sup>me</sup> Nathalie Des Rosiers:** I am seeking unanimous consent to be able to ask a question on behalf of my friend from Don Valley East.

**The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott):** The member for Ottawa-Vanier is seeking unanimous consent of the House to ask a question on behalf of her colleague the member from Don Valley East. Agreed? Agreed.

**M<sup>me</sup> Nathalie Des Rosiers:** Ma question est pour la vice-première ministre. Comme plusieurs de mes collègues de différents partis, j'ai participé à la marche samedi après-midi pour les francophones.

Even though they account for 4.7% of the population, il semble que 13 000 d'entre eux partout en province se sont déplacés. Au monument des droits de la personne à Ottawa, il y avait des milliers de personnes. Des députés de l'Assemblée nationale du Québec sont venus pour exprimer leur appui, ainsi que des francophones de partout au pays. Les francophones se sont battus à plusieurs reprises pendant leur histoire pour obtenir les acquis qu'ils ont maintenant. Ils ne veulent pas les perdre.

La vice-première ministre peut-elle s'engager à revoir trois décisions de ses ministres : laisser le commissaire aux affaires francophones continuer ses opérations et ne pas le déplacer chez l'ombudsman—il n'y a pas de raisons, il y a peu d'économies et il y a des risques de diminuer sa capacité d'action; s'engager à ouvrir l'Université de l'Ontario français pour septembre 2020 en travaillant avec la communauté, le fédéral et les institutions ontariennes; et travailler avec la communauté pour assurer le financement des institutions culturelles comme La Nouvelle Scène?

**Hon. Christine Elliott:** The Attorney General.

**L'hon. Caroline Mulroney:** La députée a raison. Les Franco-Ontariens et Franco-Ontariennes font une partie intégrante et importante de notre province, de notre histoire et de notre avenir. C'est pourquoi notre gouvernement s'engage à continuer à travailler pour les Franco-Ontariens, qui ont travaillé très fort pendant des générations à faire

avancer leur communauté ainsi que notre province dans son ensemble.

Cette fin de semaine il y a des centaines, des milliers, de Franco-Ontariens et de francophones qui ont manifesté, et notre gouvernement a écouté. On est ici pour écouter et on est ici pour représenter les intérêts des Franco-Ontariens. On va continuer à faire ça, monsieur le Président. Les mesures que nous avons annoncées ne vont en aucune façon faire reculer les acquis des Franco-Ontariens. On va continuer à protéger les droits linguistiques et on va continuer à—

*Interjection.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott):** The member from Algoma–Manitoulin, come to order.

**L'hon. Caroline Mulroney:** —pour que notre gouvernement soit en mesure un jour de financer l'Université de l'Ontario français de manière concrète et de manière différente du gouvernement précédent.

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

**M<sup>me</sup> Nathalie Des Rosiers:** La communauté francophone est prête à aller devant les tribunaux pour revendiquer ses droits et préserver ses acquis. Il est clair, d'après la Cour d'appel de l'Ontario dans l'arrêt Lalonde, que les décisions administratives ne peuvent pas mettre en péril les acquis et les institutions de la minorité linguistique. Il faut tenir compte de l'effet sur la communauté avant de prendre des décisions administratives.

La ministre a-t-elle considéré le risque juridique de ces décisions? Pourquoi préfère-t-elle dépenser de l'argent devant les instances judiciaires plutôt que de travailler avec la communauté et de reconnaître les erreurs qui ont été faites au cours des dernières semaines?

**L'hon. Caroline Mulroney:** J'aimerais demander au membre du Parti libéral indépendant si eux ils ont pensé aux répercussions de leurs décisions fiscales quand ils ont laissé un déficit de 15 milliards de dollars aux Ontariens et une dette à payer de presque 350 milliards de dollars. Ce gouvernement précédent a dépensé beaucoup d'argent pour faire beaucoup de choses dans cette province, mais il n'a pas consacré le financement nécessaire pour l'Université de l'Ontario français.

Nous avons été élus avec un mandat pour tous les Ontariens, y compris les Franco-Ontariens. On va protéger les droits linguistiques. On va remettre l'Ontario sur la voie de la prospérité.

#### GASOLINE PRICES

**Mr. Norman Miller:** My question is for the Minister of Energy, Northern Development and Mines. Our government made a very clear promise to the people of Ontario that we would reduce the price of gasoline. Early on in our mandate, we are delivering on that promise. We took immediate action by scrapping the previous government's cap-and-trade carbon tax, which has already reduced the price that Ontario families are paying at the pump. Ending cap-and-trade took 4.3 cents a litre off of gasoline and 5 cents a litre off of diesel.

But parts of northern Ontario are not benefiting from our government's action to reduce gas prices. Can the

minister let the Legislature know what he is doing to fix this issue?

**1110**

**Hon. Greg Rickford:** I want to thank the member from Parry Sound–Muskoka for bringing this issue to light.

Mr. Speaker, there's no question that we've taken concrete action to reduce the price per litre of gasoline in the province of Ontario. Many parts of the province have seen that reflected in the price per litre when they go to the gas pumps.

I heed the concerns expressed by my colleagues across the way from northern Ontario that not all of that has translated to our price per litre in northern Ontario. In northwestern Ontario, in particular, we have not seen any of these savings. From Thunder Bay west, we saw only a drop of a third of that over the same period.

It's clear to me that these savings are not being passed on. I'm speaking today not just on behalf of the people from the great Kenora–Rainy River district, but also up in Kiiwetinoong, where the prices are grossly distorted and unfair as they relate to other pricing that goes on in the province.

Our solution is not state intervention, as proposed. That has not proven to work for the provinces that use it or the states that have used this model. We're going to stand up for fair pricing—

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

Supplementary?

**Mr. Norman Miller:** Thank you to the minister for addressing this issue that is so important in the north. I deeply appreciate having a minister with so much experience standing up for northern Ontarians' interests.

It's incredible that while average prices of gasoline have fallen in the rest of Ontario, northern Ontario is not benefiting from these reductions. I know the minister will continue to fight for northern communities and make sure that everyone in our province benefits from our government's policy decisions.

Residents in the north rely on gasoline to drive long distances to work, to put food on the table. They drive their kids to hockey practice. They drive to the grocery store. There are very few alternatives to driving in northern Ontario.

I'd like to thank the minister for his hard work on this file, and ask him what next steps the government is taking to ensure northerners benefit from lower gas prices.

**Hon. Greg Rickford:** The member from Parry Sound–Muskoka is right to point out that in order for our children to travel for competitions in sports and other activities, it costs us considerably more money to get to those destinations where kids can be exposed to the kind of calibre that others take for granted down here in southern Ontario.

Furthermore, it's true that we have been tracking, for the past several months, the unfairness in price per litre at the gas pumps, particularly in northwestern Ontario.

*Interjection.*

**Hon. Greg Rickford:** The state intervention proposed by the member for Timmins has proved to not work for several provinces and the few states that use that. So he

can tell the leader of his party that this is not an effective way to reduce the price per litre of gasoline.

That's why I've called the Competition Bureau in to launch a full investigation into the entire supply chain as it relates to the price of gas in northwestern Ontario. We hope that the Competition Bureau will take this request seriously, and we'll get some answers.

### SERVICES EN FRANÇAIS

**M. Guy Bourgouin:** Ma question est pour la ministre des Affaires francophones. Madame la Ministre, samedi dernier, de 13 000 à 15 000 personnes se sont rassemblées pour manifester contre les décisions de votre gouvernement concernant l'élimination du Commissariat aux services en français en tant qu'organisme autonome et l'annulation du financement pour l'Université de l'Ontario français.

Monsieur le Président, cette crise linguistique, cette attaque aux droits constitutionnels des Franco-Ontariens et Franco-Ontariennes, il n'y a qu'une solution: le gouvernement doit revenir complètement à l'arrière avec ses décisions. Ma question est très simple: allez-vous écouter les demandes des francophones?

**L'hon. Caroline Mulroney:** Je remercie le député pour sa question. Oui, nous écoutons les francophones, les Franco-Ontariens et les Franco-Ontariennes. Nous les écoutons et nous allons continuer à les écouter et à travailler pour eux. Nous avons proposé, comme nous avons annoncé la semaine dernière, des modifications au projet de loi 57 pour assurer aux Franco-Ontariens que le poste du commissaire aux services en français au sein du Bureau de l'ombudsman va demeurer. Notre but est de trouver la meilleure façon de protéger les droits des francophones en Ontario tout en respectant l'argent des contribuables.

Encore, selon nos propositions, le commissaire va continuer à déposer ses rapports auprès de l'Assemblée législative et conservera son indépendance du gouvernement. Il va conserver également la fonction de formuler ses recommandations visant à améliorer la prestation des services, des recommandations que notre gouvernement va écouter et que nous allons essayer de suivre une fois qu'il fera ses recommandations. On est ici pour écouter—

**Le Président (L'hon. Ted Arnott):** Merci. Supplementary?

**M. Guy Bourgouin:** Madame la Ministre, le 26 novembre, l'ombudsman de l'Ontario a accordé une entrevue dans laquelle il donne raison aux craintes légitimes de la communauté franco-ontarienne. Dans un article, M. l'ombudsman « admet que son rôle n'est pas celui d'être un « défenseur » de la francophonie ». Quant à l'annulation du financement à l'Université de l'Ontario français—et je cite encore l'article—« il explique que “c'est pas à [lui] de [s']ingérer” ».

Les paroles de l'ombudsman sont très claires. Alors, pourquoi continuez-vous à appuyer l'élimination du seul bureau capable d'officier de façon indépendante pour veiller sur les droits des Ontariens et Ontariennes?

**L'hon. Caroline Mulroney:** Nous n'avons pas éliminé le bureau du commissaire. Nous allons intégrer le bureau du commissaire au sein du Bureau de l'ombudsman, tout en conservant son indépendance et les pouvoirs qu'il a présentement de faire des rapports et de faire des recommandations et de faire des investigations. Tout le travail que fait présentement le commissaire va être fait au sein du Bureau de l'ombudsman.

Le projet de loi que nous avons proposé, s'il est adopté, va s'assurer que les droits linguistiques sont protégés de la même manière. Alors, je demanderais au député de cesser ces faussetés. Nous avons protégé l'indépendance des droits linguistiques en Ontario—

*Interjections.*

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

The Attorney General will withdraw that unparliamentary remark.

**Hon. Caroline Mulroney:** Withdraw.

*Interjections.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott):** Order. Thank you. Start the clock. Next question.

### ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION

**Mr. Logan Kanapathi:** My question is for the Minister of the Environment, Conservation and Parks. For too long, Ontario families were faced with the pressures of rising costs of living as well as skyrocketing energy costs that have hurt our economy and our competitiveness. They are understandably frustrated to see their hard-earned tax dollars being put towards policies and programs that don't deliver results. With the passing of the cancellation of the Liberal cap-and-trade tax, families are finally able to feel some relief.

Last week, the minister brought forward his Made-in-Ontario Environment Plan. Can the minister tell the people of Ontario how our government's new plan for the environment will also make life more affordable?

**Hon. Rod Phillips:** I thank the member from Markham—Thornhill for his question. Mr. Speaker, we now have a balanced plan, a plan that balances the economy and the environment.

To his question: The way that that makes life more affordable for Ontarians is that we will hit our Paris targets, we will hit the objectives our country has set, we will reduce greenhouse gases, we will protect the environment, and we will not charge Ontarians a regressive, job-killing tax. That, we know, is going to save Ontarians \$264 per family. We know that the Trudeau carbon tax would be \$648 by 2022 per family. That's why we'll fight that tax.

Mr. Speaker, our plan also calls for the increased use of ethanol for cleaner fuels in gasoline. That will reduce gasoline prices.

At every moment, we are balancing the economy and the environment. At every part of our plan, we are making sure that we protect our beautiful environment but also protect the financial health of families.

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

**Mr. Logan Kanapathi:** Thank you, Minister, for that answer. I know my constituents will be happy to hear that our government has kept our promise to not place an unnecessary, regressive tax on them. They will be pleased to know that they have the ability to do their part without the burden of a carbon tax.

The effect of climate change is concerning, and I can assure you our government takes these concerns very seriously. However, this plan is so much more than just climate action. It is a plan for conservation, a plan that will protect our lakes, rivers, land and air.

1120

Can the minister tell the members of this Legislature what other concerns this plan will tackle to better protect our environment?

**Hon. Rod Phillips:** Again, thank you to the member. He is quite correct: Our plan is an environment plan. It's a plan that deals with clean air, clean water, clean land. It's a plan that does address the vital issue of climate change.

*Interjections.*

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

**Hon. Rod Phillips:** It will also address vital issues like water security—

*Interjection.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott):** Member for Waterloo, come to order.

**Hon. Rod Phillips:** —sewage in our water, certainly something that I'm sure the NDP cares about. It talks about soil and what we do with excess soil. It talks about our parks and expanding by one million the number of Ontarians and visitors who can enjoy our parks every year. It addresses a range of issues, important environmental issues, including climate change but not exclusively climate change.

Mr. Speaker, these are the issues that Ontarians are worried about: a balanced plan balancing the environment, the economy, making sure we protect our environment and protect families' pocketbooks.

#### COURT FACILITIES

**Ms. Sara Singh:** My question is for the Attorney General. A few weeks ago, Regional Senior Justice Peter Daley addressed the courts to bring attention to the abysmal state of Brampton court facilities. Daley stated, "The Ontario government—past and present—is either willfully blind to the erosion of trust caused by its failure to take timely steps to address the facilities crisis in Brampton, or it believes that spending on this courthouse will not result in more votes."

Since the minister declined an invitation from Mr. Daley to hear his remarks and to tour the courthouse in Brampton, is the minister willing to visit the courthouse to learn first-hand how chronically underfunded facilities in our city are blocking access to justice?

**Hon. Caroline Mulroney:** I thank the member for the question and for the invitation. I am looking forward to touring the Brampton courthouse.

In February last year, construction commenced on a six-storey addition to the Brampton courthouse. We are taking a fiscally responsible approach to the Brampton addition, where the basement, first and second floors will be completed now to address immediate needs, while the remaining floors will be fit at a future date.

The previous Liberal government, as you know, Mr. Speaker, left us with a \$15-billion deficit and \$340 billion in debt for us to pay back. We were given a mandate from the people of Ontario to clean up the financial mess, and we are working to do so while finding ways to deliver efficient and effective services to meet the needs of Ontarians.

The ministry will continue to review and respond to the facility needs of the Brampton courthouse as we move forward, and I look forward to touring the courthouse.

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

**Ms. Sara Singh:** Thank you to the minister. My colleagues and I from Brampton on both sides of this House are very proud of our fast-growing city, but we all acknowledge that our city needs the services to grow with us. I have personally heard stories about serious cases being stayed or even dismissed because courtrooms are not available or trial dates cannot be secured in a timely manner. The government has failed to address the lack of resources to the courts in Brampton, and we are witnessing significant impacts to our justice system.

What is the minister willing to do to ensure that the people of Brampton and people across the region of Peel have timely access to justice?

**Hon. Caroline Mulroney:** As I said, we are in the process of constructing a new courthouse in Brampton to address this issue. Access to justice for the people of Brampton and across this province is a priority for our government. While the government has left us with a fiscal mess to clean up, we're trying to find other approaches to improve access to justice, including investing in technology and finding other ways to make sure that Ontarians can access the courts and the services they need.

Mr. Speaker, this is what we have been doing since we were elected on day one. We will continue to do that, and addressing the facilities needs in this province is part of that plan. As I said, I look forward to spending time in Brampton and touring the courthouse with the member.

#### IMMIGRANT AND REFUGEE SERVICES

**Mrs. Nina Tangri:** My question is to the Honourable Minister of Children, Community and Social Services. Last week, the Parliamentary Budget Officer tabled his report detailing the costing of irregular migration across Canada's southern border. The PBO estimates that the average cost for each irregular migrant will rise to an average of \$16,666 next year. This amounts to a total variable cost of \$340 million this year, and is projected to rise to \$396 million next year. These figures only account for the costs incurred by the federal government, not the provincial government.

Can the minister please tell us when Ontario expects to be reimbursed for the federal Liberal government's failed border policies?

**Hon. Lisa MacLeod:** I am so delighted that we have this question on the floor of the assembly. I only wish it had come from the opposition, who would be as diligent in their work as the member from our party.

What happened last week is, the Parliamentary Budget Officer and the Toronto street needs survey validated what this government has been saying since June 29: that because of the illegal border-crossing in Quebec, there was substantial pressure on our shelter system in the city of Toronto, which is 40%, which is what our number has been, and there's substantial pressure on our provincial government. The Parliamentary Budget Officer validated our \$200-million-and-growing costs in the province of Ontario.

We are simply asking the Minister of Immigration and the Prime Minister to make us whole, as every single Premier in every single province and territory has suggested when they stood side by side with our Premier.

What's also troubling is the fact that the Parliamentary Budget Officer has suggested this is going to cost taxpayers \$1 billion just for the federal government alone.

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

**Mrs. Nina Tangri:** Minister, that wasn't the only discouraging report released last Thursday. The city of Toronto also released findings from their Street Needs Assessment, which surveyed the city's homelessness back in April. The findings clearly show that the city's shelter system is struggling to meet the increased demand, and that roughly 40% of occupants identify as refugees or asylum-seekers. I imagine other municipalities across the province are facing the same predicament.

Minister, how are Ontario's homeless shelters expected to operate under this added strain as the temperature falls?

**Hon. Lisa MacLeod:** That's an important question. I recently met with both Mayor Tory and Mayor Watson, in our two largest cities, who have said that their capacity is at 40%.

I want to be perfectly clear: The federal Minister of Immigration may like to call people names when they disagree with him, but the facts don't lie. In fact, we know, for example, that the Toronto needs survey validated our number and the Parliamentary Budget Officer validated our number.

What I'd like to see from Prime Minister Trudeau is a tweet and a pledge for the \$200 million he owes us, so we can ensure that people who are homeless this holiday season get the support they need—

*Interjections.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott):** Once again, I apologize to the minister for having to cut her off in mid-sentence. But when her colleagues rose, the volume of the standing ovation was such that I could not hear her. I had to cut her off.

Next question.

#### PUBLIC TRANSIT

**Ms. Jessica Bell:** This is to the Minister of Transportation. Last week, the government quietly released the terms of reference for their plan to break up Toronto's subway

system and take it away from Torontonians. While this government has been cagey about their plans for our subway, the document clearly lays out an agenda for selling off and privatizing this valuable public asset.

Then on Friday, we learned that the government is demanding that the city of Toronto tell the province how much the TTC is worth. Step 1 for selling off a public asset is to determine how much it's worth.

Will the minister come clean and tell the public that their plan for Toronto's subway system has been to break it up and sell it off?

**Hon. Jeff Yurek:** Thank you very much to the member opposite for that question.

Speaker, we have no intention of breaking up and privatizing and selling off the TTC. What we're going to do is what should have been done long ago: to create the regional structure this province needs by getting Toronto moving, and the best way to do that is to work with the city of Toronto to look at uploading the system.

Right now, we have a special adviser, appointed at the end of August, Michael Lindsay, who has been working with stakeholders in Toronto to see which is the best way forward. He has come forward with a plan to put forward, which I addressed in my letter to the mayor, John Tory. I've spoken to Mayor Tory; he's all for working together. We're going to work together with city council.

**1130**

We're going to come together with a plan that works not only for Toronto but the GTHA as a whole. If you get that region rolling, you get the province rolling in opening up Ontario for business.

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

**Ms. Jessica Bell:** Minister, Toronto built the subway, Toronto taxpayers and transit riders pay for the subway, and Torontonians govern the subway. It's ours, not yours, to sell.

**Mr. Mike Harris:** I guess you weren't listening to the answer.

**Ms. Jessica Bell:** I was.

Breaking up the subway and selling off parts of it will not help overcrowding or delays, nor will it make fares more affordable. On the contrary, we have seen from other privatized transit lines that fares are set for what's good for the service provider and not what's affordable for the rider.

What Torontonians want to see from this government is investment in transit to make their commutes shorter and fares more affordable, not a \$1.4-billion cut to transit infrastructure.

Will the minister do the right thing, listen to the experts and riders, and stop this wrong-headed decision to break up Toronto's subway?

**Hon. Jeff Yurek:** Thanks for that supplementary from the member opposite. Unfortunately, it was missing quite a bit of actual data that has been coming forth.

I'll be crystal clear that the TTC will run and operate the subways. We have requested a lot of data from the TTC, the city and Metrolinx to figure out what's the best way forward. That will be coming forward.

Mr. Speaker, after the upload is completed, we are going to do for Toronto and the regional system—we're going to grow it. We're going to build the relief line. We are going to build the Yonge extension. We're going to build subways out to Etobicoke. We are going to grow the GO Transit system. We are going to get this province going from the GTHA down to downtown Toronto—

*Interjections.*

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

Once again, I'll acknowledge that some of the members are very enthusiastic and want to demonstrate their agreement with a member who has the floor, perhaps a minister answering a question. But once I cannot hear the minister's response because of the volume of the standing ovation, I have to stand up and interrupt the minister in mid-sentence.

Next question.

#### ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

**Mrs. Gila Martow:** I have a question to the Minister of Finance.

Our government is working hard to make sure the whole world knows that Ontario is now open for business. We are taking action so that our province can once again regain its place as the economic engine of Canada, but in order to do so, it's important that our government foster international relationships to encourage investment in Ontario.

Last week we were happy to hear that our Minister of Finance visited New York City. Could the minister please explain the purpose of his trip and what he accomplished while he was there?

**Hon. Victor Fedeli:** Thank you to the member for Thornhill.

Last week, we were thrilled to let the investment community in New York City know that Ontario is open for business. We spoke with the Canadian Association of New York about fostering a culture of innovation in our province and nurturing an attractive investment climate. We also discussed our government's plan for lower taxes, smarter spending and deficit reduction with international investors, and we made clear that for the first time in 15 years, Ontario's government wants to work with the business community.

After our trip to New York, everyone across Ontario can be excited for the success that lies ahead, because Ontario is open for business.

*Interjections.*

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

Start the clock. Supplementary.

**Mrs. Gila Martow:** Thank you to the minister for his response.

We're all very excited to hear about the success the minister and his team had in spreading the message that Ontario is open for business. It is only by sharing the hard work everyone in our government is doing that we will be able to attract the investment Ontario needs to get moving again. Indeed, it has been a long time since the business

community saw this level of support from Ontario's government.

Mr. Speaker, our government has taken action to open Ontario to investment, with plans to continue fostering an attractive business environment. Could the minister share the details of our open-for-business message and how the actions of our government have resonated with the investment community?

**Hon. Victor Fedeli:** Our open-for-business approach was warmly received by the investment community in New York. In fact, they said our message was the best they've heard in 15 years.

We were able to share that the cap-and-trade carbon tax is no longer punishing businesses in our province. We promoted our decision to parallel the federal changes to the accelerated capital-cost allowance, which makes business investments more attractive in Ontario, and we once again committed to cutting red tape by 25% by 2022 in order to make doing business in Ontario easier.

Speaker, we are restoring confidence in Ontario as the best place to invest and do business.

#### ACCESSIBILITY FOR PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES

**Mr. Joel Harden:** Today is the International Day of Persons with Disabilities, and as I pose this question I want to acknowledge some of our friends from the disability rights community in the Speaker's gallery. Thank you for being here.

Speaker, today is a day that should be reminding us that our province is on a deadline—

**Interjection:** Who are you asking?

**Mr. Joel Harden:** My question is to the Deputy Premier. Pardon me, Speaker.

We're on a deadline, Speaker. The Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act has to be set in place with a legitimate plan by 2025, but every disability rights leader and organization I've met has told us that we're way behind in meeting that objective. Does the minister believe that we're on track to have a fully accessible province by 2025?

**Hon. Christine Elliott:** To the Minister of Community Safety and Correctional Services.

**Hon. Sylvia Jones:** I'm really glad that you've asked this question, because my colleague the Minister for Seniors and Accessibility has been working full out on these issues, and he's actually away today doing a speech on this very issue.

It's important that we work with all of our stakeholders. We need to make sure that we have the most open and accessible province, but we need to do it in a reasonable way that makes sure that no one gets hurt along the way. So we're working with stakeholders, we're working with the accessibility citizens and we're making sure that we're getting it right.

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

**Mr. Joel Harden:** Back to the Deputy Premier: Achieving full accessibility, according to experts who I've

talked to, requires two things: a commitment and a plan. But right now, for three out of five AODA standards committees, which are actually doing the work about accessible and inclusive health care and education for people living with a disability, their work has been frozen since the election. It's one thing to say we support accessibility, but it's another thing to actually make it a priority by putting those AODA committees to work.

My question is very simple: Will the minister unfreeze the committees, and will the minister work with people with disabilities to develop a multi-year accessibility plan so Ontario is fully accessible by 2025?

**Hon. Sylvia Jones:** There is no doubt that everyone in Ontario deserves to fully participate in their everyday lives. That includes recreation, our workforce, our families, our schools and our justice system. But we need to do it in a reasonable and measured way. That is what my colleague is doing. That is what he is working on. We will make sure that work gets done, but we need to make sure that the stakeholders are involved and engaged in the process.

#### ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION

**Ms. Jane McKenna:** My question is to the Minister of the Environment. Our government is working hard to grow our economy while protecting the environment. While the Prime Minister of Canada imposes a carbon tax on workers and families, our government is restoring hope and affordability for our people.

I'm proud of our Minister of the Environment and I'm proud of his made-in-Ontario solution. We are proud of our plan to ensure clean air and water and conservation of our natural heritage. Can our minister confirm that our plan will help reduce emissions while growing our economy?

1140

**Hon. Rod Phillips:** Mr. Speaker, before I begin, let me just commend the member from Burlington for her question but also on her promotion as the PA for the Minister of Labour.

As the member referenced, importantly, in getting rid of cap-and-trade, we saved Ontarians \$260. That's money in their pockets. But in addition to that, we have now provided a plan: a plan that balances the economy and the environment, a plan that makes sure that we reduce greenhouse gases in a sensible way that takes advantage of the sacrifices Ontarians have already made to make Ontario the leading reducing province—22% since 2005—and to get us that last 8% to the international targets we've agreed to and make sure that we balance the health of the economy and the environment, we meet our objectives and we have a healthy environment as well.

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

**Ms. Jane McKenna:** Minister, thank you for your kind words.

Our made-in-Ontario plan will ensure that polluters are held accountable with stronger enforcements—a plan that is tailored to address Ontario's unique environmental and

economic challenges and a plan that does not include a carbon tax on working families in this province. It's time we made life affordable. It's time government is part of the solution, not the problem.

Speaker, can the minister outline the benefits of our made-in-Ontario plan and how it will ensure that we leave the next generation better off?

**Hon. Rod Phillips:** Our made-in-Ontario climate plan does include a plan for climate change. It does include the Ontario Carbon Trust, which will use the best models internationally to reduce greenhouse gases. It understands the benefits of conservation in the area of natural gas.

It talks about cleaner fuels, but it also talks about other things. It talks about cleaner water. It talks about being clear and transparent, whether it's about sewage in our water or pollution in our air. It is a broad-based plan that deals with litter and waste. It deals with the Blue Box Program and how we move from 30% diversion to a higher level of diversion. It's a comprehensive plan. It's a plan that balances the economy and the environment.

#### VISITORS

**The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott):** I'm advised that we have a former member visiting us in the House today. The member for Middlesex from the 36th Parliament, Mr. Bruce Smith, is here with us today. Welcome.

The member for King–Vaughan on a point of order.

**Mr. Stephen Lecce:** On behalf of my colleague the House leader, I'd like to recognize the family of page Kidan Singer, today's page captain.

#### SIGN-LANGUAGE INTERPRETATION

**Mr. Stephen Lecce:** If you would permit me, Mr. Speaker, I would like to seek unanimous consent to move a motion without notice regarding sign-language interpretation for statements by the ministry this afternoon.

I move that sign-language interpreters may be present on the floor—

**The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott):** First of all, you're seeking unanimous consent of the House to allow sign-language interpreters in the House this afternoon for the ministers' statements. Agreed? Agreed.

**Mr. Stephen Lecce:** Thank you, Speaker. I move that sign-language interpreters may be present on the floor of the chamber today to interpret statements by the ministry and responses.

**The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott):** The House has agreed to the request that you're making, and we thank you very much for that.

*Motion agreed to.*

#### VISITORS

**The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott):** Point of order, the member for Oakville North–Burlington.

**Ms. Effie J. Triantafilopoulos:** I also wanted to recognize the family of page Rham Anpalagan, who are here

with us today: Alagan and Arun Anpalagan. Thank you for joining us.

**The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott):** There being no deferred votes, this House stands in recess until 1 p.m.

*The House recessed from 1144 to 1300.*

## INTRODUCTION OF VISITORS

**The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott):** I've been informed that we have a number of guests at Queen's Park today in recognition of the International Day of Persons with Disabilities. Some of them were in the Speaker's gallery this morning, and many will be coming to the Speaker's gallery this afternoon: Tina Doyle, Mark Wafer, Peggy Chan, Emily Chan, Julia Hanigsberg, Lynn Ziraldo, Julia Dumanian, Gary Malkowski, Joe Dale, Jeannette Campbell, Kevin Collins, Ana Maria Faria, Kat Clarke, Deidre Guy, Zinnia Batliwalla, Peter Athanasopoulos and Hongsun Yoo. Welcome to Queen's Park.

**Ms. Suze Morrison:** I would like to warmly welcome today to the Legislature Lorin MacDonald, who is a disability rights activist, lawyer, Toronto Centre resident and, most importantly, one of my neighbours. We live in the same building in Regent Park. Welcome to the Legislature.

**Hon. Bill Walker:** It's my pleasure to introduce Kevin J. Collins, president and CEO of Easter Seals. I had the delightful time to be able to meet him down in the cafeteria. He's here, of course, doing his great work.

**M<sup>me</sup> France Gélinas:** They are making their way into the east gallery. It's Jon Fredrick, Sydney Fredrick, Chad Clarke, Randy Davis, Carla Evans, Jason MacLennan, Charles Parcham and Xica Rodriguez. They are here because it is the 30th anniversary of World AIDS Day. Welcome to Queen's Park.

## MEMBERS' STATEMENTS

### WATERFRONT FOR ALL

**Mr. Chris Glover:** Last week, I was at a meeting in my area for Waterfront for All. Waterfront for All is an umbrella organization that includes 30 groups—business improvement areas, neighbourhood associations. It's an extensive group, and they cover the area of the Toronto waterfront, all of the way from Etobicoke to Scarborough.

They base their work on the David Crombie commission from a couple of decades ago. David Crombie laid out principles for the revitalization of Toronto's waterfront. These principles included that it be clean, green, open, accessible, connected and affordable.

Last week, we had a presentation, and it was an ambitious presentation. They were talking about: How do we make Toronto's waterfront one of the top 10 in the world? We had a presentation on the different waterfronts around the world. They talked about green space, and they gave the example of Chicago. They talked about access to water and the beaches in Rio de Janeiro. They talked about clean

water and they talked about Stockholm. Apparently, in Stockholm, you can swim along the waterfront in any place because the water is clean enough. The question is: How do we create this kind of hub and this kind of waterfront in Toronto?

One of the things that is coming up really quickly is Ontario Place. Ontario Place is a crown jewel in Toronto's waterfront. The process is going to make the outcome, so we're asking for a public consultation to decide what will happen with Ontario Place.

### LES CRUICKSHANK

**Mr. Jim McDonell:** I rise today to celebrate the life of Les Cruickshank, a family man who was so giving to his community that he inspired us to do our very best.

As a businessman, he transferred his single-person grader contractor's position into one of the biggest transportation firms in my riding of Stormont–Dundas–South Glengarry, in eastern Ontario and in Ontario as a whole. Les and his staff at Cruickshank Construction lived up to Les's motto—"doing our level best"—over thousands of kilometres of roads.

A grader operator, Les was drawn to the riding from Paris, Ontario, in 1956, when he mortgaged his future to buy a second-hand grader and helped build the seaway. After its completion, Les stayed in Morrisburg, expanding Cruickshank Construction into earth excavation, paving, aggregate supply, bridge building and highway maintenance.

Les's devotion to his business and community was duly recognized with awards for Canada's best-managed company, best employer and safest employer. In 2007, he was inducted into the Ontario Road Builders' Association hall of fame. The Ontario Ministry of Transportation tapped Cruickshank Construction as Paver of the Year in 2014.

He mirrored his company's success by giving much back to his community. Among his pursuits were the creation of the Cruickshank mural on the side of the Morrisburg Public School; support for his church, St. James' Anglican; and co-organizer of Old Home Week. To commemorate Cruickshank's 50th anniversary, Les built and donated the Cruickshank Amphitheater to the Morrisburg waterfront.

On behalf of my constituents, I offer my condolences to his wife of almost 62 years, Marlene, and their children, Laurie, Steve and Lynn, and their families.

### GO TRANSIT

**Mr. Wayne Gates:** I rise today to talk about some new information that the Ford government released to the public last Friday afternoon at about 4 o'clock, and that is their decision to halt the delivery process of GO train stations from Grimsby to Niagara Falls.

Mr. Speaker, let me give you and the Premier a little history. The fight to bring GO trains to Niagara Falls by 2023 is a fight that united the entire Niagara community. It came from the grassroots and it united every municipality, every level of government—and, we had thought,



every party. The PCs were the last ones to the game, they were the last ones to support GO trains coming to Niagara Falls, but they got there.

Now the residents see this government putting up another delay. Before we even talk about what the stations might look like, this government needs to stand up and make one thing perfectly clear. Can the residents of Niagara Falls still expect a GO train in 2023: yes or no?

For years now, we've been fighting to bring the train sooner, hoping to get a commitment to get there by 2021. The GO train will provide jobs, boost tourism and allow residents to live in Niagara and work in Hamilton and Toronto. It will take cars off the QEW and be great for the environment. The people of Niagara Falls deserve to know the GO train is coming sooner, not later. I'm asking the government to be clear and to commit publicly that they are honouring the wishes of the residents of Niagara and bringing the GO train directly to Niagara Falls on the same timeline.

#### FORD MOTOR COMPANY

**Mr. Rudy Cuzzetto:** I rise here today to congratulate Ford Motor Co. for 65 years of business in Oakville's plant. Since the plant first opened in 1953, it has changed the region forever, supporting our local economy and creating thousands of jobs, including my own. As many of you know, before I worked for Premier Ford, I worked for Ford Canada in Oakville for 31 years, most recently as a vehicle auditor.

In total, 4,500 Ontarians work for Ford Motor Co. in Oakville. It has established a very great economy for the manufacturing industry. For every job in Oakville, nine other jobs are a spinoff of that corporation.

I'd like to thank the Oakville chapter of Professional Engineers Ontario for inviting me to return to the plant recently, this time as an MPP, with my colleagues from Oakville and Oakville North–Burlington. During our tour, we had the opportunity to meet many of my old friends in the plant.

I was thinking of them again a week later when we got the news from GM in Oshawa. Mr. Speaker, having worked in the automotive industry for 31 years, I know how devastating this decision is, not just for GM workers but for their families and all of Oshawa. Our Premier and our government stand with all of you however we can. I'd also like to thank other firms, including Bruce Power, for reaching out to provide new opportunities for skilled workers impacted by this closure. I know that, moving forward, our new government will work to ensure that Ontario is open for business in auto manufacturing.

Once again, congratulations to Ford Canada for 65 years in Oakville.

#### SERVICES FOR PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES

**Mrs. Lisa Gretzky:** Last week, I tabled my private member's bill, the Noah and Gregory act. The bill aims to

address one of the most pressing issues that people with developmental disabilities and their families face.

#### 1310

Many people may not know, but when young people with developmental disabilities turn 18 they transition from youth supports to adult supports. This is not a simple transition. There are thousands of Ontarians and their families who dread their 18th birthday because, after someone is cut off youth supports, the adult support doesn't kick in right away. Instead, you are forced to languish on a government wait-list, and it can take years.

My bill tackles this issue head-on. It would extend the delivery of government youth supports to people with developmental disabilities after they turn 18 until the point at which their government adult supports come into effect. It ensures that no one falls into this gap.

I named this bill the Noah and Gregory act after two young men from Windsor–Essex who have developmental disabilities. Both Noah Helou and Gregory Rocheleau have incredible moms who are fierce advocates for them and their needs. It's thanks to Michelle and Mary Beth that I became so passionate about this issue. Noah, Gregory and thousands of others like them deserve to have full, healthy, happy lives, and that can only happen when their caregivers are fully supported too.

I urge every member of this Legislature to vote for this important bill, which would ensure a better quality of life for those with developmental disabilities and their families.

#### HUMAN RIGHTS TRIBUNAL OF ONTARIO

#### TRIBUNAL DES DROITS DE LA PERSONNE DE L'ONTARIO

**M<sup>me</sup> Nathalie Des Rosiers:** Today is International Day of Persons with Disabilities. As we celebrate the inclusive nature of our society and note the obstacles that are still there for many people with disabilities, I want to speak about the importance of a strong human rights framework for people with disabilities and for many other people in Ontario.

Individuals with disabilities account for 15% of our population and 40% of people over the age of 65. They need a human rights framework to ensure their equitable access to services. A human rights tribunal was instrumental in ensuring that the rights that they currently enjoy were pronounced.

Le Tribunal des droits de la personne a aussi été important pour plusieurs groupes dans notre société : les femmes, les minorités religieuses et aussi les membres de la communauté juive.

Just as with francophones, "even though" Muslims account for only 4.6% of the population, they are entitled to human rights protection. I am very concerned about what I have seen in the Human Rights Tribunal's framework, that there are some adjudicators who have lost their jobs. There are fewer and fewer adjudicators.

I urge the government: If you are going to fire human rights adjudicators, please replace them quickly. We cannot afford to have a Human Rights Tribunal that cannot respond to the needs of all Ontarians.

#### CHILDREN'S TREATMENT CENTRE OF CHATHAM-KENT

**Mr. Rick Nicholls:** I rise today to commend the excellent work being done in my riding of Chatham-Kent–Leamington by the Children's Treatment Centre of Chatham-Kent.

The life of every child has value. The programs offered by the Children's Treatment Centre work wonders in helping children from birth to age 18 actualize their value and potential. They help our communities know and realize that a child with special needs gives far more to their family and community than they take.

When a family has a child diagnosed with a disability, it can seem like there is a mountain ahead of them. Without proper information and supports, they can easily fall into despair. This problem is exacerbated when the supports that are out there do not complement each other, turning life into a long to-do list, chasing down disparate and unconnected services.

That is where the Children's Treatment Centre of Chatham-Kent and similar groups step in. They ensure that all services and supports that a family with a disabled child needs are in one location, locally administered for differing local needs and emphasizing a community experience.

One of the most important things they do is working with school boards to fully integrate students with special needs, training staff and students alike in supporting the transition from earlier supports to a positive and safe learning environment, as mentioned in Bill 48.

Our government for the people champions local organizations like the Children's Treatment Centre of Chatham-Kent for the work that they do in helping children with special needs integrate successfully into our schools and communities.

**The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott):** The Minister of Government and Consumer Services on a point of order.

**Hon. Bill Walker:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'd like to seek unanimous consent to have the interpreter come inside the legislative chamber for this period through ministerial statements and responses.

**The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott):** The minister is seeking unanimous consent of the House to allow a sign-language interpreter to come into the House between now and the end of ministerial statements and responses. Agreed? Agreed.

#### WORLD AIDS DAY

**M<sup>me</sup> France Gélinas:** I rise today to recognize the 30th anniversary of World AIDS Day. Thanks to antiretroviral medication, HIV/AIDS has become a chronic disease managed by medication that allows people to live healthy lives.

Pre-exposure prophylaxis, better known as PrEP, is medication that prevents HIV infection. Unfortunately for many, these medications are beyond their means. One in four Ontarians isn't filling their prescription for medication because they can't afford it. That's why the NDP believes in universal pharmacare.

Regardless of their HIV status, people living with HIV still carry a troubling stigma. It's time for us as legislators to take action against this stigma. That's why today I'm introducing the following motion:

That, in the opinion of this House, the government should:

—involve people living with HIV in all decisions made across government that relate to the health, well-being and dignity of people living with and affected with HIV;

—encourage people living with HIV to start and stay on treatment; and

—dismantle HIV stigma on the community, clinical and personal levels by adopting the Ontario Accord and endorsing the Undetectable = Untransmittable campaign, the U = U campaign.

It's time for this Legislature to recognize the ongoing challenges that people living with HIV are still facing today in Ontario in 2018.

#### SCARBOROUGH HEALTH NETWORK

**Miss Christina Maria Mitas:** Recently, the residents of Scarborough Centre and the surrounding area celebrated the future of health care in Scarborough with the official launch of the Scarborough Health Network. I was honoured to attend this launch along with our Deputy Premier.

The title of the Scarborough Health Network was chosen because it better reflects the incredible work and variety of services offered across Scarborough by the former Scarborough and Rouge Hospital. This hospital holds a very special place in my heart. I, like many Scarborough residents, have used this hospital on many occasions. Every time I step into the building, I'm flooded with memories. I grew up just minutes away from the hospital, and it is where my family has gone for care throughout my life.

Many families in our community are started at this hospital. Whether it is to mend bones, cure an illness or address fears, the incredible staff here have always made all patients feel as comfortable as possible.

Touring the network as an MPP has given me an even greater appreciation of the quality of care of the Scarborough Health Network. Not enough is being said about the recognition they have received for being a centre of excellence in orthopaedic surgery, cancer care and mental health. As an expecting mother, I'm also incredibly impressed with the advanced maternal and neonatal care being provided in their state-of-the-art birthing facilities.

Our government is focused on building a health care system that puts the needs of Ontario patients first, and I look forward to continuing to work with the Scarborough Health Network to maintain and deliver the outcomes that all Ontarians expect and deserve.

## ÉDUCATION EN FRANÇAIS

**M<sup>me</sup> Goldie Ghamari:** Je suis très honorée de prendre la parole aujourd'hui. Je tiens à remercier les écoles publiques et catholiques françaises de Carleton pour tout ce qu'elles font pour soutenir nos enfants, notre culture francophone et notre langue.

À Carleton, environ 2 800 élèves fréquentent des écoles françaises complètes et environ 10 340 fréquentent des écoles avec des programmes d'immersion française. Aujourd'hui, je voudrais me concentrer sur les écoles purement françaises de la circonscription.

J'aimerais parler un peu des programmes que ces écoles offrent à leurs communautés et à leurs élèves, des programmes et activités sportives, comme le basketball et le volleyball, une ligue d'improvisation et d'impro clap, une chorale, un club de robotique, un comité de développement durable, un comité de politiques et beaucoup plus.

1320

Ces écoles aident également leurs communautés de nombreuses façons, comme des collectes de dons pour les familles dans le besoin et des collectes de nourriture pour leurs banques alimentaires locales.

Je voudrais tout particulièrement remercier l'École élémentaire catholique Saint-Jean-Paul II. Avec l'aide de la banque alimentaire de Stittsville, ils adoptent une famille afin de leur remettre un panier de Noël bien garni. Ce sont ces petits actes de gentillesse qui me font réaliser à quel point je suis fière d'être bilingue et francophone.

En terminant, j'aimerais remercier toutes les écoles francophones de Carleton d'avoir fait tout leur possible pour soutenir les élèves, les familles et leur communauté.

## REPORTS BY COMMITTEES

STANDING COMMITTEE  
ON ESTIMATES

**The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott):** Standing order 63(a) provides that "the Standing Committee on Estimates shall present one report with respect to all of the estimates and supplementary estimates considered pursuant to standing orders 60 and 62 no later than the third Thursday in November of each calendar year."

The House not having received a report from the Standing Committee on Estimates for certain ministries and offices on Thursday, November 15, 2018, as required by the standing orders of this House, pursuant to standing order 63(b), the estimates before the committee of the Accessibility Directorate of Ontario; Ministry of Advanced Education and Skills Development; Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs; Ministry of the Attorney General; Cabinet Office; Ministry of Children and Youth Services; Ministry of Citizenship and Immigration; Ministry of Community and Social Services; Ministry of Community Safety and Correctional Services; Ministry of Economic Development and Growth; Ministry

of Research, Innovation and Science; Ministry of Education; Ministry of Energy; Ministry of the Environment and Climate Change; Ministry of Finance; Ministry of Francophone Affairs; Ministry of Government and Consumer Services; Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care; Ministry of Indigenous Relations and Reconciliation; Ministry of Infrastructure; Ministry of International Trade; Ministry of Labour; Office of the Lieutenant Governor; Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing; Ministry of Natural Resources and Forestry; Ministry of Northern Development and Mines; Office of the Premier; Ministry of Seniors Affairs; Ministry of the Status of Women; Ministry of Tourism, Culture and Sport; Ministry of Transportation; Treasury Board Secretariat; Office of the Assembly; Office of the Auditor General; Office of the Chief Electoral Officer; and Ombudsman Ontario are deemed to be passed by the committee and are deemed to be reported to and received by the House.

Pursuant to standing order 61(b), the estimates 2018-19 of these ministries and offices, not having been selected for consideration, are deemed to be received and concurred in.

*Report deemed received.*

## MOTIONS

## HOUSE SITTINGS

**Hon. Bill Walker:** I move that, pursuant to standing order 6(c)(ii), the House shall meet from 6:45 p.m. to midnight on Monday, December 3, 2018, for the purpose of considering government business.

**The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott):** Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion is carried? I heard some noes.

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

All those opposed will please say "nay."

In my opinion, the ayes have it.

**M<sup>me</sup> France Gélinas:** On division.

**The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott):** On division, the motion is carried.

*Motion agreed to.*

STATEMENTS BY THE MINISTRY  
AND RESPONSESINTERNATIONAL DAY OF PERSONS  
WITH DISABILITIESJOURNÉE INTERNATIONALE  
DES PERSONNES HANDICAPÉES

**Hon. Raymond Sung Joon Cho:** Mr. Speaker, with your permission, I'd like to introduce very important people in your gallery: Tina Doyle, University of Toronto; Mark Wafer, Megleen Treadstone; Emily Chan, Holland Bloorview, and her mother, Peggy; Julia Hanigsberg, Holland Bloorview; Lynn Ziraldo, Learning Disabilities

Association of York Region; Julia N. Dumanian, Canadian Hearing Society; Gary Malkowski, Canadian Hearing Society; Joe Dale, Ontario Disability Employment Network; Jeannette Campbell, Ontario Disability Employment Network; Kevin Collins, Easter Seals; Ana Maria Faria, Easter Seals; Kat Clarke, Canadian National Institute for the Blind; Deidre Guy, Inclusive Workplace and Supply Council of Canada; Zinnia Batliwalla, March of Dimes; Peter Athanasopoulos, Spinal Cord Injury Canada; Morgan Austin, Spinal Cord Injury Ontario; and, lastly, Ghulam Rana, IWSCC. Welcome to Queen's Park. I'm so happy. Thank you very much.

I am honoured to rise today to mark the 26th annual United Nations International Day of Persons with Disabilities. Since 1992, countries around the world have celebrated the contributions people with disabilities have made to the world. Supporting this declaration is the UN's 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, which pledges to "leave no one behind." The agenda includes goals to ensure every person is treated equally and with dignity. The agenda calls for full and equal participation of people with a disability in all aspects of life and will require creating inclusive environments by, for and with people with disabilities.

Mr. Speaker, while we may look to the UN for guidance, we all must do our part in Ontario to engage with people with disabilities, to listen, to learn and to act accordingly. Governments, organizations, academic institutions, businesses and the general public must come together to make change. It is a shared responsibility.

We are lucky to live in a province like Ontario where accessibility is the law. The Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act has helped Ontario become a leader in accessibility and provides a strong foundation to build an inclusive province. The act continues to advance inclusion in our province through standards for accessibility in all sectors of the economy. This way, all Ontarians, regardless of ability, can fully participate in their community and our economy.

In our province, about one in seven people have a disability. That's almost two million people. Building an inclusive province is not just the right thing to do; it is the smart thing to do.

Mr. Speaker, the facts speak for themselves: 50% of people with disabilities have a post-secondary education and 90% of people with disabilities in the workforce rate above average and better on job performance evaluations than their colleagues. It's very good news. Yet the unemployment rate for people with disabilities is 16%—double Ontario's broader unemployment rate—while 30% of a small to medium-sized business in our province struggle to fill job vacancies. It just doesn't make sense.

**1330**

Mr. Speaker, employment is a critical piece of someone's engagement with the world around them. Employment gives people self-confidence and self-respect. Some of us, after all, are born with some form of disability, and others become disabled due to an accident or illness. As a

minister, I am fortunate to find inspiration from individuals I meet every day: people like Emily Chan at the Holland Bloorview Kids Rehabilitation Hospital, advocate David Lepofsky, or the Honourable David Onley.

The other day, I was honoured to welcome Rick Hansen to my ministry. We know, of course, that he travelled around the world in his wheelchair, which took him two years—a long time. Rick told me that his Man in Motion World Tour originated to give those with disabilities hope and to raise funds for spinal cord research.

What I have learned from these exceptional individuals is that disability is not an obstacle to their success. They did not let their disability define them. They instead converted their disability into ability, and are changing the world around them.

To recognize the International Day of Persons with Disabilities, I would like to invite all of my MPP colleagues, regardless of political stripe, to join the United Nations campaign and pledge alongside them that we will continue to ensure that no one in Ontario is left behind. We will all be better for it.

**The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott):** Responses?

**Mr. Joel Harden:** Thank you, Minister, and thank you, friends, again, who are with us in the gallery from the disability rights community. We're here talking about this, but every single day you are fighting for people who need help. I want to salute your activism and I want to thank you very much for all that you're doing.

As I mentioned before in question period, we had a very stimulating breakfast put on by March of Dimes Canada and Spinal Cord Injury Ontario. The stories that were shared at that breakfast left an impression upon me that I have heard from other disability rights activists: this notion that we need to listen a lot more. We need to understand that we live in an economy and in a society which has built-in discrimination against some of our most important citizens, to my mind—people like David Lepofsky, who has been recognized by this House and whose individual efforts to bring our attention to the fact that our responsibilities with the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act require action, that people with disabilities should not have to be their own private accessibility police, that it should be the goal of the Legislature and of legislators to make sure that standards are set and they're followed up on.

I want to think back home to people who aren't with us today: people like Sally Thomas, a Paralympian who competed for Canada in Athens and today lives on the Ontario Disability Support Program and the minimal paycheque that offers. On a meagre income, she tours schools in Ottawa, telling young children with disabilities that they have innumerable options, that they have worth. I salute Sally's work, but to be very honest, it's not enough. It's not enough for me to salute the work. It should be my role as the critic of this government for people with disabilities to encourage them to make the necessary investments so that Sally doesn't live in poverty, having competed for this country at the highest levels. That is our national, provincial shame, that we legislate poverty in this country for people who have disabilities.

The minister mentioned that we should celebrate the UN's commitment to make sure that our province is accessible; I agree. But I will also remind the minister and this government that this province is a signatory to the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, and part of our obligation as a province, as a signatory to that convention, is that we never make any decision which degrades the living conditions of people with disabilities. I will suggest to my friends in government that when people who are living on the Ontario Disability Support Program were expecting an increase of 3% this fall and you only followed through on a 1.5% increase, that was an abrogation of our commitments to the UN convention.

We cannot at one and the same time say that we need to make sure that Ontario is more accessible, that we salute trailblazers like Sally or Rick Hansen—or Linda Niksic, who tomorrow will receive the David Onley award for leadership for people with disabilities; Linda is from Ottawa Centre. We can't just acknowledge leadership; we have to acknowledge where we're moving backwards. Changes that have been announced to the Ontario Disability Support Program around eligibility requirements—what experts are telling me is that that will mean fewer people will qualify for incomes that compel them to live in poverty.

We have to do better. We have to acknowledge that people with disabilities are one and a half times more likely to be targets of violence than those without disabilities, and that's particularly true for Indigenous people with disabilities, for women with disabilities and for racialized people with disabilities. We have to acknowledge that right now in the province of Ontario, we are continuing to build infrastructure that is inaccessible. I look forward, in this sitting of the House, to putting forward a private member's bill which, working with the builders of this province, will ask us to make sure that anything new built in this province is built to a universal standard of design, because it's not enough for us to say that we need to do more.

We also have the AODA committees, all of which have been frozen, all of which are staffed by our talented friends up there in the gallery, waiting to offer their advice to this government. Minister, I invite you—I plead upon you, as a man of integrity—to make sure that those committees get to work and get to work right now, because the deadline of 2025 is coming way too fast, and we need the brightest minds in our province making sure that we're on track to a fully accessible province.

**M<sup>me</sup> Nathalie Des Rosiers:** It's a great honour for me to stand today on this International Day of Persons with Disabilities. I want to salute everyone who is here today to help us celebrate, and to recognize the obstacles that are still left to conquer.

First, I want to celebrate the great advocacy that has taken place in Ontario for many decades on issues of disability. I want to acknowledge the primary role of many of the people who are here in doing this great advocacy. We are here to celebrate the accomplishments of all people

with disabilities in Ontario and elsewhere, and I'm happy that we are here to take notice of the international day and be there together to continue to resolve to eliminate all barriers to participation by 2025.

I am proud to be part of a party who have made Ontario law a world leader in the legal rights for disability, but I think I know, and we all know, how much more there is left to be done so that we can cross the finish line in 2025.

Je voudrais discuter de trois enjeux : tout d'abord, de l'importance de la reconnaissance d'une vision articulée par la communauté des personnes qui vivent avec un handicap. Secondly, I want to re-emphasize the importance of the human rights framework to continue to proceed with a disability-focused agenda and, thirdly, the importance of investment in resources to assist us in reaching our goal.

#### 1340

Number one: The experts on how to achieve equality and inclusiveness in matters of disabled rights are the people with disabilities. I think we said it this morning: We are here and we should be here to listen. We have to move to a model where the person with a disability has choices; it's not the government that decides how to accommodate him or her, but she has the choice to decide what is the solution that will make her life better. This movement from definition from the outside toward a definition from the perspective of the person who requires and who defines accommodation is where we need to go.

Secondly, I want to re-emphasize a little bit what I said earlier in my statement. The human rights framework has been essential for the hearing impaired, for the people who were having difficulties in transportation. David Lepofsky was one of the ones who used the human rights framework to achieve his goal. We remember that one of the first cases was a person in a wheelchair who could not watch a movie and took it to court and actually changed the way in which we accommodate people in access to movie theatres and to all other public places. So it's important not to lose track of the human rights framework. It's the place where people who cannot be heard finally may have a voice. I urge the government not to undercut this very important part of our system of justice.

Finally, I think I will continue to say that in the great riding of Ottawa–Vanier, every day people who are on ODSP come to my door because they have difficulties in accessing the services that they require. Their medications sometimes are too expensive for what they can afford and they continue to struggle. I think this is a challenge for all of us.

I want to commit today to continue to work with all of us to ensure that we are indeed moving toward our goal in 2025. Our commitment must be to eradicate all barriers—employment, transportation, sports, leisure, health—and to allow choices and to allow participation in all forms of political life and public life for people with disabilities.

Nous ne pouvons pas nous permettre de laisser des talents derrière.

We cannot afford to leave any talents behind us.

## PETITIONS

### INJURED WORKERS

**Mr. Faisal Hassan:** I have a petition entitled “Workers’ Comp Is a Right.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

I fully support this petition and I’ll be affixing my signature to it and providing it to page Emily to deliver to the table.

### ANIMAL PROTECTION

**Mr. Toby Barrett:** I received a number of petitions last night at a demonstration concerning a dead horse and several horses in need on Cockshutt Road in Waterford. They’re entitled “Animal Protection in Ontario.”

“To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“Whereas all animals in Ontario deserve our protection but are largely going unprotected at this time;

“Whereas the Ontario Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals (OSPCA) is the only agency in Ontario authorized to enforce animal protection laws;

“Whereas the OSPCA has continually cut back services, including the recent decision to stop investigating incidents involving farm animals, including horses, as well as failing to fully investigate poorly run zoos, dogfighting operations, puppy and kitten mills and even documented cases of dogs being tortured in the city of Toronto;

“Whereas the OSPCA has made itself completely unaccountable to the public by eliminating annual general members meetings and board elections as well as eliminating a government representative from their board meetings;

“Whereas the Ministry of Community Safety and Correctional Services provides an annual grant to the OSPCA of \$5.75 million of the public’s dollars, for which the OSPCA is to provide province-wide coverage and other services which the OSPCA has failed to deliver;

“We, the undersigned, hereby petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to exercise its authority, through the Ministry of Community Safety and Correctional Services under the current funding transfer payment agreement and the OSPCA Act, requiring that:

“—through the OSPCA Act the government annul the bylaws of the OSPCA;

“—a new bylaw be required that re-establishes annual general members meetings, open board elections and a government representative attending board meetings;

“—the government immediately suspend funding to the OSPCA and conduct a forensic audit of the organization’s use of public funds;

“—the government conduct a service delivery audit of the OSPCA relating to the enforcement of the OSPCA Act;

“—recognize the important job of animal protection by creating a more accountable system that ensures the immediate and long-term protection of the millions of animals who live among us.”

I support the petitions and affix my signature.

### WEARING OF POPPIES

**Mr. Michael Mantha:** I want to thank the township and the community members of Manitouwadge who prepared a resolution to support the petition I prepared with regard to “I Wear My Poppy with Pride and Respect.

“To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“Whereas the poppy is a powerful symbol of remembrance worn by millions the world over with respect and gratitude for those who made the ultimate sacrifice to protect peace and freedom for all people;

“Whereas the poppy has been the principal emblem of the Royal Canadian Legion since its inception in 1925;

“Whereas the poppy is an enduring symbol of sacrifice that was initially inspired by the Canadian poet and soldier John McCrae while in the trenches in the Second Battle of Ypres, Belgium, during World War I;

“Whereas the use or reference to the universal poppy symbol for purposes other than remembrance and respect for fallen servicemen and -women and peacekeepers worldwide may be offensive and disrespectful in the minds of their family, friends and comrades;

“We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to: educate and promote the poppy as a universal symbol of remembrance and sacrifice, and that its heritage and origin from Canadian roots be highlighted. With this positive focus and purpose in mind,

“We further petition LAO to demonstrate leadership in this endeavour by exemplifying respect and pride in the poppy symbol when referred to by members of the Legislative Assembly of Ontario and provincial political parties.”

I wholeheartedly agree with this petition and present it to page Alex to bring down to the Clerks' table.

#### LONG-TERM CARE

**Mr. Percy Hatfield:** I have a petition signed by John Tofflemire from Leamington and hundreds of others right across Windsor and Essex county.

“To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

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

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

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

**1350**

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

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

I fully agree, Speaker. I'm going to put my name on this and give it to Isabel to bring up to the table.

#### SERVICES EN FRANÇAIS

**M<sup>me</sup> France Gélinas:** J'aimerais remercier M<sup>me</sup> Lyse Lamothe, la présidente de l'ACFO, ainsi que tous ceux qui ont participé au « rally » en fin de semaine à Sudbury.

« À l'Assemblée législative de l'Ontario :

« Je manifeste aujourd'hui à Sudbury pour maintenir le Commissariat aux services en français et l'Université de l'Ontario français. C'est en solidarité avec la communauté francophone de l'Ontario que je suis sorti(e) aujourd'hui pour manifester mon inquiétude dans le traitement que vous accordez aux institutions francophones de l'Ontario. J'ai bravé le froid pour faire entendre ma voix.

« C'est avec tristesse et consternation que j'ai appris, lors de l'énoncé économique du gouvernement, que vous abolissez le commissaire aux services en français et l'Université de l'Ontario français. Il est primordial que la communauté de langue minoritaire francophone, l'une des communautés fondatrices du Canada, conserve ses acquis. Deux piliers de la communauté franco-ontarienne disparaissent, et cette dernière prend un grand recul dans son destin et son développement. »

Ils demandent à l'Assemblée législative de l'Ontario qu'il soit résolu :

« Que le commissaire aux services en français de l'Ontario et l'Université de l'Ontario français soient rétablis sur-le-champ. »

J'appuie cette pétition, je vais la signer et je vais demander à Zoe de l'amener à la table des greffiers.

#### INDIGENOUS AFFAIRS

**Ms. Suze Morrison:** I would like to enter a petition. It reads:

“Stop the Cuts to Indigenous Reconciliation.

“To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“Whereas Ontario is situated on the traditional territory of Indigenous peoples, many of whom have been on this land since time immemorial;

“Whereas in 2015 the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada released its final report: ‘Honouring the Truth, Reconciling for the Future’ which made 94 recommendations or ‘Calls to Action’ for the government of Canada;

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

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

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

“—reinstate the Ministry of Indigenous Relations and Reconciliation;

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

“—support TRC education and community development...;

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

I fully support this petition. I'll be affixing my signature to it and providing it to page Shlok to deliver to the Clerks.

#### INJURED WORKERS

**Mr. Kevin Yarde:** This petition is to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario and is entitled, “Workers' Comp Is a Right.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

I fully endorse this petition, Madam Speaker, and I will give it to page Aditya.

#### CLIMATE CHANGE

**M<sup>me</sup> Nathalie Des Rosiers:** I want to thank Lyn Adamson from ClimateFast for this petition.

“A petition to the Ontario Legislative Assembly to allow the people of Ontario the right to be consulted on dismantling the cap-and-trade program, as is our right under Ontario’s Environmental Bill of Rights:

“Whereas on July 6, 2018, the government of Ontario submitted an application ... to dismantle Ontario’s cap-and-trade program without consulting the people of Ontario;

“Whereas a quarter of a century ago, in 1993, Ontario’s Environmental Bill of Rights was passed by the Legislature of Ontario. Under our Environmental Bill of Rights, Ontarians have the right to comment on environmentally significant government proposals;

“Whereas the loss of the cap-and-trade program will take millions from much-needed environmental programs, including cancelling \$52 million in funding for TransformTO and \$100 million in funding for energy-saving retrofits in schools;

“We, the undersigned, call upon the government of Ontario to open up to consultation the proposed dismantling of Ontario’s cap-and-trade program and all related climate legislation, as is our right under our Environmental Bill of Rights.”

I agree with this petition. I’ll sign it and I’ll give it to page Jack.

#### CURRICULUM

**Ms. Teresa J. Armstrong:** I would like to thank Martha Cowie of London for bringing this petition forward to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario.

“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;

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

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

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

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

I fully support this petition, sign it, and give it to page Kidan to deliver.

#### DIAGNOSTIC SERVICES

**M<sup>me</sup> France Gélinas:** I would like to thank Shelley Young from Coniston in my riding for collecting this petition. It reads as follows:

“Save the Breast Screening and Assessment Service.

“To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

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

“Whereas in Sudbury we have already lost 70 nurses” at Health Sciences North, and they are planning to close

“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;”

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

#### ORDERS OF THE DAY

##### STANDING ORDERS

**The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Lisa Gretzky):** Minister of Government and Consumer Services.

**Hon. Bill Walker:** I move that the definition of “recognized party” in standing order 2 is deleted and the following substituted:

“‘recognized party’” means a party that has a “recognized” number “of at least 10 per cent of the total number of seats in the assembly. For the purpose of this standing order, if the party’s percentage of the total number of seats is not a whole number, it shall be rounded to,

“i. the next lowest whole number, in the case of a percentage that ends in less than .5; or



“ii. the next highest whole number, in the case of a percentage that ends in .5 or more.”

Madam Speaker, I would like to correct my record. I said: ““recognized party”” means a party that has a recognized number.” I should have said: “has a recognized membership of at least 10 per cent of the total number of seats in the assembly.”

1400

**The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Lisa Gretzky):** Mr. Walker has moved government motion number 25.

**Hon. Bill Walker:** Speaker, I'll be sharing this time this afternoon with the members for Etobicoke Centre, Mississauga East–Cooksville and Mississauga–Erin Mills.

I would like to just point out, however, that this will allow us to not have to come in and make standing order changes every time there's a government change. At the end of the day, the three largest Legislatures in the country—Quebec, the federal government and Ontario—will now have the same standard: 12 seats, 12 seats, 12 seats, and will give certainty to the electorate.

**The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Lisa Gretzky):** I recognize the member for Etobicoke Centre.

**Miss Kinga Surma:** Thank you, Madam Speaker. I would like to use my time allocation to do my maiden speech, if that's all right.

Madam Speaker, thank you for your indulgence. I know that most, if not all, of the members in the House already presented their inaugural speeches, but I chose to wait because I wanted to wait to have my family and my friends, my campaign and my supporters here with me today. I would like to thank all of you for coming. For the team members who couldn't be here today: Trust me; there will be plenty of opportunities.

I would like to start by saying that I live in the best riding in the province of Ontario.

*Interjections.*

**Miss Kinga Surma:** I think I started something here.

I have the honour and the privilege of representing the best people. I have a diverse riding with folks from every part of the world. It is home to the hardest-working, family-oriented and engaged residents in the province. I can prove that to be true, Madam Speaker, because everywhere I canvassed, I would meet folks who grew up in Etobicoke, left to go to school or to work and would often choose to return to start their families right there in Etobicoke, or they refused to even consider living elsewhere.

During the campaign, I had a little fun competition with my residents to find the longest resident of Etobicoke, and I think I did. I met a lovely couple who had lived in Etobicoke in the same house for 65 years. I'm sure I will get a call tomorrow from a resident who will argue that they in fact lived longer, but the point is, Etobicoke is a wonderful place to live, and I hope to be that resident one day.

The greatest time of my life took place from April to June 7, 2018. You may wonder why a 2018 campaign period, with all the chaos of an election, was my greatest time—because I had the best team. I've been involved in the Etobicoke community for many years, ever since I

moved to Toronto and worked for councillors representing different parts of Etobicoke. But since I won my nomination in November 2016, I spent every single free moment canvassing—close to two years before the election. I was bound and determined to meet and speak to every single resident at least once, if not twice.

It was clear when I was doing all of this that change was upon us. Everywhere I went, I spoke to people about their daily struggles. I could feel that something was wrong. People were telling me they were working harder but they had less and less for their families, and I could sense that people were starting to realize that they were much too forgiving of Kathleen Wynne and the Liberals. They were ready for a new beginning. I knew then that we needed to get back to the basics.

But this was part of a greater movement—a movement that has been in the works for years; a general feeling from the public that in many different places, not just here in Ontario, politicians weren't serving their people; they weren't respecting tax dollars; they were more concerned about PR than doing what was right and what was in the best interests of their citizens; and politicians failed to protect good jobs at home, the very foundation of our economy and society.

Madam Speaker, we are not afraid to do what's right.

During this physically gruelling time of canvassing every day after work, I met the most sincere, hard-working, professional and engaged people. It took me about two years to build a team: a strong riding association, recruit lots of volunteers, encourage donations, create a great youth group and form a wonderful campaign team. I and my growing team engaged hundreds of people who were never involved in politics before. I can say this proudly: We were ready, well before the writ dropped, to fight for the residents of Etobicoke Centre.

I cannot go on without mentioning my core team, who were responsible for putting me in this chair: my campaign managers, Dan Jacobs and Richard Longtin; my CFO, Ennio Longo; my volunteer chair, Adam Cotter; and my office manager and sign chair, Nick Sklar, who's here with us. These five very special people not only ran the best campaign—and it is in fact true, because Dan Jacobs was nominated at our PC convention just a couple of weeks ago for best campaign manager—but they made sure we had so much fun along the way.

I want to thank all of our wonderful volunteers, all the people who came through the doors to help in the campaign, whether it was to make calls, put up signs, make a donation or even bring a little treat for our team. We could not have done it without you. Our campaign office became our home, not just for the team, but for members of the community—a safe, warm place with great food, cots and even our own ice cream truck. No one could question how hard we worked or how organized we were—but we were so much more than that.

Of course, my family—my mom, Margaret Surma; my dad, Mirosław Surma; my brother, Konrad and my sister, Carolina—were all a part of that. Like the Premier always praises his family for being a tight-knit group, so are we.

My family has gone through so much, and we always stuck together through all the challenges we faced—from escaping Communism and my parents coming here with three little ones and only \$1,500 in their pockets; from not speaking the language; to finding any available work to provide for their family; and the three of us siblings trying to accustom to life in Canada, taking care of one another when we were on our own, whether in school or in the neighbourhood. We were unbreakable, and we stuck together.

If there is one photo that portrays our family for what we are—my favourite photo in our family album—it’s a photo of a completely empty room in a tiny little apartment, our first home, with my little sister who is just over a year old, smiling, standing in a baby crib, with the rest of us around. We came here with nothing, but of course the first and only piece of furniture that we had for weeks was my little sister’s baby crib. Looking at our faces, you’d never notice we didn’t have anything, because we had the most important thing: a loving family.

To my family: I love you so much.

When I started engaging myself in politics, around the time I worked at city hall, when Rob Ford was mayor, about eight years ago, people would often ask me why I wanted to get into the dirty blood sport of politics, oftentimes trying to direct me to a different career path. My father, too, was guilty of this. He wasn’t quite sure why his daughter was obsessed with a career choice that is often thankless, not stable and would face so much scrutiny. My response was always, “If good people don’t do it and they’re discouraged, who will?”

I always believed that the legislative process was the best way to bring forward change. In order to do that, one must be elected and have a voice either at Parliament Hill, Queen’s Park or city hall.

It was at city hall where I first became motivated to run. It wasn’t until I experienced the wasteful spending firsthand that I thought to myself, “We can do better.” And if it was that bad there, I thought, “Wow, what would it be like at the province?” There, I was part of a great team, under the leadership of the great mayor Rob Ford. There were very few of us conservatives in that building, but we were close and we were never afraid to fight for the taxpayer, because Rob Ford never gave up, no matter how harsh the scrutiny. I always told myself that if I could represent my constituents to one tenth of the degree that Mayor Rob Ford did, I would be okay. He is irreplaceable, and no one will ever be capable of providing the customer service he did to the residents of Toronto. I can tell that you he is my standard, and often when I’m not sure what to do, I ask myself, “What would Rob Ford do?” In my political life, he is my guiding star.

**1410**

With everything I learned at city hall, the many lessons that my parents taught me throughout my life and my humble beginnings, I truly felt that I understood the day-to-day challenges of the people of Ontario. So I kept going, undeterred—some would say stubborn—to bring forward a strong Conservative government.

Eight years later, that day came. On June 7, under the leadership of Doug Ford and the PC Party of Ontario, we formed a strong majority government.

Today I get to be part of another great team, whose focus is restoring prosperity in Ontario. Today my team and I—Eva Hara, Natasha Kruk, Amanda Ross, and, of course, with all the folks in the Ministry of Transportation—

*Interruption.*

**Miss Kinga Surma:** I can’t believe that happened.

Not only are we able to provide the best customer service to make life more affordable for the residents of Etobicoke Centre, but we’re also doing everything we can to improve public transit, something that I am very passionate about.

Do you know what the best part is? I am 100% confident that our team—my colleagues, our cabinet, our Premier and all of the wonderful staff who are part of this government—will get it done.

I cannot express to you all how exciting it was to sit in this chair for the very first time. I can admit, sometimes when you wait for something for so long and it finally comes, you almost don’t know what to do.

Now, after five or so months learning the process here in the House, bonding with my wonderful seatmates and fighting for the taxpayer, it is truly amazing. Our team is fighting every day, right here from this room.

Together, in the last five months, we’ve accomplished the following:

- we removed the CEO of Hydro One and brought in an entirely new board;

- we created a new consultation process to review all of the curriculum, and so far we’ve had thousands of participants;

- we cancelled the cap-and-trade carbon tax, reducing costs for Ontario families by \$1.9 billion;

- we allocated \$25 million to help law enforcement to address gang violence in the city;

- we cancelled the basic income research project, saving Ontarians \$17 billion; and,

- one of my favourites: We moved the Better Local Government Act to reduce the size and cost of Toronto’s municipal government, fixing council dysfunction that crippled Toronto city hall;

- we reduced the cost of gas by five cents a litre;

- we cancelled the Green Energy Act that led to the disastrous feed-in tariff program and skyrocketing electricity rates for Ontario families;

- we cancelled the outdated and unnecessary Drive Clean program;

- we revisited Bill 148 to reduce red tape and regulations, the job-killing bill; and

- we fought for Ontarians during trade negotiations.

I could go on for a while, but let me say this: We have had an exciting five months.

Our government for the people has set a new standard of governance. Everywhere I go, people are talking about how hard we are working, how we’re keeping all of our promises and whether the Premier will actually give us some time off during the holidays.

What's next for us? I will repeat what I said on Friday during my annual Christmas party: We are going to keep going at the same rate for the next four years. We are bound and determined to bring prosperity back to Ontario. The people know this, and they have faith in us. The volume of people who are emerging and coming forward to share their ideas with us is immense. People—whether residents, stakeholders, business owners, doctors—are saying that, unlike the previous government, we are listening.

But we have a huge challenge ahead of us. We are not only faced with a \$14.5-billion deficit that we promised we would reduce, but with a media that is not on our side and that does not want to see us succeed in resolving many of the problems created by the previous administration. They want to see us fail.

But I stand here today to tell all of you, to tell my family, my friends, my colleagues, my supporters and members opposite that we will not fail. The reason that is is because the people are behind us. They know we have tough choices ahead of us, but they chose us to make those choices.

To end my remarks, I would like to once again thank all of my friends, family and supporters for coming. I would also like to recognize Ted Opitz, who is the Conservative federal candidate in the upcoming election. I would like to thank Premier Doug Ford and his entire family for being so supportive; my riding association for continuing their good work; all of my colleagues for your constant support and encouragement; and last but certainly not least, my wonderful residents for giving me the opportunity to sit in this chair and fight for them every day. I will not disappoint you.

I look forward to spending more time in the riding during the holidays. I want to take this opportunity to wish everyone a merry Christmas, happy holidays and a wonderful new year.

**The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Lisa Gretzky):** I recognize the member for Mississauga East–Cooksville.

**Mr. Kaleed Rasheed:** By the way, MPP from Etobicoke Centre: That was an amazing intro speech. Great job. I am really, really proud of you for being part of our team and a colleague.

Madam Speaker, today I stand in the House to speak on the amendments that our government is putting forward to help Ontarians save their hard-earned money, which is motion 25:

“That the definition of ‘recognized party’ in standing order 2 is deleted and the following substituted:

“‘recognized party’ means a party that has a recognized membership of at least 10 per cent”—or 12—“of the total number of seats in the assembly.”

Through this amendment, we are putting Ontarians' money back where it belongs: in their pockets. Our government for the people is acting to improve both political and legislative accountability in Ontario. Our plan for the people states, in accordance of the amendments we are putting forth, that the reason for these amendments is: “To

reduce unnecessary cost while preserving critical functions, the government is proposing amendments to statutes governing the officers of the Legislative Assembly.”

Amendments our government is putting forward will work for the people. We will set a threshold percentage for the number of seats required to achieve recognized party status. Our government has stated that a recognized party will include any party that obtains at least 10% of the seats in the Legislative Assembly.

Let it be noted that official party status should not be confused with being a registered party. A political party can exist even if it has no seats in the House. They may register with Elections Canada or a provincial Chief Electoral Officer as a party. In Ontario, members of unrecognized parties do not get taxpayer funding for staff to help research policies or duties beyond the basics. Being a recognized party in terms of Queen's Park means that these members are entitled to speaking time during debates and having guaranteed opportunities to ask questions during question period. Recognized parties are given public money to establish their caucus offices.

It was made clear in the past election that Ontarians do not want to subsidize a party that has put us in a deficit. Recognized party status in the Legislative Assembly Act determines what salary members get for performing certain roles, such as House leader, caucus chair or party whip.

**1420**

Members write the standing orders, and they can rewrite them if necessary. The threshold for party status used to be 12 for members of the provincial Parliament in Ontario before 1999. Under Premier Mike Harris, the threshold was lowered to eight after the 1999 election. That was because the number of members at Queen's Park shrank from 130 to 103. This was the year the NDP had only nine seats. Our government changed the minimum. We made it so that they would still be a recognized party in the House. Remember, we were the ones who helped the official opposition of today remain an official recognized party, not the Liberals.

I believe the taxpaying constituents of my riding, Mississauga East–Cooksville, should not see their hard-earned tax dollars spent on ineffective politicians, especially when they cannot meet the basic test of a recognized party. Our government believes that tax dollars are best left in the hands of taxpayers, not political parties. This Legislature is to be non-partisan in nature. Not having party status will not prevent you from doing your job—which, I remind you, is to work for the people of Ontario.

Madam Speaker, parties are not created by the House. Instead, they present themselves to the House as parties. Our membership in our respective parties is a matter between ourselves, our fellow caucus colleagues and our voters. We can leave our parties or be asked to leave. We can create new parties, merge parties or change the name of our party. Regardless, not having party status should not prevent you from doing your job.

The tradition in this Legislature has been for the Speakers to accept the party affiliation that the parties and

members have reported to them. This amendment put forth is not a jab at any particular person or party; it's just something that needs to be done. If we look at the number of seats our House has now, then it is reasonable to say that 10%, or 12 seats in this case, should be the minimum for a party to be recognized.

Let me take you back in time, Madam Speaker. In his ruling of September 30, 1963, Speaker Macnaughton pointed out that the status of a party in the House was for the House itself to decide, and the appropriate will to determine the recognition of a political party in the House must be found not in the Speaker acting alone, but in the House acting as a whole, because that's democracy. What I'm saying is that with the number of changes that have occurred in the past to the membership of this Legislature, going from 130 seats, when the minimum number was 12, to 103, to 107, to now 124, it just seems to make the ruling as such back to 12, or 10% of the seats.

Premier Mike Harris is a great example as to why the current threshold is eight. His government saw the reduction in seats from 130 to 103 and subsequently lowered the required number of seats for official party status from 12 to eight. There are now 124 electoral seats. If we base it off math and logic, it is clear that there needs to be an increase in the number where there must be 10%, or 12 seats, in order to be recognized as a party in the House.

The member from Ottawa South said in an interview regarding our proposed amendments, "It's thwarting democracy and it's also what bullies do."

But let me remind you, member from Ottawa South, that your Liberal government had done the same in 2003. It looks like you were the real bullies.

Now let me reiterate what happened in 2003, when the Liberals were in power. The official opposition party of today sat with seven members as well. They were trying to get their jobs done, and they were working hard. I'm going to give credit where it is due, Madam Speaker, because they were working tirelessly to represent their constituents. And what did the Liberals do? Absolutely nothing. They said, "We are not going to give you party status."

Madam Speaker, I have an amendment. I move that the government notice of motion 25 be amended by striking out the number ".5" in subparagraph (i) and replacing it with the number ".7", and by striking out the number ".5" in subparagraph (ii) and replacing it with the number ".7".

**The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Lisa Gretzky):** Mr. Rasheed has moved that government notice of motion 25 be amended by striking out the number ".5" in subparagraph (i) and replacing it with the number ".7", and by striking out number ".5" in subparagraph (ii) and replacing it with the number ".7".

Back to the member for Mississauga East–Cooksville, on the amendment.

**Mr. Kaleed Rasheed:** Premier Dalton McGuinty denied the official opposition of today the right to be known as an officially recognized party in the House. I don't know about you, Madam Speaker, but that doesn't sound so nice, because if we look at the number of elected seats at that time, we can see that there were only 107.

Now the Liberals are in that same position, sitting here with seven members—

**M<sup>me</sup> Nathalie Des Rosiers:** Point of order.

**The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Lisa Gretzky):** I recognize the member from Ottawa–Vanier on a point of order.

**M<sup>me</sup> Nathalie Des Rosiers:** I just wanted to make sure that we refer to Hansard, because there was some recognition of some participatory rights for the NDP in 2003. It is in Hansard. I just wanted to make sure that the member was familiar with this.

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

Back to the member for Mississauga East–Cooksville.

**Mr. Kaleed Rasheed:** Now the Liberals are in that same position, sitting here with seven members. Through you, Madam Speaker, I say to them that what goes around, comes around. It looks like karma is knocking on their door now.

It's evident that the deficit that the previous government created was something Ontarians did not like. That's why they only have seven seats out of 124—seven—which is less than the party minimum set when this government was elected this year. Maybe this ruling can be a way to help wipe away some of the debt they created.

We saw what 15 years of their rule did to Ontario, and the voters in Ontario said, "Enough is enough." I personally heard from many of my constituents of Mississauga East–Cooksville that they have had enough. I knocked on thousands of doors, and one thing I heard the most was, "We have had enough of those Liberals." The people have spoken through their votes. They sent a clear message to the Liberal Party of Ontario that they will not be recognized as an official party in the House.

It is clear that they do not need the extra money, as they did not use it wisely the first time. They probably would not use it right this time around as well.

**1430**

Madam Speaker, the seven Liberal independent members in this House represent a total of 121,000 votes—just 121,000 votes. My riding has over 121,000 people, so they are representing less people than I actually have in my riding—

**The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Lisa Gretzky):** The Member for Ottawa–Vanier on a point of order.

**M<sup>me</sup> Nathalie Des Rosiers:** I think the total number of people that have—it's a point of order, just to correct the record: 1.1 million people voted for the Liberal Party in the last election.

**The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Lisa Gretzky):** That's not a point of order. Members can correct their own record but not that of other members.

Back to the member for Mississauga East–Cooksville.

**Mr. Kaleed Rasheed:** Thank you, Madam Speaker.

They make up less than 10% of this House—less than 10%. Our government makes up about 74%. If we do the math, our government received over 2.3 million votes in total. Now, if we calculate the number based off of the elected members, the total would be way more than—

**Mr. Percy Hatfield:** Point of order.

**The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Lisa Gretzky):** I recognize the member for Windsor–Tecumseh on a point of order.

**Mr. Percy Hatfield:** If I heard correctly, I heard the member say that his party represents 74% of the members in this House, which is incorrect. You may have 74 members, but it is not 74% of the members in the House.

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

Back to the member for Mississauga East–Cooksville.

**Mr. Kaleed Rasheed:** Even if we kept the party minimum to eight, the Liberals would not have been considered a party in this House. This decision goes down to the changes in the number of elected seats that now exist in this House.

Our honourable government House leader, minister and the MPP for Bay of Quinte explained, “When we saw the Legislature shrink in size in 1999, the number of seats needed for official party status shrunk as well. We saw the size of the Legislature increase from 107 seats to 124 seats for the last election and the number didn't change, so what we're doing is making it clear to all involved that 10% is the number from here on out.”

We are trying to get back to work so that we can do and will do more for this province. Our government promised to spend every dollar wisely and to not give more taxpayer money to the Liberals than what is required. We will ensure that this promise made will be a promise kept.

Madam Speaker, while recognizing the non-partisan nature of this House, ideally, once we are in the Legislature, we are all a team. The people of this House are to represent their own opinions and their party's consensus of opinion, as well as the riding that they represent. It is easy to criticize each other, but I think we all need to recognize that we are here to do one job, which is to work for the people of Ontario and to create a better and brighter future for them. Changing the party minimum should not prevent any of us from doing our job.

Every rule, every law is set by precedent, and we have conclusive precedent showing that as the number of seats increases, so should the minimum to uphold recognized party status. All provinces and the federal Parliament have their own standing orders. If we look to neighbouring provinces, we can see that their minimums vary. It is evident that they vary due to the number of elected officials.

For instance, if we look to our neighbours in Quebec, they have set a minimum of 12 seats, or 20%, and they currently have 125 elected seats, which is almost as many as ours. But we believe that 10% is fairer and more just than having 20% of the seats.

If we look to New Brunswick, it's a little different. They have an elected assembly comprised of 49 seats and, for party recognition, the minimum required is five seats, or 20% of the popular vote.

So if we compare this with our amendments, it's not that big of a difference. We have more than double the elected seats in the House. It seems just to have this threshold of 12 seats, or 10% minimum, in order to be recognized as a party in this House.

It's not our fault that the Liberals only got seven seats. If they had created policies that helped Ontarians, they might not have been in this position. I believe that the official opposition leader would agree that the people gave the Liberals seven seats. That's what they have in the Legislature, and they are going to have to deal with it.

Let me assure the independent members that they can still fulfill their roles and job as a member of provincial Parliament without being part of a recognized party. The standing orders state that they can be appointed to standing committees, introduce private members' bills, make comments or ask questions on other members' speeches, put written questions on the order paper and raise points of order.

The only thing they won't be getting is the hard-earned money of taxpayers. Ontarians saw what they did previously, and they voted them out. That is why they did not even meet the eight minimum this election.

This amendment can and will help cover the deficit they left for us. This will work for Ontario, and it will work for the people.

It is logical to apply that if the number of seats in a House grows, then the number of seats a party should be recognized grows as well. That is why I support this amendment of creating a 10% minimum for the House to recognize a party.

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

*Interjection.*

**Mr. Gilles Bisson:** Thank you for the words of encouragement.

Madam Speaker, I want to just make a couple of points in this debate. I'll be sharing my time with other members from my caucus in regard to this 60-minute spot. Some of our members will be getting up and will just be splitting amongst each other, if you're fine with that.

*Interjection.*

**Mr. Gilles Bisson:** Yes, we're going to split. That's what I was saying.

I made this point the last time we had the debate on changing the standing orders with the government, and that is, I understand that from time to time there needs to be a change to the standing orders. I may or may not agree with these particular changes, but it's the way we do it that, to me, is the sticking point at this point. We have a committee in this House that's called the Legislative Assembly committee, and a Legislative Assembly committee was purposely set up in order to give the—

**The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Lisa Gretzky):** I apologize for interrupting. I just want to let the member for Timmins know that before he finishes speaking, he does have to name which members from his caucus will be sharing the time.

*Interjection.*

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

**Mr. Gilles Bisson:** Madam Speaker, I purposely didn't name because I'm waiting for—whatever—those two

members to show up, and when I see them, I will give you the name.

Back to the point: We created in this assembly, years ago, the Legislative Assembly committee. The Legislative Assembly committee is exactly that—it's a committee of the House that looks at issues that affect our chamber and looks at what affects the rules about how we function. It just always seems to me that if we're going to make changes to the standing orders, the best place to make those changes is to refer the question to the committee. That way, the committee can sit down and they can utilize the resources of the committee in order to decide what makes sense. For example, should the status of a party be recognized by a percentage in our standing orders? I think that's a fair debate. Should the number be 10%? Should it be 8%? That's a whole other question. But for the government to arbitrarily come up with a standing order change and, themselves, as a party in the House—not the only party in the House; a party in the House—and on behalf of all members of the House, to make a decision that will affect all members I don't think is a fair way to go. I think what you need to do is that you need to charge the Legislative Assembly committee in order to give the committee a chance to take a look at the question so that we can come up with the proper answer.

1440

For example, if there are things that need to be changed in the standing orders, every member of this House has the ability to attend committee. So, if it is an independent member of the House, a member of the official opposition, or a member of the government, they have the opportunity, if they're not regular members of the committee, to show up at committee and to give their views. It affords members of this assembly the ability to have their say before the motion is ever brought back to the chamber for a final vote.

That's where we are at right now. We have a situation where the government has decided on its own, with no input from any member of the opposition, including the two independent Conservative members—I don't know if we can call them independent Conservatives, but on the part of two independents who sit in the Conservative ranks—as well as seven independent Liberals and an independent Green. They haven't had a chance to even look at this, and neither has the official opposition.

Is there an argument? There may very well be an argument to change it to a percentage; I'm not arguing that. My argument is, first of all: Do we need to go there? How do we make sure that members have an ability to participate in the House that allows them to do the job that they were sent here to do? And if there is to be a change of percentage, what should it be?

For example, the Legislative Assembly committee could afford us the opportunity to call witnesses to come before us in order to be able to have their say. The committee, for example, could say, "Okay, why don't we reach out to the other assemblies across Canada and across the British Commonwealth and look at what the standing orders are there when it comes to official party status"—

or any other particular issue that we want to deal with in our standing orders; electronic petitions, whatever it might be.

Then, we could call forward expert witnesses to come before the committee so they can depute to us and give us their views. For example, we have people here in Ontario in our universities who are scholars, who study the matters of parliamentary democracy and look at these issues in some depth. We have people who have done a fair amount of research; we might be able to hear from them. I don't think that would be a bad thing, in order to allow the assembly to do better job of looking at the question and coming up with an answer.

Once the committee has done its work and they've decided whatever they've decided, it then becomes a majority vote on the committee to refer the matter back to the House. The government has got the escape clause because they control the majority of the committee. But at least members of the opposition and the independent members would have an opportunity to participate in having their say about what the standing order changes should be.

That's my objection to this particular motion, in the same way that I had an objection the first time. I think the best way to be able to change the standing orders is to refer the matter into committee. That's my first part.

The second thing I just want to say is that I was listening to the comments—I'm wondering if my friends are going to be coming soon.

**Ms. Teresa J. Armstrong:** Soon.

**Mr. Gilles Bisson:** Oh, good.

The point I was making is that I was listening to the previous members speak and talking about the experience that our party went through when we lost party status. I was there for both of those. I am probably the only member in the House currently who has served in government, served in a third party, served in the official opposition and served as an independent member—twice. I've been there, done that.

*Interjection.*

**Mr. Gilles Bisson:** I tell you, it wasn't easy.

I just want to remind people that when we went down to seven members, the way we got our official party status back was that Andrea Horwath was elected and we became eight. That's the way that we did it. We were unfortunate and fortunate at the same time due to the death of a member. There was a by-election and we won the by-election. It happened to be in an area where we normally do fairly well, the Hamilton area. Unfortunately, that member died and it created a by-election.

But this myth that all of a sudden, we were given something—we were never given anything. I was there. I still remember those battles. We sat in the House every day in order to make sure that we had our voices counted in the assembly. We were not allowed to participate as an official party until Andrea Horwath was elected.

In the case of the first time, when we dropped to nine when Mr. Harris was elected as the government, the difference there was that we had gone from a House of 130

to a House of 100. I think the government at the time came to the conclusion, "You've got to have some kind of a ratio to the amount of members in the House," and they came to that particular decision. That's how we got there. So I say to my friend across the way, just for the record to show, that we were afforded party status for a reason. One was because the numbers in the House changed, and the second time because we elected Andrea Horwath to become the eighth member. That's what the record is. That's what happened.

I also note that my good friend the member from Thunder Bay–Atikokan is here, who I'm going to be sharing my time with. I'm going to wrap up in a couple of minutes, just to give her a bit of warning that—

*Interruption.*

**Mr. Gilles Bisson:** That's not me. Okay. All of a sudden I'm hearing a phone making noises, and I'm going, "I turned it off. I don't know why it's doing that."

I want to end on this point. I'm not going to take a whole lot of time, but I just want to say to the government that it is not a good idea to do these things unilaterally, because this chamber is about all members. It's not just about the government; it's about every member in this House, be they in government, be they in opposition or be they an independent. They have certain rights and need certain tools to be able to do their job. If we don't afford the members of this House on all sides the opportunity to get to the Legislative Assembly committee to have their say about what they think the rules should be about how this House operates, I think, then, it's a disservice not only to those members individually, but also a disservice to us as a House. So I just say to the government across the way, I'm not a big fan of making changes to the standing orders directly by way of a motion coming to the House that has not been debated with anybody else.

With that, I'll leave time for my good friend the member from Thunder Bay to have her maiden speech.

**The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Lisa Gretzky):** I recognize the member for Thunder Bay–Atikokan.

**Ms. Judith Monteith-Farrell:** I am proud to rise today in this House to deliver my inaugural speech, and I'm honoured to represent the people of Thunder Bay–Atikokan.

I begin today by acknowledging that for thousands of years, Indigenous people have been stewards of this place we call Ontario. I recognize and deeply appreciate the historic connections of First Nations, Métis and Inuit nations to this land. The riding I represent is in the Robinson-Superior Treaty territory, and the land is the traditional territory of the Anishnawbe. Our riding includes the people of Fort William First Nation and Lac des Mille Lacs First Nation. So many people are working together towards reconciliation, and I pledge to help that process in the work I do.

I have many people to thank. Thank you to my three children, Ian, Eve and Claire, for their support. They are my best work and my biggest joy. Thank you to my dear daughter-in-law, Kayley, who is having my second grandchild next month. Thank you to my granddaughter, Rosie, who inspires me to do more and better and gives the

best hugs. Thank you to my late husband, Gary, who always encouraged me. I miss him every day, but smile knowing he would have plenty to say about the places life has taken me. Thank you to my great friends and colleagues who I have been blessed with. Thank you to my campaign team, my party and my leader, Andrea, for having faith in me. Finally, I want to thank the people of Thunder Bay–Atikokan, who made a change for the better. I hope to make them all proud.

Thunder Bay–Atikokan stretches from the shores of Lake Superior, the inland sea of Canada, bordered by the Nor'Wester Mountains, and extends to Quetico and Kakabeka provincial parks. Our beautiful riding includes the city of Thunder Bay and the towns and villages of Atikokan, Neebing, Oliver Paipoonge, O'Connor, Kakabeka, Conmee, Gillies, Upsala, Raith, Shebandowan, Murillo, Hymers, Devon, Blake, Scoble, Shabaqua, English River and Sapawe. It sounds a little bit like the Stompin' Tom Connors song I've Been Everywhere.

Each of these places—

**Mr. Percy Hatfield:** It was Hank Snow.

**Ms. Judith Monteith-Farrell:** Oh, Hank Snow? Okay.

Each of these places is part of the fabric of the northwest. The homesteads, farms, forests, traplines and railroads—all of these and more are part of our story. Our many lakes and rivers, along with Kakabeka and Silver Falls, are a treasured part of our landscape. Many of these waterways were the original trading routes of the Indigenous people who shared their knowledge with the fur traders of the North West and Hudson's Bay companies. There is a deep connection to the water in our region.

**1450**

The economy of Thunder Bay is diverse. We are proud that our traditional industries—forestry, sawmills, pulp and paper mills, grain elevators and mines—are some of the best in this country. Industry in Thunder Bay is growing in the knowledge economy, information technology and trades sectors. Our farmers are leaders in agriculture.

We are host to the health care providers at Thunder Bay Regional Health Sciences Centre, St. Joseph's Care Group and Atikokan General Hospital. The Bombardier manufacturing centre employs over 1,100 of our residents, building light rail and subway cars. We have massive railway infrastructure, as well as the port of Thunder Bay, Canada's gateway to the west and east, moving goods through our region to the world.

We are a regional hub to Indigenous organizations that serve and support the many communities of the north. The public sector is also such an important part of our local economy. Teachers, correctional officers, education workers, medical professionals, front-line staff, police officers, scientists, firefighters, administrators and so many others make my riding and this province such a marvellous place to live. I recognize the importance of the public sector, and I am grateful for the work they do, work that is often undervalued.

In post-secondary education, Thunder Bay is the home of Lakehead University and Confederation College.

Lakehead hosts a medical school and a law school. Confederation recently opened a tech hub to foster innovation in trades and in the knowledge economy. They both excel in engineering and forestry studies, and their research and development work has won many awards and grants. This fall, Lakehead University was named Canada's Research University of the Year for the fourth year in a row.

Tourism in the region is thriving. Our motto is "Superior by nature," and with our beautiful natural setting, it's so true. We have much to offer.

This community also loves sports. There are plenty of opportunities for climbing, hiking, skiing, kayaking and sailing, to name just a few. We even have ice racing. A special shout-out goes to all the hockey players and curlers I represent. We have some of the best in Canada. Team sports of all kinds and team spirit enrich our community.

The arts are alive and well, with year-round events, performances, programs, exhibitions and festivals. From our own Thunder Bay Symphony Orchestra and art galleries to the blues festival and National Aboriginal Day, we love to celebrate arts and culture.

We look out for each other in the north, and our philanthropic endeavours reflect the giant heart of our community. We have Grace Place, the Gathering Place, Evergreen community, Our Kids Count, Habitat for Humanity and numerous food banks coordinated by our regional food distribution centre. There are many other initiatives that help to improve the lives of others, like the backpack program, clothing bank and breakfast programs. We have many foundations for fundraising, plus the outstanding charitable initiatives of our business community and service organizations.

Our faith groups have touched the lives of many through their hard work and dedication. We have a vibrant United Way, and I had the pleasure to serve on their board. None of this is accomplished without a tireless army of volunteers. While there are too many to mention, let me say to everyone: Thank you very much.

As for my own story, my family was part of the wave of immigrants who came to Canada after World War II. They were grateful to be part of this country. They were grateful that people accepted them as citizens, neighbours and friends.

I learned so many important lessons early in my life that stay with me to this day. I grew up in a working-class neighbourhood in Thunder Bay. We were from many different places and we lived side by side. On my block, there were new Canadians from Finland, Germany, Poland, Ukraine, Czech Republic, Slovakia, Italy, the United Kingdom, Greece, Hong Kong, Croatia and Belgium—quite the cultural mosaic. It was very interesting hearing the moms calling us in from playing, all in their different languages. We were a testament to the idea that hard work and co-operation can pay off. It wasn't always easy and we struggled, but we pitched in to offer a helping hand and together made Canada our home.

Experience is a great teacher, and my personal and working life has given me many lessons. I put myself through university doing odd jobs to make ends meet. I

was a cleaner, a salesperson, a server. I worked in clerical positions and hospital labs and did door-to-door research. These jobs showed me how crucial all workers are and the enormous respect they deserve. Without the hard work of so many, our society and economy would come to a halt.

My first career was as a councillor who worked with both employers and the unemployed. There were women who wanted to be in the trades as well as special challenges as part of my caseload. To this day, one of my passions is expanding access to jobs and trades in this country.

Later I became involved with the labour movement and then worked for the Public Service Alliance of Canada. I fought hard to expand employment equity and human rights, access to child care and workers' compensation. I also worked one-on-one with so many union sisters and brothers to make sure they were treated fairly and with respect. I did that with negotiations, arbitration, mediation and education. To my allies in the labour movement, thank you for all you do.

That brings me to today and my third career as MPP for Thunder Bay—Atikokan. To be a politician was something I always contemplated, but life had other plans. Earlier this year, my friend John Rafferty asked me to step up and run. I did, and now I'm here to make a difference. I want to make this a more fair and just society to live in. In our province, far too many people are struggling. We must do better.

I am reminded of my childhood hero, Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. He said, "Injustice anywhere is a threat to justice everywhere." Those words ring in my ears when I think about Ontario today. We have so much wealth, but so many are left out. Charity is not the only solution. I think daily of the many stories and experiences I have heard from my constituents, and that we have all heard: health care nightmares, a working adult who can't afford to have their teeth fixed, a senior worried about long-term care or home care, a parent trying to find child care, and those who can't afford to work. I know we have to do more to help.

I will work to make my riding in Ontario a more just place. I believe that all of us here must make that happen. I believe that when people with different outlooks and experiences sit together, we can work things out respectfully. Solutions that come from meaningful consultation are stronger and smarter. The people of this province are looking to us all to work together to make this a better place, leaving no one behind.

We make Ontario better not only by filling individuals' pockets, but by protecting our natural resources. If we don't protect our world's environment, the result will be deadly.

We should promote our business community, but not on the backs of working people. People deserve a living wage and dignity. We must protect every person's rights. Everyone deserves the protection of our Constitution because how we treat our most vulnerable is the measure of our society.

I start every day with a reflection of gratitude for all that I have in my life: my family, my friends, my health and the incredible privilege of being here at Queen's Park.



I believe that we come to places in our lives for a reason. The reason we are all here is to make life better for the people of Ontario, now and in the future. I wish for all of you a peaceful heart and mind so that we can make that happen together. Thank you. Meegwetch. Merci.

**The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Lisa Gretzky):** Further debate? The member for Ottawa–Vanier just squeaked in.

**M<sup>me</sup> Nathalie Des Rosiers:** I'm rising here to debate the motion, and I will suggest an amendment to the motion.

I want to begin by saying why I'm rising and why I am addressing this House. I'm addressing it as a parliamentarian and as a person who has been really interested in the evolution of democracy around the world. That was my expertise as a constitutional lawyer, and I will bring that to the floor today.

I will address you as parliamentarians. I think we should all be interested not only in trying to change the rules for our political advantage, but mostly because whether it is good or bad for the future of our democracy.

**1500**

I have done my research and I have really sought to reflect on how we compare nationally or internationally, what the point is of this magic number that we want, what it reflects and where we should go from here.

I appreciate and I am in agreement with the statement from the member from Timmins: that the process to achieve changes to the standing orders should be larger and should include a committee of many parties. I think it would make more sense for the future.

In doing my research, what I found so interesting is that, internationally and also in Canada, the trend is to lower the threshold, not to increase it. The reason that is the case is because—and our Supreme Court has been quite clear on this—to reflect that threshold that limits public participation ought to be scrutinized and may not stand up to the constitutional protection. The Supreme Court of Canada was quite clear that any threshold that seeks to limit political participation ought to be reviewed and sometimes eliminated because that's not the way in which a democracy should function; a democracy should respect diverse opinions and the capacity of all participants to express themselves in the House.

I will speak to, number one, what the Supreme Court has said; number two, the precedents in Canada and elsewhere; and number three, I have suggestions on the financial aspect. I actually have a compromise position for the government in terms of looking at the financial implications of this question. Finally, I will make a motion and propose an amendment that reflects the international precedents that I will put to you.

First, the Supreme Court of Canada was quite clear that full political debate ensures an open society benefiting from diverse opinions and that social policy should be sensitive to the needs and interests of a broad range of citizens—which, in the context it was making that statement, was trying to eliminate the threshold that limited the participation of a party in the electoral process. So it did exactly what we're doing today: looking at whether the

threshold that we're trying to put in prevented fulsome participation. It does go on to say that political parties act as vehicles for the participation of individual citizens in the political life of the country. You have to respect the fact that many people voted for the independent members—1.1 million people voted Liberal; at least 300,000 voted for the Green Party; and certainly, people also voted for the new independent members. So the ability for the constituents to express themselves in this House is what is at stake, as well. Section 3 of the Constitution protects the democratic rights of all Canadians, and it protects the right of all citizens to participate in the decisions. It's in that context that we should look at this famous threshold. We are supposed to look to a right of effective representation.

Let me look a little bit at the precedents that we have. The government House leader said, "Oh, this is a good number, 10%, because it would mean 12 in Quebec, 12 in Ontario and 12 at the federal level." But 12 at the federal level is, in fact, 3.6% because they have way more people sitting. In the Senate of Canada, the minimum is five seats, which is the equivalent of 4.8%. In Alberta, it's four seats, which is an equivalent of 4.6%. In British Columbia, it's four seats, which means 4.6%. In Manitoba, it's 7%. In Newfoundland, it's 5%. In Nova Scotia, it's 3.92%. In Ontario, with eight seats, it was 6.5%; now we will move it to 10%, and we would be the only one in Canada reaching this higher threshold.

Indeed, the province of Quebec, which has 12 seats or 20% of the popular vote, which means 9.6%—but you should know that currently, they are offering party status to both the Parti Québécois and Québec solidaire, who have only 10 seats. In general, around the world, you look at these trends where they're trying to lower the threshold to allow a broader participation of diverse voices, seeing that this is good for democracy, that people are more likely to want to vote, more likely to want to engage in political decisions where their choices are meaningful and will get reflected.

Indeed, the last country that has looked at this issue in depth is Ireland. Let me talk a little bit about what happened to Ireland. In Ireland, there are 218 seats, 158 in the lower house and 60 in the upper house. Before a reform in 2016, seven seats was the minimum requirement to be a recognized party, and this was changed to five. The debates around this were exactly what I'm referring to here: All parliamentarians looked at this not as an issue of, "What is my political advantage? Can I just stick it to the other party and make sure that they never achieve recognized party status?"

I hope not. I know that's not what this—we're talking about the future of our democracy. The future of our democracy is indeed, when you look at the trend, to diminish the threshold, because that's what allows people to want to have their voice better reflected in Parliament. This is exactly the same trend that you see reflected not only in Ireland, but, let me say, in Switzerland, with five members of 246; the European Parliament, 25 of 751; New Zealand, six members maximum; and in Australia, all of them are below 10%.

My point is simply this: It's somewhat interesting—that we should look at this, we should pay attention. I'm saying this as a parliamentarian, but as someone who's concerned about Ontario's democracy in the future. I won't be here forever, but I know that when we make rules and change the rules for the future, we should pay attention to what the impact is not for the current situation, but what the impact is out there and whether, indeed, it will allow people to feel validated, to have their voices being heard in this Parliament.

I urge people on the government side to do the same research that I have done. I will put it on my Facebook. I've done it through the legislative library here. I asked them: "Give me some information. What's going on around the world? And what should we do?" I asked in the generous, curious academic spirit that I have, which is to say that it is important what we do in here. It is important not to shortchange Ontario and to ensure that we are doing the right thing, looking at what the international trends are and not bucking the trend, because maybe we would not do a service to Ontarians in the way they want to express themselves through their democratic rights.

Based on this research, I want to just confirm a little bit some of the things that were said. Based on the research, I will move, I will make an amendment—I know there has already been an amendment, and I will incorporate that amendment.

I move that the definition of "recognized party" in standing order 2 be deleted and the following substituted:

"Recognized party" means a party that has a recognized membership of at least 4 per cent of the total number of seats in the assembly."

For the rest, I follow the lead of my predecessor, but 4% is the number that came up from the review of the—

*Interjection.*

**M<sup>me</sup> Nathalie Des Rosiers:** So I'm just saying that the international evidence leads toward 4%. I'm saying that it's important for us not to make rules simply to achieve some immediate benefits, but to look at the long term for the vitality of Ontario democracy. So my suggestion to the—

**The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Lisa Gretzky):** Stop the clock, please.

I would just like the member for Ottawa–Vanier to clarify whether she was moving an amendment, or if she was just speaking to—

**M<sup>me</sup> Nathalie Des Rosiers:** I just wanted to explain that because of the previous amendment, that makes my amendment out of order, and so I withdraw the amendment I was proposing.

I'm suggesting, since it is the bulk of the international evidence that leads to not increasing thresholds, but actually—

**The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Lisa Gretzky):** Okay. Thank you for the clarification. Back to the member for Ottawa–Vanier.

1510

**M<sup>me</sup> Nathalie Des Rosiers:** As I was saying, I urge the government to look at the international scene. I urge them

to pay attention to what's going on in Canada. Why make Ontario the province where the least voices will be expressed in Parliament? Indeed, we should be leaders in encouraging a diversity of voices to be heard. That's our duty, and that's our duty as representatives of our constituents.

For the people of Ottawa–Vanier: I have been elected, and I am unable to participate in the same way as other members here. It happened last week. I had to ask for unanimous consent to speak to an issue of francophone rights, which was very important to my community, and I was denied that right.

What I'm urging is, do not change the rules to continue to deny or eliminate the possibility of voices of Ontarians to be heard in this House. We should care about this; we should care about this deeply. I'm urging you, as parliamentarians, to reflect on this and, indeed, to either strike a committee so we can look at it with a little bit more depth, look at what's going on around the world, and reflect a little bit on what the impact is on the right to vote, the impact on the reason why people want to vote. We know that more and more people want to participate in the political process in a different way, and more and more people's voices should be reflected. That will enhance public policy, not diminish it.

My suggestion on the financial side—I understand that the member of the government is saying, "Well, we want to reduce money, so let's eliminate the possibility of some parties having access to recognized party status so that we don't have to give them any money." There is a solution: You could ensure and diminish the amount that comes automatically to recognized party status.

For example, I know that, currently, \$500,000 becomes automatic for research, to any party that gets recognized party status. Thereafter, an additional amount depends on the number of seats that you have. Why don't you reduce it to \$50,000 and then continue to have additional amounts depending on the number of seats? It would reflect the fact that, certainly, the seven people here—or the eight people, if we didn't change the rules—would have less money than the PCs and less money than the New Democrats—fair enough—but it would allow them at least to have participatory rights, and that's what I'm after.

When I'm here and I cannot speak on behalf of my constituents, I feel I am being paid to do nothing. I think the assembly does not benefit from the expertise that is around this place, and cannot benefit from it, and our constituents get frustrated about the fact that there are not sufficient questions that are being asked of the government at times.

So that's my suggestion: If the concern is about the money, and it's not a piece of vengeful politics and sticking it to the Liberals, and it's certainly to enhance democracy in Canada, reflect on the way in which you could change the allocation of the money without actually changing the rules on recognized party status.

This is important: When the Supreme Court of Canada declared unconstitutional the threshold that was imposed on the Marxist-Leninist Party, it did so by speaking to the

values of democracy for Canadians. It declared that a right to effective representation, which is what every one of us has, must reflect the ability for diverse voices to be truly expressed, diverse voices that express themselves through different parties.

It's not only about the Liberals; it's not only about the Greens or the New Democrats or the Conservatives. You are changing the rules, and you may prevent new voices, new parties, from having access to this ability, new voices of Canadians that, in the future, may want to express themselves with different values and want to have that represented here.

So I urge you, all my fellow parliamentarians, to take this exercise seriously. It's not only about us; it's about the future of democracy in Ontario. We should want to be leaders in thinking about what the right tools are that we have to enhance the ability to vote, enhance the capacity of parties to truly represent their constituents, and not buck the trend and go backwards but reflect what's going on around the world. There are lessons here, and I hope that you will take them under advisement.

**The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Lisa Gretzky):** I just want to remind all members, because I have heard it happen quite a few times, that if you have your phones on vibrate and it's on your desk, when you are up speaking—it's not very loud down here, but to the gentlemen up in the sound booth, it's very loud because they have headphones on. So please make sure, if you are up speaking, that you either turn your phone right off or put it on another desk while your mike is on.

Further debate? The member for Brampton North.

**Mr. Kevin Yarde:** Thank you, Madam Speaker. I'm just making sure my phone is off here.

I'm glad to rise here for my inaugural speech. I was wondering what I was going to say, when I was preparing my inaugural speech. I think most people at home, people in the gallery, and other MPPs want to know about the MPPs, so I wrote a little bit about my family history and a little bit about myself. Here we go.

My family came to Canada back in 1902 from Petersburg, Virginia, and they settled in southern Ontario. Most of them worked on the railroad. My great-great-grandmother was native Indian, so I like the fact, when I go to different locations and when we're talking in groups of people, that we mention the Métis, the Anishnawbe, the Huron and the Wendat, because that is part of my history as well.

My grandmother, my mother's mother, Olive Rusilla Liddie, was born in 1909 in St. Kitts. She emigrated here to Canada on Canada Day in 1930 and arrived in Saint John, New Brunswick on the SS Lady Drake. Unfortunately, I never did get to meet my grandmother, as she passed away in 1957 in Toronto.

On my father's side, my father was born in Christ Church, Barbados, and he is the eldest of six, with five sisters. I don't know how he got through that—five sisters. He came to Canada in September 1960 to further his education. He adjusted to the cold weather. He said that when he came here, it was very cold. It's a big difference

between 30 degrees and minus 30 degrees. Over time, he was able to get used to the conditions.

From 1971 to 2005, he was a senior account agent with a major insurance company. For several years, he was the top sales rep in the entire country in terms of life insurance. He instilled in me and my siblings that every problem has a solution, and giving up is not an option.

My mother worked hard in government as a project director in the IT department for the Ministry of Consumer and Business Services. That's what it was called back then. She was also a senior manager. She is a graduate of York University in administrative studies, and she attended school part-time, when we were in school, while maintaining a full-time job. That's quite an accomplishment. She wanted to get her university degree before we went to university—there's nothing like having kids in the same school as their parents—so she was able to do that. Right now, she is retired. She is a member of an international fraternal organization which provides educational scholarships for young women in need. She's also a member of the Quarter Century Club of Ontario's public service. I'm quite proud of that.

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My siblings: My sister, Michelle, is the mother of two children who are in university. She works in government as well. So you can see that my family is pretty much working in government. She works as a manager, and she's also a graduate of the University of Toronto. She spends most of her time at Niagara-on-the-Lake. She loves spending a lot of time down there.

My older brother, Trevor, was always popular in school. Back in high school, they always said that he reminded them of Michael Jackson. He was always, I guess, the envy of everybody. I kind of envied him as well, because he was more popular in school than I was. He also worked in the insurance industry. Unfortunately, my brother passed away in August 2012. The demons got the best of him; he struggled with alcohol addiction.

When we talk about alcohol addiction, from other members here, I understand what they're going through, and I wish them all the best.

It was difficult to see and watch him deteriorate in mind and body, and my brother's death was a catalyst for me getting into politics.

People who face addictions, Mr. Speaker: Sometimes they ask for help and sometimes they don't ask for help. That's why I believe, when it comes to addictions, and in particular, opioid addiction, we need to be more open, and we also need to have more open addictions sites and overdose prevention sites, so that people will still have a chance for a better life, which my brother never did.

Professional expert evidence is clear: Overdose prevention sites have saved and do save lives. They connect vulnerable users to care. They reduce the spread of disease and save the health care system money.

If we look to a country such as Portugal, I think that should be a model of how we deal with the drug problem. Some 1,200 people a day receive methadone by mobile sites, Mr. Speaker. Most people will tell you it saved their lives. Drugs are still illegal in Portugal. Traffickers and

dealers still go to jail, but possession of a small amount is no longer a crime. It is a health problem, and that was a revolution in Portugal. People now go to treatment, not prison. Portugal now looks after people without passing any judgment. Overdose rates and HIV and hepatitis infections all dropped.

The government has put an arbitrary cap on the number of overdose prevention sites they're allowed to operate in this province, pitting community against community while the opioid crisis continues to claim lives.

Escalation of the opioid crisis means communities need more supports, not fewer. The new application guidelines which the ministry has put forward will make it next to impossible for some overdose prevention sites to continue, and the arbitrary cap will make it next to impossible for new sites to open.

In Windsor, we need a sanctioned site where people can test their street drugs for fentanyl and other toxic chemicals, to avoid more horrific fatalities.

We need to fill these gaps in harm-reduction-based treatments. We need more outreach workers and we need more mental health and addictions supports. Most of all, we need the government to recognize these needs and to take action on all fronts. My brother, while addicted to alcohol, would want me to advocate for this.

Prior to entering politics, I obtained an honours BA from York University in political science. I also attended the Ryerson School of Journalism. Prior to getting into politics, I worked at the Weather Network for 17 years as the morning show broadcaster. I travelled to many communities across Ontario, promoting small towns like Timmins and Sudbury in northwestern Ontario.

People ask me, "You had such an amazing career in television. Why would you want to get into politics?" Well, after telling people what to wear every day for 17 years, I was tired of lying to people. So I decided to get into politics, and that's why I did that.

After such a wonderful career in broadcasting, the one thing I learned from the Weather Network is that climate change is real. One of my close friends, Mark Robinson, is a meteorologist and storm chaser at the Weather Network. I talked to him about climate change, and I said, "Do you have any information that we can give here at Queen's Park?" He said, "Yes, Kevin," and I'm going to quote him here. He said, "Kevin, I don't believe in climate change. As a trained meteorologist/storm chaser who has studied wildlife biology as an undergraduate, I don't believe in climate change. I accept the overwhelming evidence for it. And that is the critical point. When you're talking about science, there is no such thing as 'believe.' There's an acceptance or a rejection of the evidence presented."

In 2015, Canada committed to the Paris agreement, signed by nearly 200 countries that all agreed to lower carbon emissions to keep global warming below a rise of two degrees Celsius from pre-industrial levels so a catastrophic future of extreme natural disasters, droughts, floods and heatwaves could be avoided. However, Ontario is cancelling cap-and-trade without a replacement to reduce emissions. This, quite frankly, is wrong.

The government is getting rid of any renewable energy contract that they consider is wrong for their insider friends. Cancelling government contracts in this manner undermines investor confidence, and it signals to the business community that the government of Ontario cannot be trusted as a business partner.

The government cancellation of cap-and-trade has already cost billions of dollars in lost revenue and good jobs. It will cost families more, and it will hurt our environment.

Now the government is firing people who are critical of this government. They're also firing the Environmental Commissioner and shuttering the commission entirely. Clearly, the government does not want anyone to know just how badly they are going to damage the environment.

These cuts came just two days after the commissioner released a report highlighting some of Ontario's biggest environmental challenges.

Now, here's a neat fact. You all know the Barenaked Ladies?

**Mr. Gilles Bisson:** Oh, I love them.

**Mr. Kevin Yarde:** Yes. Well, my cousin is the drummer: Tyler Stewart, of the Barenaked Ladies.

**Mr. Gilles Bisson:** Can I get an autograph?

**Mr. Kevin Yarde:** I'll see if I can get you an autograph, Gilles.

Now, a little bit about the Barenaked Ladies: Of course, they have sold 15 million albums, they have won 18 Juno awards, and earlier this year, they were inducted into the Canadian Music Hall of Fame. The band this year celebrates its 30th anniversary. We're all proud of Tyler and the Barenaked Ladies' success.

We all probably know some of the songs out there: One Week, Brian Wilson, and Pinch Me. A couple of weeks ago, I heard the member from Markham-Unionville. He was singing a little bit—you did a good job. I'm going to try, okay?

One of the songs that everybody knows and loves is *If I Had \$1,000,000*. I'm going to kind of relate it to what's going on here, Speaker, so it's not out of tune.

*Sung to the tune of If I Had \$1,000,000.*

If I had a million dollars,  
I'd help fix our schools.  
If I had a million dollars,  
I'd give it to those in need.  
If I had a million dollars,  
I wouldn't spend it on lawyers.

So I'm going to—yes, you can clap.

*Applause.*

**Mr. Gilles Bisson:** Leave the music to your cousin.

**Mr. Kevin Yarde:** Yeah, leave the music to my cousin. Okay. I'll talk to my cousin and see if we can update the song and make it more representative of what's going on, more current.

*Interjection.*

**Mr. Kevin Yarde:** What was that?

*Interjection.*

**Mr. Kevin Yarde:** Exactly. I'm not sure what that was, but yes.

Once again, I want to talk a little bit about Brampton. I'm honoured to be the MPP for Brampton North. Brampton is a wonderful place to work and play, and one of the fastest-growing cities in Canada, with 14,000 new residents every year. Over 89 languages are spoken by 209 different cultures. We welcome all newcomers.

The population in 2016 was 593,000, Canada's ninth most populous municipality. Brampton was incorporated as a village back in 1853 with only 50 residents, taking its name from the market town of Brampton in Cumbria, England.

Gilles is still looking at me. I think he still wants me to sing a few more songs. But I'm not going to do that, Gilles.

**Mr. Gilles Bisson:** I love their music.

**Mr. Kevin Yarde:** I'm not going to sing anymore.

**Mr. Gilles Bisson:** Oh, come on. Please.

**Mr. Kevin Yarde:** Pride in the Square: I was so happy to be there this year. It was the first ever, in downtown in the Garden Square this summer. It's a small version of the Pride Parade that they have in Toronto, but we're hoping it will grow each and every year. Organizations like PFLAG, for families and friends wishing to understand and accept their LGBTQ loved ones, and also queer, trans, Black, Indigenous and people of colour were all involved. It was an amazing event this past summer.

In Brampton, we have major economic sectors, including advanced manufacturing, retail administration, logistics, information and communication technologies, food and beverage, life sciences as well as business services.

Companies headquartered in Brampton include Loblaw Companies Ltd., Rogers Communications, Chrysler Canada—their Brampton assembly plant is there—Coca-Cola and Canadian Tire. We also have international companies in Brampton such as Brita and Clorox.

**1530**

Brampton is also the location of the Canadian forces army reserve unit the Lorne Scots (Peel, Dufferin and Halton Regiment).

In terms of education, Brampton is home to Sheridan College. And, as we all know, Ryerson University had plans for building a new campus, with a goal of opening in 2022. This was going to be one of the best, one of the coolest things to happen in Brampton. Ryerson was going to bring a new kind of program to our city: a national centre for cyber security. It was going to transform the kinds of jobs that we have, the kind of pay that we give people, and the pride that we were going to have in our city. It was really exciting. That's why we were excited about the prospect of a university in Brampton. It was a chance to create many, many jobs for our region.

I know that the people of Milton and Markham also felt the same way about plans for their campuses. But instead of building Brampton, Milton and Markham up, the

government, unfortunately, has decided to kill these university campuses and all the opportunity that was to come with them.

New campuses weren't just going to provide educational opportunities; they were also going to create economic opportunities. The city of Brampton estimates that construction would add over 1,800 jobs, with ongoing operations adding 1,500 more. The government talked about the need for finding efficiencies and lowering the debt. Well, these universities would have brought money into the economy, not take it out.

Let me be clear: I, along with my Brampton colleagues, will do everything in our power with the new mayor and new council—which will be sworn in tonight, by the way—to ensure that Brampton gets the university that they so desperately need.

Like any city, more work needs to be done: infrastructure to meet unprecedented growth in transit, education, health partnerships and regional governance. These are all issues which we're still dealing with.

Unfortunately, Brampton is considered the poster card for hallway medicine. It has become the new normal inside Ontario hospitals across the province. In Brampton, nearly 60% of medicine wards are reporting occupancy rates over the internationally accepted safe standard levels. Emergency rooms are overcrowded. Ontario hospitals say that they need a minimum of \$300 million in addition to ongoing funding just to keep the hallway medicine problem from getting even worse. In October 2017, the Liberals' disappointing announcement of \$100 million in one-time hospital bed funding for flu season fell far short. As a result, the hallway medicine crisis didn't get better; it got worse.

The current government needs to recognize that we have to, and we can, do much better to end hallway medicine. Hospitals need an actual funding increase to make up for years of frozen budgets and cuts under the Liberals. In their short time in office, this government has made things worse. They have already cut over \$330 million in mental health funding, forcing people to go to already overwhelmed emergency rooms for mental health care. The health minister warned hospitals to get ready to do even more with even less. Turning health care around and ending the hallway medicine crisis should be a priority, Mr. Speaker, not just another status quo disappointment that fails families.

Young people can't afford a home in Brampton, either. A majority of Bramptonians have to leave the city to work every day.

Gun violence and public safety has become the number one concern.

In Brampton, we pay the highest auto insurance rates, not just in Ontario but in the entire country. My colleague the NDP MPP from Brampton East said the following: "No one voted for a government to make life even more unaffordable for families. No one voted for a government to take the side of insurance companies over everyday Ontarians." I was shocked and outraged to hear that the government had voted a hard no to any policy position which makes auto insurance more affordable.

People in Brampton are a diverse and well-educated group. We want a city where you can get a good job and a good education close to home, so that we don't have to travel to leave our city.

Madam Speaker, when I first came here to Queen's Park, one of the first things I did was I stood up in the Legislature and I mentioned that I had been carded seven years ago. Now, unless it has happened to you, there's no way you can understand how degrading carding is. I have had complete strangers come up to me since then to thank me and to tell their stories.

We must work hard with law enforcement community leaders to get to the root problems of crime to make our cities safe. I met with corrections officers and heard their concerns over safety, mental illness, segregation of inmates and other issues. I'll always fight for fairness and equality for police and corrections officers in my critic portfolio.

When it comes to firefighters, we propose that we have mandatory certification and regulations, while pushing the government to provide all municipalities with the resources and tools they need for the safe, effective and standardized training of all fire personnel in the province. The current fire protection system allows for sound decision-making, with the arbitrator having the balance of power, but the current government wants to change this.

In conclusion, I'm grateful for this honour to serve the people of Brampton North. After all, it is your seat. As we sit across the aisle from one another—New Democrats, Liberals, Conservatives and Greens—we need to remember that our words are very powerful. Our words can spit venom or they can mend a broken soul.

I'm proud to be part of the largest opposition to build bridges and work across the aisle. I'm also proud to be part of a diverse caucus. My members from York South-Weston, Kitchener Centre and Toronto-St. Paul's have increased the Black caucus, and I'm so proud of that. But representation alone is not enough. Ontarians deserve representation that goes further, that builds partnerships with communities and makes sure that priorities are represented in government.

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

Mr. Rasheed has moved an amendment to government notice of motion number 25 relating to the definition of "recognized party" under standing order 2. Is it the pleasure of the House that Mr. Rasheed's motion carry? I heard a no.

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

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

In my opinion, the nays have it. I declare the motion lost.

Are members ready to vote on the main motion?

Mr. Walker has moved government notice of motion number 25 relating to the definition of "recognized party" under standing order 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.

**Mr. Gilles Bisson:** On division.

**The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Lisa Gretzky):** Carried on division.

*Motion agreed to.*

**The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Lisa Gretzky):** Orders of the day. I recognize the Minister of Government and Consumer Services.

**Hon. Bill Walker:** I move that we do adjourn today, Madam Speaker.

**The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Lisa Gretzky):** Mr. Walker has moved adjournment of the House. Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carries? I heard a no.

All those in favour will please say "aye."

All those opposed will please say "nay."

In my opinion, the ayes have it.

**Mr. Gilles Bisson:** On division.

**The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Lisa Gretzky):** Carried on division.

This House stands adjourned until tomorrow morning at 9 a.m.

*The House adjourned at 1539.*







**LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF ONTARIO**  
**ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE DE L'ONTARIO**

Lieutenant Governor / Lieutenante-gouverneure: Hon. / L'hon. Elizabeth Dowdeswell, OC, OOnt.  
Speaker / Président: Hon. / L'hon. Ted Arnott  
Clerk / Greffier: Todd Decker  
Deputy Clerk / Sous-greffier: Trevor Day  
Clerks-at-the-Table / Greffiers parlementaires: Tonia Grannum, Valerie Quioc Lim, William Short  
Sergeant-at-Arms / Sergente d'armes: Jacquelyn Gordon

Member and Party / Député(e) et parti	Constituency / Circonscription	Other responsibilities / Autres responsabilités
Anand, Deepak (PC)	Mississauga—Malton	
Andrew, Jill (NDP)	Toronto—St. Paul's	
Armstrong, Teresa J. (NDP)	London—Fanshawe	Deputy Opposition House Leader / Leader parlementaire adjointe de l'opposition officielle
<b>Arnott, Hon. / L'hon. Ted (PC)</b>	Wellington—Halton Hills	Speaker / Président de l'Assemblée législative
Arthur, Ian (NDP)	Kingston and the Islands / Kingston et les Îles	
Baber, Roman (PC)	York Centre / York-Centre	
Babikian, Aris (PC)	Scarborough—Agincourt	
Bailey, Robert (PC)	Sarnia—Lambton	
Barrett, Toby (PC)	Haldimand—Norfolk	
Begum, Doly (NDP)	Scarborough Southwest / Scarborough-Sud-Ouest	
Bell, Jessica (NDP)	University—Rosedale	
Berns-McGown, Rima (NDP)	Beaches—East York / Beaches—East York	
<b>Bethlenfalvy, Hon. / L'hon. Peter (PC)</b>	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	
<b>Cho, Hon. / L'hon. Raymond Sung Joon (PC)</b>	Scarborough North / Scarborough-Nord	Minister for Seniors and Accessibility / Ministre des Services aux aînés et de l'Accessibilité
Cho, Stan (PC)	Willowdale	
<b>Clark, Hon. / L'hon. Steve (PC)</b>	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	
<b>Elliott, Hon. / L'hon. Christine (PC)</b>	Newmarket—Aurora	Deputy Premier / Vice-première ministre Minister of Health and Long-Term Care / Ministre de la Santé et des Soins de longue durée
<b>Fedeli, Hon. / L'hon. Victor (PC)</b>	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	
<b>Ford, Hon. / L'hon. Doug (PC)</b>	Etobicoke North / Etobicoke-Nord	Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs / Ministre des Affaires intergouvernementales Premier / Premier ministre
Fraser, John (LIB)	Ottawa South / Ottawa-Sud	
<b>French, Jennifer K. (NDP)</b>	Oshawa	Third Deputy Chair of the Committee of the Whole House / Troisième vice-présidente du comité plénier de l'Assemblée législative

<b>Member and Party / Député(e) et parti</b>	<b>Constituency / Circonscription</b>	<b>Other responsibilities / Autres responsabilités</b>
<b>Fullerton, Hon. / L'hon. Merrilee (PC)</b>	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	
<b>Gretzky, Lisa (NDP)</b>	Windsor West / Windsor-Ouest	First Deputy Chair of the Committee of the Whole House / Première vice-présidente du comité plénier de l'Assemblée
<b>Hardeman, Hon. / L'hon. Ernie (PC)</b>	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	
<b>Hatfield, Percy (NDP)</b>	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	
<b>Jones, Hon. / L'hon. Sylvia (PC)</b>	Dufferin—Caledon	Minister of Community Safety and Correctional Services / Ministre de la Sécurité communautaire et des Services correctionnels
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	
<b>MacLeod, Hon. / L'hon. Lisa (PC)</b>	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	
<b>McNaughton, Hon. / L'hon. Monte (PC)</b>	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	
<b>Mulroney, Hon. / L'hon. Caroline (PC)</b>	York—Simcoe	Attorney General / Procureure générale Minister of Francophone Affairs / Ministre des Affaires francophones
Natyshak, Taras (NDP)	Essex	
<b>Nicholls, Rick (PC)</b>	Chatham-Kent—Leamington	Chair of the Committee of the Whole House / Président du comité plénier de l'Assemblée Deputy Speaker / Vice-président

Member and Party / Député(e) et parti	Constituency / Circonscription	Other responsibilities / Autres responsabilités
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	
<b>Phillips, Hon. / L'hon. Rod (PC)</b>	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	
<b>Rickford, Hon. / L'hon. Greg (PC)</b>	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	
<b>Scott, Hon. / L'hon. Laurie (PC)</b>	Haliburton—Kawartha Lakes—Brock	Minister of Labour / Ministre du Travail
Shaw, Sandy (NDP)	Hamilton West—Ancaster—Dundas / Hamilton-Ouest—Ancaster—Dundas	
Simard, Amanda (IND)	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	
<b>Smith, Hon. / L'hon. Todd (PC)</b>	Bay of Quinte / Baie de Quinte	Minister of Economic Development, Job Creation and Trade / Ministre du Développement économique, de la Création d'emplois et du Commerce 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	
<b>Thompson, Hon. / L'hon. Lisa M. (PC)</b>	Huron—Bruce	Minister of Education / Ministre de l'Éducation
<b>Tibollo, Hon. / L'hon. Michael A. (PC)</b>	Vaughan—Woodbridge	Minister of Tourism, Culture and Sport / Ministre du Tourisme, de la Culture et du Sport
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	
<b>Walker, Hon. / L'hon. Bill (PC)</b>	Bruce—Grey—Owen Sound	Minister of Government and Consumer Services / Ministre des Services gouvernementaux et des Services aux consommateurs
West, Jamie (NDP)	Sudbury	
Wilson, Jim (IND)	Simcoe—Grey	
Wynne, Kathleen O. (LIB)	Don Valley West / Don Valley-Ouest	
<b>Yakubski, Hon. / L'hon. John (PC)</b>	Renfrew—Nipissing—Pembroke	Minister of Natural Resources and Forestry / Ministre des Richesses naturelles et des Forêts
Yarde, Kevin (NDP)	Brampton North / Brampton-Nord	
<b>Yurek, Hon. / L'hon. Jeff (PC)</b>	Elgin—Middlesex—London	Minister of Transportation / Ministre des Transports

**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**

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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, Chris Glover  
Christine Hogarth, Logan Kanapathi  
Daryl Kramp, Natalia Kusendova  
Amarjot Sandhu, Mike Schreiner  
Dave Smith, Jennifer (Jennie) Stevens  
Daisy Wai  
Committee Clerk / Greffière: Sylwia Przewdziecki

**Standing Committee on Government Agencies / Comité permanent des organismes gouvernementaux**

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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  
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Roman Baber, Aris Babikian  
Nathalie Des Rosiers, Jill Dunlop  
Parm Gill, Lindsey Park  
Ross Romano, Prabmeet Singh Sarkaria  
Sara Singh, Monique Taylor  
Kevin Yarde  
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**Standing Committee on the Legislative Assembly / Comité permanent de l'Assemblée législative**

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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**

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Vice-Chair / Vice-présidente: Peggy Sattler  
Toby Barrett, Catherine Fife  
Goldie Ghamari, Jim McDonell  
Norman Miller, Suze Morrison  
Michael Parsa, Peggy Sattler  
Kinga Surma  
Committee Clerk / Greffier: Christopher Tyrell

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Lindsey Park, Ross Romano  
Prabmeet Singh Sarkaria, Sandy Shaw  
John Vanthof  
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