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Clerk: Todd Decker

Président : L'honorable Ted Arnott
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LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF ONTARIO

Thursday 6 December 2018

ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE DE L'ONTARIO

Jeudi 6 décembre 2018

The House met at 1030.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): We will begin this morning with a moment of silence for inner thought and personal reflection.

Prayers.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Point of order, the Minister of Natural Resources and Forestry.

Hon. John Yakabuski: Thank you, Speaker. At a recent Green Party event, the leader compared climate change to World War II. This is insulting to the brave soldiers who fought and lost their lives. I believe the leader of the Green Party should apologize to all veterans—

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): I don't find that to be a point of order.

INTRODUCTION OF VISITORS

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): We have with us in the Speaker's gallery today the consul general of Hungary at Toronto, Mr. Valér Palkovits. Please join me in warmly welcoming our guest to the Legislative Assembly today.

M^{me} France Gélinas: I would like to welcome the many members from the Ontario Medical Association who are here with us today and will be trying to meet with as many of us as possible. Welcome to Queen's Park.

Mr. Randy Pettapiece: I would like to welcome Dr. Rob Annis from Listowel, in my riding of Perth–Wellington. Welcome.

Ms. Suze Morrison: This morning I would like to give a very warm welcome to students who have joined us in the members' gallery from Inglenook school, which is an alternative secondary school in my riding, in Regent Park. Welcome to the Legislature.

Mr. Mike Schreiner: I'm really excited today. Members of my youth council who are interested in politics and advising me on youth issues are here at Queen's Park today. I'd like to welcome Alexandra Elmslie, Indigo Kim, Omar Sayyed, Jananey Rajagopalan, Maleya Mirza, Kaitlyn Turcotte and Abbey Prilesnik to Queen's Park today. Thank you for being here.

Hon. Merrilee Fullerton: I would like to introduce an amazing volunteer and campaigner, Calvin, from my riding of Kanata–Carleton—amazing.

Mr. Wayne Gates: I'd like to introduce Margaret Rankin from the CMHA Niagara, and her daughter Elizabeth. Welcome to Queen's Park.

Ms. Kathleen O. Wynne: There's a delegation of teachers here from the Waterloo region. I'm not sure whether they are in yet, but I want to just welcome Patrick Etmanski,

president of Waterloo Catholic Teachers; Ed Wyse, vice-president, secondary, Waterloo Catholic Teachers; Simon Dallimore, vice-president, elementary, Waterloo Catholic Teachers; Sherry Freund, teacher/occasional teacher, bargaining unit president with district 24 OSSTF; and finally, Kevin Johnston, also with district 24 OSSTF.

Hon. Lisa M. Thompson: It's a pleasure today to welcome, from the Catholic District School Board of Eastern Ontario, chair Todd Lalonde, as well as director John Cameron.

I would also like to give a warm welcome to Rick Lafelice, father of my director of communications, Kayla.

Mrs. Jennifer (Jennie) Stevens: I would like to welcome a new resident to St. Catharines: Greyson James Walter, weighing in at 8 pounds, 10 ounces. Welcome to St. Catharines.

Mrs. Marie-France Lalonde: It is a great pleasure for me to welcome in the House a former member of provincial Parliament but also a former minister responsible for francophone affairs and Minister of Community and Social Services during Peterson's time. He served here in our Legislature between 1987 and 1995. Please welcome Charles Beer to the House. Thank you very much for being here, sir.

Mr. Stephen Lecce: Let me congratulate the member for St. Catharines on that wonderful news.

Speaker, I'd like to introduce and welcome Robina Hafizi to the Legislature. I want to thank her for her work for the people of Ontario. Thank you so much, Robina.

Mr. Guratan Singh: It is with great honour and privilege that I get to introduce into this House an athlete, a freestyle wrestler, who has represented Canada as a gold medalist in the Commonwealth Games, who is a former Olympian who represented Canada in the 2012 Olympic Games; who is now a current competitor, a part of the Ultimate Fighting Championship, coming fresh off his most recent win, where he proudly wore his turban as the first Sikh fighter in the UFC. Coming straight from Richmond, BC, please join me in welcoming Arjan Singh Bhullar into this House. He is joined by his wife, Neenu Kaur Bhullar, and his daughter, Ajuni Kaur Bhullar.

Mr. Jim McDonell: I would like to welcome, from the Catholic District School Board of Eastern Ontario, Todd Lalonde, the chair, and Don Cameron, director. Welcome to Queen's Park.

Mr. Stephen Crawford: I am proud to introduce a friend and a supporter from Oakville, Mr. Boyd Collins.

Hon. Rod Phillips: Speaker, it's a great pleasure for me to introduce Tony Stolk, a constituent of mine from the great riding of Ajax. Welcome, Tony.

Ms. Peggy Sattler: I see a constituent of mine, Dr. Sharad Rai, who is up in the public gallery for the OMA meetings today, so welcome to Queen's Park.

I would also like to introduce Miranda Hassell, who is working in my Queen's Park office as my legislative assistant. Welcome to Queen's Park.

Mr. Sheref Sabawy: Today I would like to welcome a group of political science students from the University of Toronto Mississauga—a beautiful school in my beautiful riding—as well as their professor, David Pond, who has been dedicated to teaching our next generation of politicians.

Mr. Michael Parsa: I would like to welcome to the House my two hard-working staff: my executive assistant, Kai Nademi, and my constituency manager, Shaida Maleki, the two hardest-working staff—as an unbiased MPP, of course. As a result of their hard work, I would like to offer them both the 25th of December and January 1 off.

1040

Mr. Tom Rakocevic: I would like to introduce and welcome former TTC chair and city councillor Karen Stintz.

Mrs. Robin Martin: I wanted to rise to recognize my constituents who are in the House today: former TTC chair Karen Stintz, Paul Brown of Campbell Strategies—and all the people who are here for the OMA lobby day. Welcome to Queen's Park.

Mr. Stan Cho: It's my privilege today to introduce my good friend Mary Jo Vradis; her son Alexander Morrison; and although she has been mentioned, Karen Stintz, former city councillor and president and CEO of Variety Village, an amazing charity that makes a profound difference in the lives of young people with disabilities and their families in the greater Toronto area and across Ontario. Welcome to the Legislature.

Mr. Rick Nicholls: It's my privilege to introduce, in the gallery today, great friends all the way from British Columbia, Tim and Barb Schindel.

Mrs. Amy Fee: It is my pleasure to welcome back this morning three members of the Ontario Personal Support Workers Association: Miranda Ferrier, Thia Stephens and Ian DaSilva. Welcome to the Legislature again.

Ms. Goldie Ghamari: I want to welcome Dr. Aly Abdulla from Carleton. He has a practice in Manotick, and I spotted him in the crowd. I look forward to meeting with him and the OMA later today.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): That concludes the time we have available for introduction of visitors.

ANNIVERSARY OF MONTREAL
MASSACRE

ANNIVERSAIRE DU MASSACRE
À MONTRÉAL

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): I recognize the Minister of Children, Community and Social Services on a point of order.

Hon. Lisa MacLeod: Thank you very much, Speaker. Merry Christmas to you.

Speaker, I believe you'll find we have unanimous consent for tributes regarding the 29th anniversary of the École Polytechnique massacre, with two minutes allotted to the independent Green member, three minutes to the independent Liberal member, five minutes to Her Majesty's loyal opposition and five minutes to Her Majesty's government.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Ms. MacLeod is seeking the unanimous consent of the House to have a tribute. Agreed? Agreed.

I recognize the Minister of Children, Community and Social Services.

Hon. Lisa MacLeod: I'll be sharing time with the Minister of Training, Colleges and Universities.

Today, we rise in this assembly to condemn violence against women and commemorate the 29th anniversary of the tragic and misogynistic shooting of 14 women who were simply attending or working at l'École Polytechnique, yet whose gender sent a deranged man into a killing spree—one that will forever be ingrained in the minds of this nation.

Today, we remember, after 16 days of action on many campaigns—White Ribbon, Wrapped in Courage, Shoebox, which we're participating in today—that despite it being 29 years later, we still must work not only toward equality for women within our country, but the safety and protection of women who are at risk of domestic violence, sexual abuse, sex trafficking and, sadly, even death just for being a woman.

As Ontario's minister of women, I'm committed to doing our government's part to support vulnerable women and to use my voice to bring greater awareness to women abuse. As a mother to a teenage daughter, I have a vested interest—as we all do—to ensure the next generation and those after that see a society without prejudice, one that is free from hate and safe for women and girls. In my role, sadly, I have seen that in Ontario and Canada today, that is not always the case. As we saw with the Montreal massacre in 1989—we saw it again in 2016 in Wilno, a small, rural eastern Ontario community where violent multi-partner abuse saw the violent murders of three women. There are still so-called honour killings in Canada. Sex trafficking is on the rise. Many of Ontario's violence-against-women shelters, rape crisis facilities and sexual trafficking homes are at capacity.

When we reflect on society, we often think of how far we have come—except when we reflect on violence against women and we put the cold, hard truth out there, we actually come away saying, "My, how far we have not come."

Given my responsibilities to the people's government for Ontario's most vulnerable—children in custody and care, those struggling on social assistance, refugees fleeing war, those with developmental disabilities, soldiers, LGBTQ+ and, of course, women who have been devalued and dehumanized through abuse and trafficking—I feel we are at the heart of helping people stabilize their lives and get back on track.

As a government, we have made a commitment to ending violence against women with an historic \$174-million investment into women's shelters and programming across Ontario. We are working with those on the ground and

with lived experience to better address systemic problems in our communities, particularly Indigenous, rural and remote communities, to end the rise in attacks, sometimes deadly, against women.

I'm particularly proud of our \$1-million investment to support rural and remote communities, where supports are often lacking and far away from where the victims live. I credit my colleague from Renfrew–Nipissing–Pembroke as well as my colleague from Lanark–Frontenac–Kingston for bringing those issues to the floor of this assembly when people weren't talking about what's happening in rural Ontario.

But this is more than just a women's issue; it's an issue for all of us. I've often said that we need strong women supporting vulnerable women, but we also need strong men supporting vulnerable women.

Today, as we mark the anniversary of a tragedy that so scarred our nation, we must remember that this is not just one day a year that we need to shed light on violence against women. It's not just 16 days of action when we need to take a stand. It is every single day—every day in our communities. Forty-eight women died by femicide this year alone. École Polytechnique in Montreal was in 1989, Wilno in 2015 and the Toronto van attack in 2018.

If I may, Speaker, I would like to read the names of Geneviève Bergeron, Hélène Colgan, Nathalie Croteau, Barbara Daigneault, Anne-Marie Edward, Maud Haviernick, Maryse Laganière, Maryse Leclair, Anne-Marie Lemay, Sonia Pelletier, Michèle Richard, Annie St-Arneault, Annie Turcotte, Barbara Klucznik Widajewicz, Anastasia Kuzyk, Nathalie Warmerdam and Carol Culleton.

I urge all members of this House to light candles today for all of those women who died simply because of their gender; light candles for all of those women who are abused and trafficked simply because their violator doesn't believe that they are equal; and light a candle for hope and optimism so that women and girls in the future will know that simply because of their gender they are not at greater risk of abuse.

But before we do, let's remember the women's names that I read today, who died and should be remembered, for if we forget them, we will have turned our eyes away from the goal of greater protections for women in society.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): The Minister of Training, Colleges and Universities.

Hon. Merrilee Fullerton: Today, we commemorate the 14 young women who were murdered in a tragic act of gender-based violence. It was an incident that will always stay in our hearts and minds.

Les statistiques sont choquantes : la moitié des Canadiennes ont été victimes d'au moins une agression physique ou sexuelle depuis l'âge de 16 ans. Studies have indicated that one in five women experience sexual assault while attending a post-secondary institution. The numbers highlight an alarming and unsettling reality that between 15% and 25% of college- and university-age women will experience some form of sexual violence during their academic career.

As minister, I have a zero tolerance policy for violent behaviour, and I expect the same from all educational institutions. It's why we continue to take concrete action to help tackle the issue of gender-based violence and harassment at Ontario's post-secondary institutions. Our government believes that no one should have to worry about their safety while on campus, and post-secondary institutions should be doing everything in their power to combat sexual discrimination, harassment and violence.

One life, one family, one community affected by the lasting damaging effects of sexual violence and harassment is one too many. Sadly, we know there is still more to be done.

Nous avons la chance d'avoir des partenaires dévoués dans nos universités, nos collèges et nos collèges privés d'enseignement professionnel qui partagent nos objectifs et qui ont travaillé avec nous tout au long de ce parcours. I look forward to continuing this work with all of our partners to make campuses safer and to continuing to work with our colleges, universities and private career colleges to fight to end gender-based violence and social and systemic gender inequality.

We will continue to raise awareness and to take action to make post-secondary institutions places of respect and inclusion, places where violence against women is not acceptable, places where everyone can learn and grow, and places where we will remember the women who died in Montreal on this day.

1050

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): The member for Toronto Centre.

Ms. Suze Morrison: On the afternoon of December 6, 1989, Marc Lépine arrived at l'École Polytechnique in Montreal with a rifle and a hunting knife. He walked through the hallways and the classrooms and proceeded to separate the women from the men. That day, he shot and killed 14 women. He killed them specifically because they were women and because he claimed he was fighting feminism.

Geneviève Bergeron, born 1968, was a mechanical engineering student.

Hélène Colgan, born 1966, was a mechanical engineering student.

Nathalie Croteau, born 1966, was a mechanical engineering student.

Barbara Daigneault, born 1967, was a mechanical engineering student.

Anne-Marie Edward, born 1968, was a chemical engineering student.

Maud Haviernick, born 1960, was a materials engineering student.

Maryse Laganière, born 1964, was a budget clerk in l'École Polytechnique's finance department.

Maryse Leclair, born 1966, was a materials engineering student.

Anne-Marie Lemay, born 1967, was a mechanical engineering student.

Sonia Pelletier, born 1961, was a mechanical engineering student.

Michèle Richard, born 1968, was a mechanical engineering student.

Annie St-Arneault, born 1966, was a mechanical engineering student.

Annie Turcotte, born 1969, was a mechanical engineering student.

Barbara Klucznik Widajewicz, born 1958, was a nursing student.

These are the names of the women who were shot and killed on December 6, 29 years ago.

Every year on this day, feminists from across Canada recommit to their values and to the collective struggle to once and for all eradicate gender-based violence. Unfortunately, Speaker, every year we also learn of more women who have been killed. This year alone, between the months of January and August, 53 femicides were recorded in the province of Ontario—53 women killed in our province since the beginning of this calendar year just because they were women. There is still so much work to be done in our province to address gender-based violence.

As the critic for women's issues, I've had the privilege to work with many women's organizations over the course of the past few months. Rape crisis centres across this province have been waiting months for this government to give them an indication one way or another about whether they will release funding that has been committed to them.

One of the most stark things that I hear from front-line workers is that they feel this government does not recognize the systemic violence that women face every single day. Today, I would like to ask this government to respect the work of front-line workers in rape crisis centres and stop holding their funding hostage. It is unacceptable that organizations working to eradicate violence against women are being treated this way.

A front-line worker from the Toronto Rape Crisis Centre/Multicultural Women Against Rape said that the government "could have expedited these funds knowing that survivors have been waiting for months to access services that could be strengthened if this funding had been granted months ago."

Speaker, I would like to remind the House that the waitlist for survivors to access free counselling in Toronto is currently 18 months long. On this day, we must all recommit ourselves to the work that is still left to do to help make the lives of women across this province easier.

Tonight, I have the privilege to attend two December 6 vigils, one in my community in Regent Park and another at the Toronto and York Region Labour Council. I encourage all of my colleagues to do the same, whether it be in their home ridings or here in Toronto. This evening at 6 p.m., there will be a vigil held at the Philosopher's Walk, just south of Bloor Street and Avenue Road. I hope many members of this House will be able to make it to a vigil, like I said, either in their home communities or here in Toronto.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): The member for Nickel Belt.

M^{me} France Gélinas: Aujourd'hui, c'est une journée triste lorsqu'on considère ce qui s'est passé le 6 décembre

à l'École Polytechnique à Montréal. C'est important de s'en souvenir, parce que c'est important de changer les choses : changer les choses pour le mieux pour les femmes qui continuent d'être victimes de violence et pour les femmes autochtones qui continuent d'être victimes.

J'aimerais, moi aussi, lire les noms de ces jeunes femmes : c'était Geneviève Bergeron, Hélène Colgan; c'était Nathalie Croteau; c'était Barbara Daigneault, Anne-Marie Edward, Maud Haviernick, Maryse Laganière, Maryse Leclair, Anne-Marie Lemay, Sonia Pelletier, Michèle Richard, Annie St-Arneault, Annie Turcotte et Barbara Klucznik Widajewicz. Ces femmes ont été tuées parce qu'elles avaient choisi d'aller à l'université. Elles avaient choisi de changer le cours de leur vie et d'embarquer dans un programme qui était jusqu'alors réservé aux hommes. Puis, le 6 décembre est apparu, et on sait tous ce qui s'est passé.

Ici et partout, à l'Assemblée législative dans toutes les provinces, on se souvient. Il faut se souvenir de ces 14 femmes, et il faut se souvenir de toutes les autres femmes qui sont mortes, victimes de violence. On est ici pour aider à faire changer les choses, monsieur le Président, et j'apprécie qu'on a pris le temps, tout le monde ensemble aujourd'hui, de faire ce geste. Merci beaucoup.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Merci.

The member for Scarborough–Guildwood.

Ms. Mitzie Hunter: Today is the National Day of Remembrance and Action on Violence Against Women in honour of the 14 women who were killed in a mass shooting on December 6, 1989, at École Polytechnique.

Aujourd'hui, nous nous souvenons de ces 14 femmes qui ont perdu leur vie le 6 décembre 1989.

As a student in my final year of high school, this is a day that is etched in my mind: the reality that women were killed simply for wanting to live their lives the way they saw them and the way they imagined themselves to be. They were branded as feminists and hunted down because of their gender, the shooter an anti-feminist.

In my first year at the University of Toronto, Scarborough campus, it was during the time of Jane Doe and the Scarborough rapist. Safe-walk programs and being escorted simply to the bus stop by campus police was the norm.

Today, gender-based violence against women is real. We need a fulcrum to shift the culture of misogyny, of hatred against women. The #MeToo movement is simply the tip of the iceberg.

Governments too have a role to play in shifting the culture of misogyny and supporting and protecting women and girls. Violence against women and girls includes domestic violence, intimate partner and family violence, sexual assault, sexual harassment, rape, forced marriage and female genital mutilation and sex trafficking.

Reports show that violence against women is on the rise in recent years. Forty-five per cent of reported violence against women is intimate partner violence. For children and youth victims, the rates of physical violence were similar for both boys and girls, but when it came to sexual violence, girls experienced that five times more than boys. In the case of homicides, women are four times more

likely than men to be victims of intimate partner homicides. Approximately every six days, a woman in Canada is killed by her intimate partner.

The picture is even bleaker for Indigenous women and girls. Indigenous women are six times more likely to be killed than non-Indigenous women. There are 4,000 Indigenous women who are either missing or murdered in Canada. Research from the Native Women's Association of Canada has found that homicides involving Indigenous women are more likely to go unsolved. When racialized women report violence, their cases are taken less seriously and perpetrators often receive less harsh punishments within the criminal justice system.

December 6 is a day of action on violence against women. What have we done? There is a need in this province and in this country to stand up for women who experience violence in whatever way we can.

1100

Right now, there's a survey that was done by all university and college campuses that talks about this issue. The information on this survey needs to be shared by the ministry so students and administration can take action.

We've all acknowledged that economic insecurity and financial abuse can also impact the physical and mental well-being of women. Economic independence is another tool that we have to use. The Pay Transparency Act was passed in March of 2018 and was to come into effect on January 1, 2019, but Bill 57, which is before this House, has delayed that.

With the rise of violence against women in recent years, December 6 should serve as a wake-up call for all of us in this House. More work remains to be done to create a province where everyone is treated equally and where lives are lived freely without the threat of violence. All Ontarians must take action against all forms of violence and harassment of women.

Malgré les progrès, il faut continuer pour éradiquer la violence faite aux femmes.

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

Mr. Mike Schreiner: I'm humbled today to speak in this House on the National Day of Remembrance and Action on Violence against Women, in solidarity with Canadians of all genders and backgrounds, to renew and strengthen our commitment to end violence against women.

We must never forget the 14 women who were murdered and the 10 injured at the École Polytechnique massacre on December 6, 1989, and we must not forget all the women we have lost to violence. We have an obligation to every woman on this planet—especially Indigenous women—to examine the power dynamics that lead to violence, to examine how patriarchy and misogyny lead to acts of aggression along a spectrum of violence against women.

Thanks to courageous social movements such as #MeToo, more and more people are examining gender power imbalances that result in sexual harassment, misconduct and violence. Yet according to the United Nations, 35% of women worldwide have experienced physical and/or sexual intimate-partner or non-partner sexual violence.

Mr. Speaker, let us all in this House today commit to do our part in our daily lives, in the laws we pass in this House, in our workplaces, families and communities, to break down the power imbalances that foster violence against women. Thank you.

Applause.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): I think it would be appropriate that we now rise and observe a moment of silence in remembrance of the victims in the Montreal massacre 29 years ago.

The House observed a moment's silence.

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

ORAL QUESTIONS

HYDRO RATES

Ms. Andrea Horwath: Speaker, before I start, I just want to acknowledge that this is our last day in the Legislature; we'll all be heading off to our ridings. I want to wish all of our colleagues here in the Legislature a very merry Christmas, happy holidays, happy Hanukkah. I hope everyone has a safe and wonderful time. To all of Ontario, enjoy the season with friends and family.

The question—

Interjection.

Ms. Andrea Horwath: The question is to the Acting Premier—nice try.

Last night, the Washington Utilities and Transportation Commission denied Hydro One approval of their takeover of Avista, citing political interference from the provincial government. As part of the merger agreement, Hydro One now has to pay Avista a \$103-million penalty for failing to obtain regulatory approval.

Can the Acting Premier tell us what impact this \$103-million penalty will have on our hydro bills?

Hon. Christine Elliott: To the Minister of Energy.

Hon. Greg Rickford: I appreciate the Leader of the Opposition's question. As well, I'd like to wish everybody a merry Christmas and safe travels back to your ridings.

Yesterday's news from the US doesn't change our focus on bringing down hydro rates and protecting the people of Ontario. We will always put the concerns of Ontario families, small businesses and seniors first. We remain committed to reducing hydro rates and establishing Ontario's energy advantage. This included, Mr. Speaker, a firm commitment to renew the senior leadership at Hydro One, one that had lost the confidence of the energy customers and the people of Ontario.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Supplementary?

Ms. Andrea Horwath: People are having a hard enough time paying the bills in this province. Now it looks like they're going to have to pay the price for the Premier's and his chief of staff's bumbling attempts to install their allies on the board of Hydro One. The Washington state regulators were pretty clear: This is a government that

does whatever they want, whenever they want, and they can't do business with people like that.

The Premier said he would clean up the mess at Hydro One. What's his plan to deal with the \$103-million mess that he's created?

Hon. Greg Rickford: I'm not entirely sure that's what the decision said, Mr. Speaker, but we can disagree on its contents. Upon assuming office, we acted decisively to keep our promise to the people of Ontario. On June 7, 2018, that is exactly what the people of Ontario decisively asked us to do.

Years of Liberal mismanagement led to skyrocketing hydro rates and forced seniors across the province to choose between heating their homes and putting food on their table. This is unacceptable. The people of Ontario have an expectation that we will live up to our commitment to reduce their hydro rates and make life affordable for families and small businesses. We are reducing hydro rates, and, after years of neglect, our government is finally putting the people who pay their hydro bills each and every month first.

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

Ms. Andrea Horwath: Speaker, we agree that things were bad when the Liberals were in power, but now we have a Ford government that's ripping up contracts, racking up penalties and severance payments at Hydro One, trying to install the Premier's allies from city hall into key executive positions, and leaving families to pay the bill.

What does the Acting Premier have to say to families now stuck with a \$103-million penalty that will be added to their hydro bills?

Hon. Greg Rickford: First of all, I would remind the honourable member that that was one of three regulatory bodies' decisions and that is not an expected outcome. Hydro One and Avista are reviewing that decision and considering their options.

But as I said earlier, yesterday's news will not change our focus on remaining committed to bringing hydro rates down for the people of Ontario, for families, for small businesses and for large job creators who lost an energy advantage in this province due to the considerable mismanagement of the previous government and how they dealt with Hydro One. We've inherited this. We've made a commitment to ensure that hydro rates come down for the people of Ontario, and that's exactly what we're delivering.

1110

GOVERNMENT ACCOUNTABILITY

Ms. Andrea Horwath: My next question is to the leader—rather, the leader of the—the Acting Premier, Speaker. Sorry. My contacts are getting a bit blurry.

As we all know, when it comes to putting his own interests ahead of the public interest, the Premier doesn't limit himself to Hydro One, unfortunately. We've just received a story from the Toronto Star indicating that Ron Taverner, the Premier's pick for OPP commissioner, purchased a Toronto home privately last year from one of Premier Doug Ford's closest advisers.

Yesterday I asked the Premier whether he agrees that we need to have the Integrity Commissioner look into the appointment process of the new OPP commissioner. I didn't get an answer yesterday, Speaker. Will the Acting Premier provide one today?

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

Hon. Sylvia Jones: Again, I will remind the NDP opposition that the hiring committee was independent of government, and they made a unanimous choice with Ron Taverner.

I want to quote the co-chair of the 23 Division community policing liaison committee: "As the co-chair of the 23 Division community police liaison committee, I have personally watched Superintendent Taverner bring the community together," work toward common goals of "community mobilization/safety and crime reduction. He is our champion! ... He embodies great empathy for all and is steadfast in ensuring that all efforts are made to ... keep our community safe."

I hope, when Ron Taverner becomes the OPP commissioner on December 17, the NDP will finally do what everyone else in this province understands who knows him—and congratulate him and thank him for his service.

Interjections.

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

Restart the clock. Supplementary.

Ms. Andrea Horwath: Speaker, the Globe and Mail reports today that the Premier has been actively promoting the advancement of Ron Taverner's career since he was a city councillor. It's not surprising since they were very close friends.

Did the Premier mention this close friendship when he was leading the cabinet discussion on Mr. Taverner's new job? If so, did anyone, any single cabinet minister around that cabinet table, note the conflict of interest?

Hon. Sylvia Jones: So again, I will remind the NDP that it was an independent hiring process. They unanimously chose Ron Taverner. Then it came to cabinet on Thursday. We supported the unanimous decision of the hiring committee.

But don't take our word for it. From the executive director of the Albion Neighbourhood Services: "It is with the utmost confidence that Ron Taverner will serve the province in his capacity as the commissioner of the Ontario Provincial Police, with as much commitment, integrity and the highest level of work ethic as he did in serving our city!"

We have an excellent candidate as our next OPP commissioner. I only wish the NDP would understand the level and quality that we have been able to secure with Mr. Taverner.

Interjections.

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

Restart the clock. Final supplementary.

Ms. Andrea Horwath: I can assure the minister that what the NDP does very much understand is that people wanted and expected so much better than this after the last election.

Only this government and this party would fail to see the problem here. The Premier personally awarded a family friend the job of OPP commissioner. Instead of clearing the air, the Premier has attacked the OPP, claiming that they have low morale, and attacked the integrity of Chris Lewis, the decorated former commissioner of the OPP, because he was principled enough to speak out on this very bad process.

Will the Acting Premier do what the Premier refuses to do, apologize to the former commissioner, and clear the air with a transparent investigation into this very odious process?

Hon. Sylvia Jones: You know, while Chris Lewis has every right to his opinion, at the very least he wished Ron Taverner well and hoped that he serves the OPP with as much integrity as he has served for the last 50 years in the city of Toronto.

I think it is offensive that you refuse to talk about all of the things that he has done in a very positive way with the city of Toronto.

I am honoured and I am thankful that he is willing to continue in that service to the people of Ontario as the commissioner of the OPP.

GOVERNMENT ACCOUNTABILITY

Ms. Andrea Horwath: My next question is to the Acting Premier. After the session the government has had, I'm not surprised that they want to escape early, but families are going to be dealing with the fallout from the Premier's decisions long after he has hightailed it out of here. Whether it's the GM workers in Oshawa who were told that the Premier wouldn't fight for their jobs; students who have lost the hope of accessing university education in communities like Brampton, Milton and Markham; or patients stuck waiting in hospital hallways, the Premier took care of his friends, and families were left paying the bill.

Does the Acting Premier think that's fair, Speaker?

Hon. Christine Elliott: Well, I can only say that after 15 years of neglect on a number of fronts by the previous Liberal government, I am very proud of the work that our government has done. We were elected to effect change in this province, positive—

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): I couldn't hear the Deputy Premier for the volume of the applause.

Supplementary?

Ms. Andrea Horwath: Speaker, what people saw this session was two very, very different visions for Ontario. We said the government should fight to keep GM jobs in Oshawa; the Premier said the ship had sailed. We said cancer patients getting treatment at home shouldn't be forced to pay for life-saving drugs; the Ford government compared those patients to children demanding ice cream. We fought to raise the minimum wage and ensure that working people could take a sick day without losing a day's pay; the Premier fought to create lucrative jobs for his friends.

How could this government, after just six months in power, have taken us from bad to so, so much worse?

Hon. Christine Elliott: We got elected to improve the lives of Ontarians, and that is what we are doing. We are raising things up. We are making life affordable for families. We were left with an enormous deficit, but we are making the change that people expect us to make, to make life affordable so that they don't have to choose between heating their homes and feeding their families. That is what we got elected to do.

We got elected to end hallway health care; that is what we are working on. We got elected to make a difference in the lives of families, and that is what we're working on. That is what we're going to continue to do, and we welcome your assistance to do that, because this is something that we should all be working towards to make sure that for all of the people who we all represent, their lives become better and more affordable, and that we can create jobs for all of our young people who are graduating from high school, colleges and universities. That is what we were elected to do, and that is what we are doing.

EMPLOYMENT SUPPORTS

Ms. Jane McKenna: My question is to the honourable Minister of Children, Community and Social Services. The Auditor General released her annual report yesterday, and amid all the scandals, waste and mismanagement, there were a few statistics that stood out from your ministry. The auditor says, "We identified ... 36% of Ontario Works recipients as having barriers that affect their ability to prepare for or find employment.... Service managers across Ontario told us that these barriers include mental health conditions, addictions and homelessness."

Mr. Speaker, this sounds like a disjointed, patchwork system that isn't helping society's most vulnerable the way it should. It certainly doesn't sound like it's focused on the recipients. Can the minister tell us what our government for the people is doing different to ensure a path to employment?

1120

Hon. Lisa MacLeod: I appreciate the question from the member from Burlington. It's a very important question.

I'd also like to say thank you to Ontario's Auditor General for confirming what I have been saying in this House for five long months: that the system I inherited from the previous Liberal administration was not working to get the people in Ontario who can get back to work back on track.

That's why I am proud to be part of a government that, for the first time in 15 years, is working across government, through multi-ministerial approaches, to get people back on track, where they're able to get back to work.

That's why I was proud to work with the Minister of Finance so that we could announce LIFT in the fall economic statement, so people can keep more money in their pockets. I'm working with the Minister of Training, Colleges and Universities so we can have that skills deployment as early in the casework as possible. I'm working with the Minister of Health on mental health and addictions, and the Minister of Housing so we can make sure people have supportive housing.

I look forward to speaking more about this in the supplementary.

Interjections.

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

Ms. Jane McKenna: Thank you, Minister, for your thoughtful and passionate response.

The auditor had so much more to say about the dysfunction at Ontario Works: “Since our last audit in 2009, the average monthly number of Ontario Works cases increased by almost 25% from 202,000 to 250,000 in 2017-18. Although Ontario Works is intended to be a temporary assistance program, we found that since 2008-09, the average length of time people depend on the program has nearly doubled, increasing from an average of 19 months to ... three years....”

It’s an indictment of the previous government, but more importantly, it’s disheartening for those who just want to work.

Can the minister elaborate on her plan to give those able to work a hand up and get those ignored by the Liberals back into the workforce?

Hon. Lisa MacLeod: That’s why we’re pleased to have had the advice from the Auditor General over the past five months as we redeveloped our plan—because we understood that the system was broken and it was patchwork.

Yesterday, I had the opportunity to meet with OMSSA, the municipal service providers who are delivering social assistance at the local level. This is what they asked us for at AMO: better local delivery, more wraparound services and supports for those who can work and those who can’t to make sure that they live life with greater dignity.

We understand that Ontario Works should be temporary and the aspiration should be a job in Ontario, not going into a program that will trap them in poverty. We know that right now we spend over \$10 billion on social assistance. Almost one million people are on the programs, yet still one in seven people are trapped in poverty. That’s unacceptable.

We believe the best social program for those who can work is a job.

GOVERNMENT ADVERTISING

Ms. Sandy Shaw: My question this morning is to the Acting Premier. Before the last election, Progressive Conservatives said that they would restore the ban on partisan advertising that is paid for by the people of Ontario. Yet, not one of the ministers responding to the auditor’s report yesterday seemed willing to answer this basic question, so I’ll ask it again: When will the ban on paid partisan advertising happen?

Hon. Christine Elliott: President of the Treasury Board.

Hon. Peter Bethlenfalvy: Thank you to the member for that question. Under the Liberals, there was a large jump in government advertising in an election year. I’ll let you draw your own conclusion why that may have been. What I will say to the member opposite is that we are exploring all elements of government advertising,

including that. We will make that a priority—as we will in all expenditure items—for this government.

We welcome the ideas from the Auditor General. It’s unfortunate that the previous Liberal government gave them so much material to work with, but we will, however, endeavour to get going immediately on all of the recommendations in the Auditor General’s report.

I’ll have more to say in the supplementary on this.

Interjections.

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

Ms. Sandy Shaw: Well, here we go again. Once again, we see the Ford government taking everything from bad to worse. We’ve seen that the Premier’s meddling in Hydro One will make the Liberal gas plants scandal look like a bargain, and now, instead of cracking down on partisan advertising, the Ford government is doubling down.

Why is this government so determined to spend public money on partisan promotion?

Hon. Peter Bethlenfalvy: Through you, Mr. Speaker: Thank you again for that question from the member opposite.

You know, what keeps me up at night, Mr. Speaker, is the deficit. What gets me up in the morning is fixing it along with all of my colleagues.

Interjections.

Hon. Peter Bethlenfalvy: My colleague just asked me how I sleep. I said, “I sleep like a baby: I wake up every two hours and I cry.”

Hon. Victor Fedeli: Cry over the books the Liberals left us.

Hon. Peter Bethlenfalvy: Yes, thank you, Minister of Finance. We do cry over the books that the Liberals left us. Thank you for that.

I would remind the member opposite that this was the previous Liberal government’s advertising spending. We are going to take every action to clean up the books of this province.

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Stop the clock. The House will come to order so we can continue question period. The next question.

GOVERNMENT FISCAL POLICIES

Mr. Doug Downey: My question is for the very prudent President of the Treasury Board. Yesterday, the Auditor General released her annual report. It was shocking to see how the Liberals engaged in a pattern of mismanagement which has had a real and lasting impact on the services we as taxpayers in Barrie–Springwater–Orono and throughout Ontario rely on. Not only did this mismanagement result in the loss of hundreds of millions of dollars of taxpayers’ money that was wasted, it also put the safety of Ontarians at risk. Ineffective leadership and reckless overspending—it crept throughout the whole of the previous administration.

After 15 years of the Liberals squandering taxpayers’ dollars on the watch of the NDP, Ontario elected our government on the promise of restoring trust and accountability

to this province. Can the President of the Treasury Board please update this House on the findings of the Auditor General and what actions this government is going to take?

Hon. Peter Bethlenfalvy: Thank you, Mr. Speaker, through you to the great member from Barrie–Springwater–Oro-Medonte, for that question.

I would be remiss, first off, not to thank the Auditor General and her team for the great work that she did in this report.

Quite frankly, the report released yesterday shows just how badly the Liberals let the people of Ontario down. Here are some examples: Ontario Works overpayments totalling \$730 million; Metrolinx incurred over \$400 million in sunk and additional costs between 2009 and 2018. It's shameful that these two examples alone add up to \$1.1 billion. You know, that's about the same amount that the province spends annually on Ontario child benefits. This is waste, Mr. Speaker, that we need to fix.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnett): Supplementary.

Mr. Doug Downey: Back to the terrific Treasury Board president: The report did indeed reveal levels of mismanagement that were shameful. For some time now, this House has grown accustomed to hearing how taxpayers' hard-earned money was squandered by the previous Liberal government. Whether we're talking about trying to undermine the Auditor General in order to apply jointly sponsored pension plans to the province's revenues or talking about the extraordinary lengths they went to to get off the books some of the unfair hydro scheme, the previous government left the credibility of this province's financial reputation in tatters.

1130

Can the President of the Treasury Board please inform this House what actions our government is taking to repair the other damage caused by the Liberals?

Hon. Peter Bethlenfalvy: A very good question and, thankfully, I'm prepared for that question. Over the past several months, we have worked closely with the Auditor General in pursuit of our mutually shared goal of improving not just the financial situation of the province but also the governance and accountability situation. Perhaps most disturbingly, the Auditor General discovered that under the Liberals, the Toronto—sorry, the Technical Standards and Safety Authority—

Interjection: TSSA.

Hon. Peter Bethlenfalvy: Also known as TSSA—thank you, colleague—did not ensure public safety nor fulfil its legal obligations to protect the public. That is why yesterday, Minister Walker directed the TSSA to immediately address the concerns raised by the Auditor General—immediate action.

Let me be abundantly clear: We are putting an end to waste and mismanagement. While the Liberals only concerned themselves about protecting their seats, we're concerned about protecting Ontario's future.

PUBLIC TRANSIT

Ms. Jessica Bell: This is a question for the Minister of Transportation. The Auditor General's report proves how

badly the Liberal government let Ontario down by privatizing transit delivery, giving companies a premium price to build the Eglinton LRT on time and on budget and then making taxpayers pay hundreds of millions of dollars for cost overruns. Now this government is accelerating Ontario's course down the same path, cooking up a secret plan to privatize parts of Toronto's subway.

Minister, in one year from now, what do you think the Auditor General is going to say about this government's transit plans?

Interjections.

Hon. John Yakabuski: Paul Miller is free.

Hon. Jeff Yurek: Merry Christmas to Paul Miller, and thank you very much for that question.

Listen, I think a year from now the Auditor General is going to stand up and say, "Good job, government. You've done well."

Our government was elected to do the right thing: to get Ontario back on track. Metrolinx has a new CEO and a new chair. The government of Ontario has a new Premier and a new transportation minister. We're turning the corners. We're going to build transit in this province. We're going to get Ontario moving. We're going to get the economy going. Ontario is open for business.

Interjections.

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

Start the clock. Supplementary.

Ms. Jessica Bell: Back to the minister: The auditor's report confirmed the Liberal government secretly meddled in transit planning for their own political gain, approving a GO station in the former transportation minister's own riding even though Metrolinx had rejected that station location. But this government is taking secrecy and political interference to a whole new level by eliminating any requirement to talk to the public or local municipalities and by giving the Premier permission to change or override any of Metrolinx's plans.

Minister, can you confirm and commit to a firm, fair and transparent public consultation process for all transit planning decisions?

Interjections.

Hon. Jeff Yurek: I wish Paul Miller a happy new year as well.

Mr. Speaker, we have reviewed and accepted the Auditor General's recommendations on the GO station selection and are reviewing all the expenditures. The ministry is going to work with Metrolinx to determine which investments will proceed, including the Kirby and Lawrence GO stations. The ministry is also proposing changes to Metrolinx so that we can clarify the roles and responsibilities with respect to planning and decision-making.

I can fully tell the member opposite that my riding will not be getting a GO station or subway stop.

GOVERNMENT ACCOUNTING PRACTICES

Mr. John Fraser: My question is for the Deputy Premier. First, to all of my colleagues here in our legislative

family: merry Christmas, happy Hanukkah, happy Diwali and happy Kwanza. I want to you know that I'm going to miss the love that I feel every day from all of you when we're in here.

In the spirit of Christmas, this question is not about how the Premier gave his ex-party president a \$350,000 job, or a \$350,000-a-year job to his tour director, or the fiasco that is the appointment of the new OPP commissioner.

My question is simply this: Can the Deputy Premier please explain to us why the Ontario controller's signature is not on this year's public accounts?

Hon. Christine Elliott: To the President of the Treasury Board.

Hon. Peter Bethlenfalvy: Mr. Speaker, I think this is my colleague's way of saying this is my Christmas present from them. I can't comment on the controller and the lack of signature. The Auditor General delivered her opinion. It was a clean opinion for the first time in three years.

But I will talk about how we went about getting a clean opinion. First off, we listened to the Auditor General, who for years did not agree with the accounting of the previous Liberal government's books. Number two, the Financial Accountability Officer did not agree with the government's books. Neither did the debt credit rating agencies; neither did the markets, who didn't agree with that.

Finally, we asked an independent commission of inquiry—respected individuals, independent of government—to opine on the books of the government. I can tell you that they all disagreed with the previous Liberal government and—

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

Mr. John Fraser: I want to thank the minister for that lump of coal in my stocking.

Here is why the controller's signature is not on this year's public accounts. She was forced to leave in September because she did not agree with the accounting decision made by the government. She said she could not put her professional attestation on the public accounts.

Cindy Veinot was the first out of 62,000 candidates in the CPA exam in America. She is an expert in pension accounting. Here's what she had to say: "I believe that the consolidated financial statements of the province of Ontario as issued ... materially overstate the deficit of the province for the year."

Speaker, the government is overstating the deficit as a context for cuts. We've already seen those cuts to health care, to education, to social services, to the things that families depend on. My question to the minister is, why are you overstating the province's deficit?

Hon. Peter Bethlenfalvy: Thank you to the member for that question, but I have to respectfully ask why you are not supporting this Auditor General. I think the people of Ontario rendered their verdict, Mr. Speaker.

But let me take an opportunity to quote from the erstwhile NDP finance critic in April 2018:

"Ontario's families and businesses know they're paying too much for hydro. They feel it every month when they open their hydro bill, and today, the Auditor General

reported that the Liberal hydro plan will drive up bills, yet again—as a result of a bogus accounting scheme.

"Today, the Auditor General reported that the Wynne's government's pre-election report is 'not a reasonable presentation of Ontario's finances.' What the AG has confirmed is that the Liberals' hydro scheme is designed to conceal billions of dollars in hydro debt from the public."

Can I ask the erstwhile NDP finance critic, why don't you support the Auditor General?

Interjections.

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

RED TAPE REDUCTION

Mr. Stan Cho: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

Interjections.

Mr. Stan Cho: I think my colleagues might like my cardigan. Thank you for this.

My question is for the Minister of Economic Development, Job Creation and Trade. I know that the minister has a long history in this House of fighting to reduce red tape and regulations that are holding back Ontario businesses across a number of sectors. The fall economic statement very clearly laid out our government's commitment for the people to cutting red tape 25% by 2022, and that's a challenge I know the minister takes seriously. After all, in Todd we trust.

Can the minister give more detail to the House about next steps that our government is taking to reduce red tape for businesses and services in Ontario?

1140

Hon. Todd Smith: I want to thank the member from Willowdale and just comment on that beautiful cardigan that he's wearing today. All he needs is a pipe and a rocking chair, Mr. Speaker.

Later today, I'm going to be introducing the Restoring Ontario's Competitiveness Act here in the Legislature. This bill, if passed, is going to be another step in our government's commitment to opening up Ontario for business and cutting red tape.

A lot of people think red tape is just about business, but it isn't. It's about services as well. That's why the Restoring Ontario's Competitiveness Act is going to cut red tape that's standing in the way of opening more child care spaces in Ontario, and it's going to create good jobs for the people of Ontario.

Red tape is hurting customer service for businesses, but it's also hurting customer service for government, and that's why we're going to make sure that Ontario is competitive again with this bill.

Interjections.

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

Mr. Stan Cho: I'd like to thank the minister for his response. I know that the minister and his parliamentary assistant, Braveheart Parsa, have talked to small businesses in my riding, and their input has gone into our government's approach to red tape.

On November 29, one of the members opposite said that the idea of cutting red tape by 25% made him shudder. Well, in my riding of Willowdale, small business owners are shuddering with joy that our government is committed to getting red tape out of their way.

Remember, Mr. Speaker, that under the Liberals, one particular business owner said that moving his production facility from Ontario to Ohio was like moving “from a torture chamber to a candy store.”

Can the minister tell the House more about how the Restoring Ontario’s Competitiveness Act will help all businesses in the great province of Ontario?

Hon. Todd Smith: I can say that we’re going to get some candy canes out later today when we introduce the Restoring Ontario’s Competitiveness Act in the Legislature.

I thank Stan the Man for the question this morning—a great advocate for small businesses in Willowdale.

In fact, one of the changes in this bill—which, by the way, contains 32 concrete actions across 12 different ministries of government—is going to reduce the costs by \$5 million per year. The total package of reforms is going to reduce the cost of doing business by almost \$25 million. This is going to play a major, major role in making businesses more competitive in Ontario.

We’re also rethinking the province’s approach to red tape. Where we can, we’re harmonizing our regulatory standards with existing federal standards so that there’s one set of paperwork. The burden on small business owners will go down. This is great news for businesses across Ontario.

Interjections.

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

LEGAL AID

Mrs. Lisa Gretzky: My question is to the Acting Premier. Yesterday’s Auditor General report uncovered that Legal Aid Ontario is spending \$21 million a year on ODSP application and appeal cases. That’s 44% of the total caseload. The more incredible news is that, in three quarters of these ODSP appeal cases, people initially denied support are getting their decisions reversed.

This PC government is making a bad situation worse by changing the definition of “disability” to one that is more narrow and rigidly defined, practically guaranteeing that there will be more appeal cases.

Does the Acting Premier understand that Legal Aid Ontario will receive more cases from people denied ODSP once the new exclusionary disability definition is in place?

Hon. Christine Elliott: To the Attorney General.

Hon. Caroline Mulroney: First of all, to the member opposite: She’s making presumptions on what the definition of a disability will be. We are working on that. My ministry is working with the ministry of children and community safety—

Hon. Jeff Yurek: Children’s services.

Hon. Caroline Mulroney:—children’s services—

Hon. Steve Clark: Minister of many things.

Hon. Caroline Mulroney:—minister of many things—to come to the right definition to help lift people out of poverty and to make sure that they get the services they need.

With respect to Legal Aid Ontario, we thank the Auditor General for the work she has done identifying things that our government is going to need to do to fix a system that is not helping people get the access to justice they need. The government has invested hundreds of millions of dollars in Legal Aid Ontario. I thank the Auditor General for pointing out some very important things that we can look at to ensure that more and more Ontarians who need access to justice can, in fact, get access to justice.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Supplementary?

Mrs. Lisa Gretzky: There are no assumptions here: The Minister of Community and Social Services actually said that the definition will align with the federal definition, which is an exclusionary definition. Thousands of other people with disabilities will be cut off from services and support.

There are so many other things that Legal Aid could be doing if they weren’t so busy doing the work the minister should be doing and fighting to get people the support they need and deserve. According to the auditor’s report, community clinics indicated that due to the high volume of ODSP cases, they were less able to take on cases related to employment law, human rights and issues that impact seniors. But with the government’s new disability definition, which is designed to exclude more people, this will make matters worse.

Speaker, would the Acting Premier rather that Legal Aid spend all of their time on ODSP appeals that they likely will win, or will she ensure that the definition of “disability” is inclusive of those who experience acute, long-term and intermittent disabilities?

Hon. Caroline Mulroney: Our government wants to ensure that people who need access to legal services are able to do that through Legal Aid Ontario. We will be working very hard in conjunction with the recommendations made by the Auditor General to strengthen that access to justice for people in need.

The Auditor General also said that Legal Aid has been in a deficit situation for two years. Ontario continues to face unprecedented demand for refugee and immigration legal aid services, and the federal government is not stepping up to provide its fair share of funding to support its own refugee and immigration policies.

LAO continues to refine more robust processes for analyzing the use of its funding and implementing changes over time. My ministry will continue to work with Legal Aid Ontario to ensure that we continue to develop those processes so the people who need access to justice are able to get that.

PUBLIC TRANSIT

Mrs. Daisy Wai: My question is to the Minister of Transportation. Our government for the people is committed to getting the people of Ontario moving so that they

can spend more time with their family, friends and loved ones.

My constituents in Richmond Hill have been coming to me to complain that they do not want to sit in traffic congestion or wait on a crowded platform for transit. Unfortunately, Ontarians have had 15 years of a Liberal government, supported by the NDP, that was fiscally irresponsible.

Yesterday, the Auditor General released a report that clearly indicated just how disastrous things were under the previous Liberal government. She called for swift action by this government.

Can the Minister of Transportation share with the members of this House just how fiscally irresponsible the previous government was with our transportation system and how much taxpayers are on the hook for, for this mismanagement?

Hon. Jeff Yurek: I would like to thank the member from Richmond Hill for the excellent question and for advocating consistently and constantly for her constituents in Richmond Hill. Thank you very much.

I appreciate the opportunity to speak about the Auditor General's report yesterday. Our government for the people was elected in June to get Ontario back on track, and we do have a lot to fix. The Auditor General's report highlights the problems that existed under the previous Liberal government. The report has served as a reminder of the previous Liberal government's mismanagement, particularly on the transportation file.

However, Ontarians elected a PC government on June 7 with a clear and transparent mandate. Metrolinx now has a new CEO and a new chair. This marks the beginning of a new Metrolinx, and our government is excited and already working with them to get the people of Ontario moving.

1150

Mr. Speaker, we have a plan to accomplish our many tasks ahead of us, and I look forward to further sharing information in the supplementary.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Supplementary?

Mrs. Daisy Wai: Thank you, Minister of Transportation, for that response. It is no surprise that the Auditor General's report criticizes the interference in Metrolinx under the previous Liberal government, which the NDP continuously propped up.

However, Premier Ford campaigned on a commitment to build better transit, and Ontarians answered by overwhelmingly electing a PC majority government. We want to achieve the best value for the customer, the Ontario taxpayer. We're investing in the people of Ontario. We will provide transit service that makes sense.

Our government is partnering with the private sector to seize opportunities to build transit that best serves the people in Ontario. Can the minister share with the members more on the government's plan to get Ontarians moving?

Hon. Jeff Yurek: Thank you again for that question. Mr. Speaker, our government for the people has a transit plan that will get Ontarians moving while saving money. As the member stated, we're working in conjunction with the private sector to seize on opportunities like transit-oriented development.

Mr. Speaker, the Mimico GO station is a prime example of this already at work. It's a brand new station with a parkway and a greenway, and it's all paid for by the developer. This also promotes and creates mixed-use communities around stations, which means people get to and from their homes easily, and it allows more time with friends, family and loved ones. This saves taxpayers money and gets new stations built.

Going forward, these are the kinds of great partnerships our government for the people will be looking for as we do each transit project. The days of Liberal cabinet ministers politically interfering and mismanaging transit files are over, Mr. Speaker. Ontario has turned the corner. The days of building transit and the days of being transparent are back in Ontario.

MENTAL HEALTH AND ADDICTION SERVICES

Ms. Bhutla Karpoche: My question is to the Minister of Health and Long-Term Care. The Auditor General's report showed that 36% of Ontario Works recipients are experiencing mental health issues, addiction and homelessness, which act as barriers to employment.

Our mental health care system, addictions services and housing are failing to provide people with the support they need to get their lives back on track. With this government cutting \$330 million from mental health and addictions services, can the minister explain how that will help OW recipients rebuild their lives?

Hon. Christine Elliott: I thank the member for the question—this is a serious concern—but I disagree with the premise. What we are doing is adding significantly to the mental health and addictions system with a commitment of \$3.8 billion over 10 years, which is going to address, across the spectrum, the care needs of people with mental health and addictions issues in Ontario. This is a significant increase that is going to deal with issues like housing, with timely access to treatment, with making sure that we can deal with addictions issues across the province.

That is what I disagree with, with your question, but I do agree that we do need to make this a priority. That is what we did make a priority during our election promise to the people of Ontario, and that is what we are going to follow up on. We are going to develop and implement a coordinated and comprehensive mental health and addictions system.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Supplementary?

Ms. Bhutla Karpoche: Back to the minister: People on OW who are living with mental health and addiction issues need the support from this government to rebuild their lives. What they don't need is a government paying lip service to tackling the problem while making the problem worse by restricting the definition of disability for ODSP recipients, virtually ensuring people with mental health and addiction issues will have a harder time getting the support they need, or by cutting \$330 million from much-needed mental health services.

How can the minister justify taking actions that will make life harder for people with mental health and addiction issues while claiming to help them?

Hon. Christine Elliott: Well, Mr. Speaker, through you, I must say that I disagree with the entire premise of that question, because what we are doing is trying to help people with mental health and addiction problems. We want to make sure that they can get out of poverty. We want to make sure they have housing. We want to make sure they can find employment.

These are significant challenges that people are facing, and we are going to deal with them by engaging in a series of consultations. I would be happy to speak with you about it to get your ideas. We need ideas from all of the people of Ontario, but we are going to make sure that we speak with people in this Legislature. We're going to speak with health care stakeholders. We are going to speak to the people of Ontario and directly speak to people with lived experience, because they are going to tell us what they need. And we are going to make sure they get the services they need to deal with their mental health issues, to deal with their addiction issues. That is going to be my priority for the next number of months until we make sure we get it right and we can implement it as quickly as possible.

CONSUMER PROTECTION

Mr. Michael Parsa: My question is to the Minister of Government and Consumer Services. Yesterday, the Auditor General released her 2018 value-for-money audit of the Technical Standards and Safety Authority, the TSSA. The auditor revealed a number of shocking and concerning issues with the TSSA's operation that the previous Liberal government ignored for 15 years. The report revealed that the TSSA had oversight processes that were ineffective in ensuring public safety for Ontarians, nor had the TSSA had fulfilled their legal responsibilities. In fact, the auditor said that the TSSA portion of her report was the part that concerned her the most.

From rollercoasters to elevators to pipelines, we must ensure that public safety is our top priority. Can the minister inform the Legislature on how we can correct the numerous problems caused by the lack of government oversight over the last 15 years of Liberal reign?

Hon. Bill Walker: I'd like to thank my honourable colleague from Aurora–Oak Ridges–Richmond Hill for the question. My colleague is correct: The Auditor General's findings are disturbing and unacceptable. What the damning report revealed is 15 years of the previous Liberal government abdicating its oversight responsibility, leaving issues with the TSSA unaddressed and, most importantly, the safety of Ontarians at risk.

Unlike the Liberals, who dissed the AG for holding them to account and doing her job, we welcome her report. We welcome the feedback and recommendations on strengthening operations at the TSSA. We are taking decisive action to address these issues. Within an hour of the release of the report, I requested the TSSA board to come back to me with a report and recommendations by January 31, 2019. We will

work very closely with the TSSA on implementing the Auditor General's recommendations. We are currently examining options on improving elevator safety and availability and oversight, especially in the TSSA. I want to ensure the people—

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

Mr. Michael Parsa: I want to thank the minister for his response and for the work that he and his ministry colleagues are doing to get the TSSA back on track.

These findings are disturbing. It shows the Liberals were asleep at the switch throughout their 15 years in power and failed in ensuring the TSSA was doing its job. The Auditor General has found a long list of areas where the TSSA was not fulfilling its role and where the Liberal government was not fulfilling its oversight role. These range from numerous safety concerns around elevators, lack of record-keeping for propane storage, to issues with the upholstered and stuffed articles program.

My question for the minister is: How can we correct the numerous failures of the previous Liberal government and put the safety and security of Ontarians back at the centre of TSSA's mandate?

Hon. Bill Walker: Again, thank you to my colleague for a very important and pertinent question.

Unlike the previous Liberal government, we view independent oversight as a cornerstone of ensuring accountability and transparency in government. The auditor's findings are very, very concerning to our government. The people of Ontario need to feel very comfortable and safe when they walk into an elevator, go on a roller coaster—

Interjection: Like Mitch.

Hon. Bill Walker: —or work with boilers and pressure vessels. Like Mitch, of course.

Why, for 15 years, did these issues not get addressed by the Liberals? Why did they abdicate their responsibility? This is simply unacceptable. Action is the difference. We're going to take action. We're going to get right to business, Mr. Speaker. That is exactly what we're going to do.

1200

As I said earlier, I have asked for a report by January 31, 2019, and an implementation plan to take action. I'm also seeking more rigour in the chief safety officer's performance.

Mr. Speaker, I want to assure the people of Ontario, who have given us the privilege to serve them, that their safety is our absolute priority.

SCHOOL FACILITIES

Ms. Teresa J. Armstrong: My question is for the Minister of Education. This week, I received a letter from the Minister of Education regarding funding for the Thames Valley District School Board. The minister said in one breath that all the money remains in place and those projects will move forward, and then in the next breath she said the boards now must submit appropriate designs that fit within the ministry's benchmarks.

Would the minister inform the House what the new benchmarks are that the Thames Valley District School

Board has to now meet in order to move forward with long-planned upgrades and repairs?

Hon. Lisa M. Thompson: Speaker, I'm pleased to respond to the member opposite. I have to share with you, as well, that the Minister of Transportation has done a wonderful job tracking this issue for the community in the London area—great work.

In terms of where we need to go in these repairs and the upgrades that are required in the schools, we are working with the school board, and our capital branch has been very explicit with regard to what the school board needs to be doing in terms of not only sharpening their pencil but also making sure they're making decisions that best equip a safe and secure, supportive, learning environment.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Supplementary?

Ms. Teresa J. Armstrong: Speaker, although the minister indicates there is no holdup in the funding, the money has not flowed, and the letter said that the board needs to submit several new plans.

Minister, Thames Valley District School Board has yet to receive the funding they were promised. That is literally the definition of a delay.

When will the minister be clear with the school boards and tell them what new hoops they need to jump through in order to get the funding that they were promised?

Hon. Lisa M. Thompson: Again, I referenced the Minister of Transportation earlier, and I think he would concur with me when I say that when the new board and the trustees are in place, that's when we're going to see a lot of movement take place.

The fact of the matter is, our capital branch has been very explicit about what Thames Valley needs to be doing in terms of accessing the allotted money that is waiting for them to move forward with their schools.

CHRISTMAS TREE INDUSTRY

Mr. Parm Gill: Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs. This week, we celebrate National Christmas Tree Day. The Canadian Christmas Tree Growers Association have declared the first Saturday in December as National Christmas Tree Day.

Buying Ontario trees generates \$11.3 million in sales for Ontario farmers and related businesses every year. Almost everywhere in North America, and certainly in Ontario, Christmas trees are grown as crops on tree farms.

Families in my great riding of Milton and across this province look forward to getting together and travelling to their local Christmas tree farm throughout this month to pick the perfect tree for their home.

Can the minister please tell us why shopping locally for a real Christmas tree during this Christmas season is important?

Hon. Ernie Hardeman: I thank the member from Milton for the question. Each year, nearly 625 Ontario Christmas tree farms produce more than one million Christmas trees. As the member mentioned, buying Ontario trees puts \$11.3 million into the provincial economy every year. The

Christmas tree industry employs thousands of Canadians, not only on farms, but also in transportation and retail.

I had the opportunity to visit the Toronto Christmas Market with our Minister of Natural Resources and Forestry and my parliamentary assistant last week, where we got to see the giant Christmas tree at the market and celebrate the occasion with some of our Christmas tree carols.

I encourage everyone to buy a real, local Christmas tree this holiday season and support Ontario farmers, who work so hard to bring the very freshest fir, pine and spruce Christmas trees to your family each year.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Supplementary?

Mr. Parm Gill: I want to thank the minister for encouraging everyone to shop local and support their local Christmas tree farmers this holiday season.

For every Christmas tree harvested for the holidays, two new ones are planted to regenerate Ontario tree farms. Christmas trees are among the most environmentally friendly crops, because trees are harvested only after 10 years. To ensure future harvests, 90% of the farms must remain in trees all the time.

Can the minister please tell this House how else our government for the people is supporting families and farmers in this Christmas tree industry?

Hon. Ernie Hardeman: I could, Mr. Speaker, but I think the Minister of Natural Resources could do it much better. I'll refer it to him.

Hon. John Yakubuski: I want to thank the member for his question as well.

I'd like to take this opportunity to commend the Minister of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs for his hard work in promoting Ontario's homegrown Christmas tree industry. Many of us have cherished memories of Yuletide spent around the Christmas tree, and the smell of a fresh-cut balsam or pine is often enough to remind us of that special time of year when we gather with family and friends.

The Ministry of Natural Resources and Forestry is pleased to support our Christmas tree industry through Ontario Wood, a partnership with the broader forestry sector that promotes their products, whether they be building materials, furniture, finishing pieces, artisan products or a beloved Christmas tree.

I'd like to encourage everyone to get a natural tree, and wish everyone a happy National Christmas Tree Day, a very merry Christmas and a happy and healthy new year.

FOREST INDUSTRY

Mr. Michael Mantha: My question is to the Minister of Energy, Northern Development and Mines, and Indigenous Affairs. Minister, let me frame this for you—we've spoken about this quite a few times over the last couple of weeks: There is a mill, a stagnant mill, that has been idle in Chapleau for quite some time. There has been an Indigenous component of interest to it. There has been an industry component of interest to it. NOHFC have released their interest to it, causing a bid. The bid went out. There are two competing entities that are looking for it right now.

At this point in time, a salvage is what is going to be done with this mill. You know and I know what that means for the community: loss of opportunities, loss of jobs, and loss of development and growth for this community in Chappleau.

Northern Ontario is very strong in the forest industry. We need your help with this one. What is this government going to do instead of letting this mill go into a salvage?

Hon. Greg Rickford: I appreciate the honourable member's question. This was brought to my attention last week, and our officials are following up on this. We're focused on a strategy for northern Ontario that will open us up for business. Stagnant for more than 15 years, the decade and a half of darkness left many mills, many resource operations, shut down for extended periods of time—high energy costs. We now have, clearly, a skill set, skilled tradespeople to go in and work in many of these places.

I can assure the member opposite that, with the Northern Ontario Heritage Fund and our commitment to being open for business, we'll take a serious look at any opportunity in northern Ontario, in particular as they pertain to opportunities with Indigenous communities partnering with the private sector to create good jobs for all communities across northern Ontario.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Supplementary?

Mr. Michael Mantha: Minister, look no more: The opportunity is knocking at your door. There is an industry here that is looking at getting this going. They're waiting for you to come to the table. Don't let this opportunity pass you by. Come to Chappleau. Come meet with the industry. Meet with the local people that are there that are willing to make this work.

I know the member from Timmins has crossed the floor many times to talk to you. I've walked across the floor and mentioned it to you. This is an opportunity that we cannot miss. I don't care how we get it done. I don't care who comes there to cut the ribbon. Let's get this deal done. Don't pass up this opportunity.

1210

Hon. Greg Rickford: It's true they walk across the floor—so many times it makes me think they want to stay.

I'll tell you who is knocking at my door: people in the forestry sector and in the mining sector who are tired of red tape, who are tired of high taxes and who can't afford a job-killing carbon tax. We drive larger trucks for longer, farther distances, and the opposition is calling for a carbon tax to be the highest in the world. I can guarantee the member opposite and all of his colleagues that we're committed to opening northern Ontario for business.

As I close, Mr. Speaker, in particular I would like to wish all of my northern Ontario colleagues not just a merry Christmas, but safe travels across our vast and beautiful ridings.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): That may have been the final question period of 2018.

NIAGARA REGIONAL CHAIR

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): I understand the member for Niagara Falls has a point of order.

Mr. Wayne Gates: Yes. On a point of order: My colleague, Jennie Stevens, and myself have just found out that Jim Bradley, who was our colleague here and sat in this House for over 40 years, has been elected the new regional chair of Niagara. I just want to say congratulations. We look forward to working with him.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): I understand the member for Ottawa South would like to speak to the same point of order.

Mr. John Fraser: I can confirm for this House that Jim Bradley was indeed a Liberal. I know he crossed party lines, and I know that the government is looking forward to him taking his position as regional chair in Niagara. Merry Christmas.

SUMAYA DALMAR

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Point of order. The member for Toronto—St. Paul's.

Ms. Jill Andrew: Today, on December 6, the National Day of Remembrance and Action on Violence against Women, I'd like to say the name of a beloved member of the Black queer community—my community—in this House. Her name was Sumaya Dalmar, a Black Somali Muslim transgender woman who experienced anti-Black racism, Islamophobia and transphobia. I wish all of you got a chance to meet her. Her beauty and brilliance would have filled any room she was in.

She died suspiciously on February 22, 2015, in Toronto. Her death remains unsolved. Sumaya Dalmar's life mattered. Thank you.

NIAGARA REGIONAL CHAIR

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): The member for Niagara West.

Mr. Sam Oosterhoff: I wish to add my voice—I can assure you that Mr. Bradley did not sit with our caucus, but I had the opportunity to serve with him, in opposition, and I look forward to serving with him for the good of Niagara.

VISITOR

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): The member for Toronto Centre.

Ms. Suze Morrison: I'd like to warmly welcome to the Legislature my very best friend in the entire world, who goes back to high school with me, Tiia Merikallio. Thank you for joining us today.

LEGISLATIVE PAGES

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): It is now time to say a word of thanks to our legislative pages. I would ask them to assemble.

Applause.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): It is my privilege to say a few words. Our pages are smart, trustworthy and hard-working. They are indispensable to the effective

functioning of the chamber. They cheerfully and efficiently deliver notes, run errands, transport important documents throughout the precinct and make sure that our water glasses are always full. We are indeed fortunate to have them here.

Our pages depart, having made many new friends and with a greater understanding of parliamentary democracy and memories that will last a lifetime. Each of them will go home and carry on, continue their studies and will no doubt contribute to their communities, their province and their country in important ways.

We expect great things from all of you. Maybe some of you some day will take your seats in this House as members or work here as staff. We wish you all the best, and thank you again for serving as pages.

42ND PARLIAMENT

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Before we recess the House, I have something that I want to say to all of you before I extend my Christmas greetings, and it's a good thing you're sitting down.

Today is, in effect, the last day of the first sitting of the 42nd provincial Parliament of the province of Ontario. To paraphrase the greatest parliamentarian, Winston Churchill, we are a long way from the beginning of the end of the 42nd Parliament, but at least we have come to the end of the beginning.

This year, 2018, has been a very challenging year for all of us, members and staff alike: the frantic months leading up to the June 7 election; the early resumption of the House after the election was over; and the special summer sitting, which quickly blended into the fall sitting, with members and staff learning their new duties and responsibilities and having had little time to prepare.

For all of us in this Legislature, the demands of our roles can seem relentless, the days long and hard and the challenges insurmountable. Yet each working day, all of us on both sides of the House seek to make progress toward the goal that motivated us to run for office in the first place, that being the desire to build a better province in our time and for the generations to come. While we may differ on how to best achieve that goal, broadly speaking we all share it. We are not enemies across the aisle. We are colleagues; we are parliamentarians. That is the basis upon which we should debate the issues before us.

The people of your ridings have entrusted each of you to come here to represent them and speak on their behalf. In turn, your work here is only possible because of your respect for the people of your ridings who sent you here, your passion for public service and your deep desire to make a positive difference for your communities, for Ontario and for Canada. You are their voice. You are all leaders. Your commitment, your caring and your candour can validate the trust that your constituents have placed in you.

I am privileged to serve as your Speaker. Thanks again for conferring that responsibility upon me. Helping me to perform this role, I want to especially thank the Deputy Speaker; the other presiding officers of the House; our

Clerk and table staff; our Sergeant-at-Arms; the staff in the Speaker's office, Rachel Nauta and Monica Weber; and, indeed, all the staff in the Legislative Assembly who serve the people with dedication and professionalism, just as members seek to do.

We now have the chance to go home to our families and reconnect with our friends and the people of our ridings. We can also reflect upon the kinds of leaders we aspire to be and the kind of province we seek to build.

I want to wish all of you season's greetings, merry Christmas, happy Hanukkah and all the best in the new year.

This House is recessed until 1 p.m.

The House recessed from 1219 to 1300.

INTRODUCTION OF VISITORS

Ms. Suze Morrison: Today I'd like to warmly welcome to the Legislature Tiia and Varlene Merikallio, two of my closest friends. At a time in my life when I had moved back to Toronto and didn't have a place to live yet, it was the Merikallios who found me a home on one of the houseboats in the marina where they lived. Thank you so much.

M^{me} France Gélinas: Ils sont en route et ils seront ici bientôt. J'aimerais souhaiter la bienvenue à Jean-François Bélisle de Wendover, M^{me} Arianne Matte, Zéphraïm Matte, Céline Marcoux-Hamade et Stéphane Hamade.

MEMBERS' STATEMENTS

SEASON'S GREETINGS

Mr. Paul Miller: I would like to wish my constituents and the people of Ontario a very happy holiday season and a wonderful and prosperous new year. A special shout-out to my colleagues in the House. I would like also to thank the Speaker for doing his best to keep a lid on this House during a very tough session.

We should all take time this festive season of the year to remember the less fortunate. No child should go without a toy under the tree and no senior should be left alone. If someone is in trouble, they should get the help they need. People who require the basics should be able to go to the local food bank and get what they require. It is the duty of all of us, all Ontarians, to make sure those shelves are full all year round.

I would also like to thank organizations like the United Way, the Salvation Army, the Red Cross and the many other charitable organizations that, year in and year out, are there for everyone in our great country. I believe Canadians are generous, thoughtful and have kind hearts. This is proven every day by the millions of volunteers who give their time to make Canada a little better place. Thank you to all the veterans, the women and men of our armed forces, police, firefighters, paramedics, nurses and doctors who watch over us all year round.

We are all fortunate to live in this great country.

ACCESS TO NATURAL GAS

Ms. Donna Skelly: It's my pleasure to rise today to recognize our government for its efforts to increase access to natural gas in rural and northern Ontario. We've heard from people right across Ontario who say that natural gas expansion is critical to growing their businesses, to creating jobs, and to simply competing. This new program will encourage more private gas distributors to partner with communities to develop projects that expand access to affordable and efficient natural gas. It will benefit rural residents in my riding of Flamborough–Glanbrook and throughout the province by keeping natural gas costs low at no additional cost to taxpayers.

Natural gas is more affordable than electricity, oil or propane. Switching to natural gas can save an average residential customer as much as \$2,500 a year. This builds on the government's work to stand up for the people of Ontario by removing the carbon tax from natural gas bills, saving families about \$80 a year and small businesses \$285.

Expanding natural gas service will make Ontario communities more attractive. This is part of our government's plan to bring quality jobs back to Ontario and to send a clear message that Ontario truly is open for business.

THUNDER BAY GENERATING STATION

Ms. Judith Monteith-Farrell: Before I begin my statement, I want to acknowledge the National Day of Remembrance and Action on Violence Against Women. On this date in 1989, the lives of 14 women were cut painfully short in Montreal. We must never forget those who died.

Last summer, the closure of the Thunder Bay generating station was announced. This government talks a lot about creating jobs, but this will mean the loss of good local jobs. In Thunder Bay, we need more jobs, not less. This government endlessly repeats talking points about stopping waste, but this decision means that all the past investment in the generating station will be wasted.

This government also says it will develop natural resources in the northwest. When these resources come online, they will need electricity, but the generating station won't be there. There are plenty of alternate uses for the facility instead of closing it. Since it gives off a significant amount of heat, it could be used for other industries, such as local greenhouses to grow food.

Finally, the generating station uses biomass pellets. The production of these pellets is already advanced in the north. Closing the station undermines that industry. To squander a public asset is a shame. It's penny-wise and pound foolish. This government should save the generating station, not shut it down.

ARTS AND CULTURE BUSINESSES

Mr. Doug Downey: As we've heard our great Minister of Tourism, Culture and Sport say in this House, the arts and culture businesses in Ontario are significant. They

contribute 4% of our GDP. I also hope others in the area are familiar with the arts, culture and sport in their area. I expect they are.

Ontario artists remind us who we are and they show people all over the world some of our values and our landscapes. The business owners do that work for us and they draw others to Ontario to visit and spend money, and they bring their business and they make a life here because of it.

The least we can do is consume their work. As we head into Christmas, Mr. Speaker, the amount of sales that these artists rely on are important, whether it be in the art world or whether it be in the sport world. I have three ski hills in my riding: Snow Valley, Horseshoe Valley and Mount St. Louis Moonstone. If you know somebody who is hard to buy for, buy something consumable. Buy something that they can use. Buy them a ski pass, or a piece of art, or jewellery that's made locally.

It's really important that we support local, that we shop local and that we support the artists who are an expression of the creativity of those in Ontario. We play an important role as consumers to make sure that those businesses survive. I look forward to visiting my local craft shows throughout the holiday season, and as well buying from the store downstairs, which is filled with local merchandise. I encourage people to go down there and buy.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and have a wonderful Christmas.

ADDICTION SERVICES

Ms. Suze Morrison: Today, I'd like to tell you about my friend Kyla. She just celebrated her 30th birthday. Some of her family members are here in the Legislature today, and I'd like to welcome them.

Speaker, our world is darker today than it was two weeks ago, because two weeks ago we lost Kyla to an overdose. Kyla never had a plan and she didn't have a schedule. But instead of a plan, she always had an adventure, one that often strayed off the beaten path, one that was fearless and one that taught the people around her how to be brave. Kyla was the kind of person who would blow into your life like a hurricane, and before she gusted off on her next adventure she would always leave you with a story.

Speaker, it is not lost on me that we lost Kyla at the same time that overdose prevention sites across Ontario continue to fight for their very existence. These sites save lives. But the new criteria that this government has put forward are overly strict and put many of these sites in my riding at risk of losing their funding.

To every member on the government bench: I don't want any of you to tell me—or Kyla's family—how sorry you are. I ask you: Do not let Kyla become another statistic to you while you continue to ignore the epidemic of overdose deaths in this province.

CHRISTMAS COP SHOP

Mr. Dave Smith: Our police officers deal with a lot of difficult situations on a daily basis, but yesterday they got

to do something that was a lot more fun. It was the 12th annual Cop Shop in my riding of Peterborough–Kawartha. Peterborough police teamed up with Lansdowne Place mall. Officers were paired with 24 local elementary school students for a day of Christmas shopping cheer. This event began in 2005 when Constable Leanda LeVasseur formed a partnership with Lansdowne Place mall to give elementary school children a chance to do some Christmas shopping. They are selected based on need, volunteerism and academic achievement.

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Each year, kids are picked up from their schools in a limousine and taken to Lansdowne Place, where they're met by officers who become their personal shoppers for the day. They have breakfast with their new officer friends. Lansdowne Place generously donates a \$200 gift card to each child for shopping. They arrive with a list of gifts, and most of them have a map of the stores that they want to go to to buy all the things they want to get for their friends. In addition, the stores in the mall give the kids a discount on the things that they buy. Purchases are wrapped and tagged by mall staff and volunteers from the community. The day is capped off by lunch with Santa and their police officer, and then they're taken back to their school in a limousine. Each child is also given a new winter coat.

I'd like to thank Lansdowne Place mall and the Peterborough Police Service for another successful Christmas Cop Shop and everything that they do in our community.

FIGHT LIKE MASON

Mr. Taras Natyshak: I'm honoured to take a couple of minutes today to talk about superheroes. We all know about Superman, Batman, Wonder Woman and Spiderman, all of them great superheroes in their own right. We know their stories of superhuman strength, sophisticated gadgetry and unflinching morals. Today, however, I want to talk about another superhero you may not have heard of, but who was every bit as heroic as anything you'd find in the pages of Marvel or DC comic books.

Maseman burst onto the scene in Windsor and Essex county in 2015. His mission wasn't to fight crime in the streets; his mission was to fight childhood cancer. Maseman's civilian identity was Mason Macri. Mason was diagnosed with cancer when he was just two years old. With the help and guidance of his parents, Chantelle and Iain, Mason inspired our entire community to join his fight.

Sadly, on June 27, 2016, Mason succumbed to his cancer, but cancer did not win. Mason's legacy lives on in the thousands of people he inspired and the foundation created in his name. The Fight Like Mason Foundation raises awareness and funds for research and to help inspire young cancer patients with superhero-themed IV poles. I would encourage everyone to go to the Fight Like Mason website or Facebook page, to get involved, donate and, most importantly, read Mason's story and, like I have, be inspired.

I want to thank Iain and Chantelle for sharing Mason with us.

On behalf of the thousands of superhero sidekicks around Essex county and the rest of the province, we thank and send our love to the Macris and to you, Mason.

EVENTS IN KING–VAUGHAN

Mr. Stephen Lecce: I rise today to recognize some incredible constituents, organizations and events taking place in the riding of King–Vaughan.

I want to start by recognizing and thanking a dear friend of mine, Linda Pabst, who served for 24 years in the township of King and retired just a few days ago.

I want to congratulate the newly sworn-in councils from both King and Vaughan for their commitment to public service.

I also want to take this opportunity to congratulate other community activists and leaders. The Schomberg Red Wings, the atom hockey team, recently qualified for the Silver Stick tournament, North America's largest youth hockey tournament. I'm very excited about the Red Wings success.

The Trees of Giving fundraiser in King, at the museum, is giving funds towards the King for Refugees organization, supporting various individuals in need.

The Lazio Federation of Ontario made a historic \$25,000 contribution to Hospice Vaughan that is working to provide compassionate care for those at the end of life.

Finally, I want to congratulate Maria Castro, Michael DeGasperi, Altaf Stationwala and Robert Charles Wilson, all of whom received the Order of Vaughan, which is the city's highest civic honour.

Colleagues, please join me in recognizing and thanking these incredible people, these wonderful organizations, for enriching the lives of our community in King–Vaughan.

WOUNDED WARRIORS CANADA

Mr. Lorne Coe: I'm pleased to announce a new partnership forged between Wounded Warriors Canada and Whitby Fire and Emergency Services.

Wounded Warriors Canada, Speaker, as you will know, has a mission to honour and support ill and injured members of armed forces, first responders and their families, and provides a wide range of programs and services for those with operational stress injuries, such as post-traumatic stress disorder.

Now, through this partnership, Wounded Warriors will offer training to Whitby Fire in order to ensure that its members are healthy and able to perform, as they do, each day. Programs will include group therapy, animal-assisted therapy for post-traumatic stress disorder, resiliency training, education and skills transition.

This partnership will prove invaluable in ensuring that another layer of first-rate mental health care is in place in Durham region.

INTRODUCTION OF BILLS

DUNDAS VALLEY MASONIC HALL INC.
ACT, 2018

Ms. Shaw moved first reading of the following bill:
Bill Pr5, An Act to revive Dundas Valley Masonic Hall Inc.

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

First reading agreed to.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Pursuant to standing order 86, this bill stands referred to the Standing Committee on Regulations and Private Bills.

RESTORING ONTARIO'S
COMPETITIVENESS ACT, 2018
LOI DE 2018 VISANT À RÉTABLIR
LA COMPÉTITIVITÉ DE L'ONTARIO

Mr. Todd Smith moved first reading of the following bill:

Bill 66, An Act to restore Ontario's competitiveness by amending or repealing certain Acts / Projet de loi 66, Loi visant à rétablir la compétitivité de l'Ontario en modifiant ou en abrogeant certaines lois.

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

First reading agreed to.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Would the minister care to explain his bill?

Hon. Todd Smith: I would very much, Mr. Speaker. The legislation will, if passed, eliminate red tape and burdensome regulations so businesses can grow, create and protect good jobs for the people of Ontario. The amendments in the legislation will cut business costs, harmonize regulatory requirements with other jurisdictions, end duplication and reduce barriers to investment. It will create much-needed child care spaces in Ontario and drive down the cost of building important infrastructure in communities right across Ontario.

MOTIONS

HOUSE SITTINGS

Mr. Stephen Lecce: I move that, pursuant to standing order 6(c)(ii), the House shall meet from 6:45 p.m. to midnight on Thursday, December 6, 2018, for the purpose of considering government business.

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

Mr. Gilles Bisson: On division.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Carried on division.
Motion agreed to.

PETITIONS

SERVICES EN FRANÇAIS

M^{me} France Gélinas: Il me fait extrêmement plaisir de présenter ces pétitions. Je dis bonjour à Nathalie Rondeau de Sudbury. La pétition commence :

« Ensemble, résistons!

« À l'Assemblée législative de l'Ontario :

« Attendu que la décision du gouvernement de dissoudre le Commissariat aux services en français et d'annuler le projet de la création de l'Université de l'Ontario français met les Franco-Ontarien(ne)s en péril; et

« Attendu que les Franco-Ontarien(ne)s qui, jour après jour, doivent se battre pour maintenir leurs droits d'avoir accès à des services et l'éducation dans la langue officielle qui est la leur; et

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« Attendu que les Franco-Ontarien(ne)s occupent une place importante en Ontario, et méritent d'avoir leurs droits linguistiques constitutionnels respectés, protégés et défendus; »

Ils pétitionnent l'Assemblée législative de l'Ontario de :

« Rétablir le Commissariat aux services en français et remettre sur les rails le projet pour une université francophone. »

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

FISH AND WILDLIFE MANAGEMENT

Mr. Dave Smith: "To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas the ban on hunting and trapping in sections of Ontario to protect the eastern hybrid wolf was put in place without regard for the overall ecosystem;

"Whereas this ban has adversely affected the ability of the Ministry of Natural Resources and Forestry (MNR), hunters and trappers to properly manage animal populations and Ontario's ecosystem;

"Whereas this ban is no longer needed and is in fact causing more damage to Ontario's ecosystem and increasing unnecessary encounters between wildlife and Ontarians;

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

"That the Minister of Natural Resources and Forestry immediately lift the ban on hunting and trapping set in place to protect the eastern hybrid wolf."

I'll sign this petition and give it to page Shlok to take to the table.

MENTAL HEALTH AND ADDICTION
SERVICES

Mr. Wayne Gates: "We, the undersigned residents of Ontario, do hereby petition the Legislative Assembly of

Ontario that, in order to provide relief for front-line workers, Niagara needs immediate funding to operate three 24/7 mental health and addictions centres. These centres, to be located in St. Catharines, Niagara Falls and Welland, would provide treatment, resources and, when necessary, crisis services for those struggling with mental health issues.”

I'll sign this petition and give it to page Emily.

ANIMAL PROTECTION

Ms. Donna Skelly: “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...;

“Whereas the OSPCA has made itself completely unaccountable to the public by eliminating annual general members meetings...;

“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.”

I sign it and give it to Alex.

MENTAL HEALTH AND ADDICTION SERVICES

Mrs. Jennifer (Jennie) Stevens: I rise today to present this petition.

“We, the undersigned residents of Ontario, do hereby petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario that, in order to provide relief for front-line workers, Niagara needs immediate funding to operate three 24/7 mental health and addictions centres. These centres, to be located in St. Catharines, Niagara Falls and Welland, would provide treatment, resources and, when necessary, crisis services for those struggling with mental health issues.”

I fully support this petition, affix my name to it and hand it to page Ella.

BAITFISH INDUSTRY

Mr. Toby Barrett: The petition's entitled, “Against the New Baitfish Proposal.”

“To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“Whereas the Ministry of Natural Resources and Forestry has banned the harvesting of frogs and crayfish, imports of leeches, and the use of organic bait in some areas, infringing on Ontario anglers; and

“Whereas the Ministry of Natural Resources and Forestry is proposing further restrictions on the live bait industry by restricting the movement of live bait in Ontario; and

“Whereas creating zones and boundaries that are unreasonable; and

“Whereas the Ministry of Natural Resources and Forestry is trying to downsize the list of legal bait species currently allowed to be harvested in the waters of Ontario, which will result in financial loss and hardship to the live bait industry; The live bait industry has negotiated a grandfathered licence for harvesters in Ontario parks. The Ministry of Natural Resources and Forestry is proposing a five-year phase-out, which will result in significant financial losses to the live bait industry and the anglers of Ontario; and

“Whereas the proposed changes will have dire consequences on the economy and tourism in Ontario and will effectively put people in the live bait industry out of business;

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

“That the Ministry of Natural Resources and Forestry recognize and work directly with the live bait industry to revamp the current EBR proposal put forward to ensure an economic and stable live bait industry and provide a quality baitfish product for the anglers of Ontario.”

I agree with the sentiments of this petition and affix my signature.

LONG-TERM CARE

Ms. Teresa J. Armstrong: This petition was received from Susan Freeman of Perth. She is addressing the Legislative Assembly.

“Whereas the province of Ontario requires a minimum but no maximum temperature in long-term-care homes;

“Whereas temperatures that are too hot can cause emotional and physical distress that may contribute to a decline in a frail senior's health;

“Whereas front-line staff in long-term-care homes also suffer when trying to provide care under these conditions with headaches, tiredness, signs of hyperthermia, which directly impacts resident/patient care;

“Whereas Ontario's bill of rights for residents of Ontario nursing homes states ‘every resident has the right to be properly sheltered ... in a manner consistent with his or her needs’;

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

“Direct the Lieutenant Governor in Council to make regulations amending O. Reg. 79/10 in the Long-Term Care Homes Act to establish a maximum temperature in Ontario's long-term-care homes.”

I fully support this petition and give it to page Emily to deliver to the table.

PUBLIC SAFETY

Mrs. Robin Martin: I have a petition to the Parliament of Ontario to ensure the safety of residents of Ontario.

“To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“Whereas the Justin Trudeau government is not doing enough to protect the people of Ontario from convicted terrorists; and

“Whereas safety, security and peace of mind is of the utmost importance to the Ford government; and

“Whereas Ontario residents who have not been convicted of criminal acts could find themselves unable to gain access to various privileges they enjoy; and

“Whereas there are no provisions to prevent convicted terrorists from accessing privileges in Ontario;

“Therefore we, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to pass Bill 46 and disallow anyone convicted of a crime under section 83 of the Criminal Code of Canada and any international treaties that may apply from receiving:

“(1) a licence under the Fish and Wildlife Conservation Act, 1997;

“(2) health insurance benefits under the Health Insurance Act;

“(3) a driver’s licence under the Highway Traffic Act;

“(4) rent-geared-to-income assistance or special needs housing under the Housing Services Act, 2011;

“(5) grants, awards or loans under the Ministry of Training, Colleges and Universities Act;

“(6) income support or employment supports under the Ontario Disability Support Program Act, 1997;

“(7) assistance under the Ontario Works Act, 1997;

“(8) coverage under the insurance plan under the Workplace Safety and Insurance Act, 1997.”

I support this petition, affix my signature, and I will give it to page Jack to bring to the table.

EATING DISORDERS

Ms. Jill Andrew: “Petition for Eating Disorders Awareness Week.

“To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“Whereas as of 2016 there are an estimated one million people suffering from eating disorders in Canada;

“Whereas the mental health system in Ontario is fragmented and is failing to provide the necessary supports to those suffering;

“Whereas eating disorders have the highest mortality rates of any mental illness;

“Whereas an estimated 75% of young people suffering from mental illness in Ontario do not receive treatment;

“Whereas the morbidity of eating disorders is extensive and as of 2016 the life expectancy of individuals with anorexia nervosa is 20 to 25 years less than would normally be expected;

“Whereas the 2016 Ontario’s Auditor General reported that the past Liberal government spent \$10 million sending 127 youth to the United States for services not offered in Ontario;

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“Whereas that \$10 million could have helped more than 500 people suffering from eating disorders here in Ontario;

“Whereas factors like food and income security, access to housing, health care and mental health supports and experiences of systemic violence like sexism, racism and homophobia can contribute to the development and treatment of eating disorders;

“Whereas public portrayals often depict one type of body as an ideal over other diverse or different bodies;

“Therefore we, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to pass Bill 61, Eating Disorders Awareness Week Act, 2018 that would make the week beginning February 1 in each year Eating Disorders Awareness Week (EDAW).”

I proudly affix my signature and hand this to page Isabel.

ANIMAL PROTECTION

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnett): Petitions? The member for Etobicoke–Lakeshore.

Ms. Christine Hogarth: Thank you, Mr. Speaker, on the last day of this year. It’s exciting to be here.

I have a petition to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario.

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

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

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

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

“That the Ministry of Community Safety and Correctional Services work proactively with all amateur and professional dog/cat breeders, as well as consumers, with the intent to tackle confirmed animal cruelty cases in puppy/kitten mills and to educate all stakeholders about animal welfare standards.”

I am more than pleased to sign my name to this and hand it to Hannah.

AUTOMOBILE INSURANCE

Mr. Faisal Hassan: I have a petition entitled “Stop Auto Insurance Gouging.”

“Whereas some neighbourhoods across the GTA have been unfairly targeted by discriminatory practices in the insurance industry;

“Whereas people in these neighbourhoods are penalized with crushing auto insurance rates because of their postal code;

“Whereas the failure to improve government oversight of the auto insurance industry has left everyday families feeling the squeeze and yearning for relief;

“We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to ban the practice of postal code discrimination in the GTA when it comes to auto insurance premiums.”

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

CHILD ADVOCATE

Miss Monique Taylor: I have a petition that reads, “Protect the Provincial Advocate for Children and Youth.

“To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“Whereas children and youth are Ontario’s most valuable resource and deserve the best start in life we can provide;

“Whereas Ontario’s most vulnerable children and youth are too often underserved by our child welfare, mental health, youth justice and special-needs sectors;

“Whereas that lack of service can result in health challenges, lower educational outcomes, reduced opportunity, injury and sometimes even death;

“Whereas children and youth, and in particular vulnerable children and youth, often have no voice and few adults to speak on their behalf;

“Whereas the Provincial Advocate for Children and Youth is charged with the responsibility of providing an independent voice for children and youth by partnering with them to bring issues forward;

“Whereas the Provincial Advocate for Children and Youth provides a necessary focused approach, putting children and youth at the centre of all of their work, that cannot be provided by any other office;

“Whereas the closure of the Office of the Provincial Advocate for Children and Youth represents a step backwards for Ontario that will harm our most vulnerable children and youth;

“We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to direct the Doug Ford government to reverse its decision to close the Office of the Provincial Advocate for Children and Youth.”

I couldn't agree with this more, Mr. Speaker. I'm going to affix my name to it and give it to page Andrew to bring to the Clerk.

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

PRIVATE MEMBERS' PUBLIC BUSINESS

MENTAL HEALTH AND ADDICTION SERVICES

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): I'm pleased to recognize the member for Niagara Falls.

Mr. Wayne Gates: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I move that, in the opinion of this House, the government should enhance front-line mental health services in the Niagara

region by funding three 24/7 mental health and addictions drop-in centres in Niagara Falls, Welland and St. Catharines to provide early intervention, resources, support for caregivers, and crisis services for those struggling with mental health and addiction issues.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Pursuant to standing order 98, the member has 12 minutes for his presentation. Once again, I recognize the member for Niagara Falls.

Mr. Wayne Gates: Once again, thank you, Mr. Speaker. Thank you for allowing me to stand and speak today.

Before I begin, I'd like to recognize and thank a few people here today and watching at home. Here in the gallery, I'd like to thank members of Niagara United, a community group from Niagara that has put this issue front and centre. I'd like to welcome Margaret and her daughter Elizabeth, representing the Canadian Mental Health Association Niagara branch. I'd also like to say thank you to every member of the Niagara Suicide Prevention Coalition and their chair, Stacy Terry, who gave their input and worked with us to craft this motion. I'd like to thank Andrea Bozza from the Niagara Catholic District School Board for her input on this matter. I'd like to thank the Elementary Teachers' Federation local in Niagara for collecting signatures on our petition. I'd also like to thank Shaun Baylis and Kim Rossi from Pathstone for the work they did on the youth mental health piece and bringing that to our attention. I'd like to thank my colleague beside me, Jennifer Stevens, Jeff Burch and Sam Oosterhoff for having an open door with me and discussing ways we can use this funding to support all of Niagara. I'd also like to say thank you to Tara McKendrick, the executive director of CMHA Niagara, for her patience—and she needed lots of patience—with our office as we learned the best approaches to addressing this issue, and for all of her input.

Mr. Speaker, as you can see, we've worked with a lot of people on this motion. I realize that we all represent members of certain parties in this chamber, but we've gone to great lengths to remove the politics from this discussion and make this discussion about Niagara as a whole and how we can help. What we're presenting here is a need expressed to us from our community, a need we can all agree exists, and a need that must be solved by working together and across all party lines.

The stats show that this need exists. Some 70% of adult mental health illnesses begin in childhood. By the age of 40, half of Ontarians will have struggled with their mental health. Over a 12-hour period, upwards of 70% of police calls are related to mental health. Every day, three people are admitted to our hospital because of self-harm.

Mr. Speaker, this is important—I want everybody to listen to this. This stat jumped out at me: One person dies of suicide every eight days in Niagara. I believe that stat explains the need for this motion.

We're here today to talk about what we can do to help workers like these and community volunteers from across Niagara.

When I say that our region has been shaken by recent events involving mental health, I think most residents in

my community know what I'm talking about. A few short months ago we lost a young man, 19 years old, named Tanner. We spoke with his mother, Terra, and beyond the grief that she is still dealing with right now, she knows something needs to change. Recently, Terra attempted to access mental health support through victim services as she deals with the death of her son. She was told there was a waiting list. This highlights a bigger issue than just what this one motion covers. In Niagara, and quite frankly right across Ontario, we need sufficient funding for all resources related to mental health services so this never happens again.

Unfortunately, it happened again today.

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I'd like to quote Terra: "I was made aware there is a waiting list. This is why my child is no longer here."

We can't let this go on any longer. Since that news broke, we've had resident after resident call our office and say the same thing: Our government—we, collectively—must do more to ensure that everyone who needs access to mental health support can get it when they need it. This means preventive care. This means supports for friends, family and loved ones who are providing care for those struggling. This means, when necessary, crisis services.

The motion I have tabled asks this government to provide this funding on a yearly basis. The funding will ensure that we have trained staff members in St. Catharines, Niagara Falls and Welland around the clock who are always ready to help, seven days a week, 24 hours a day. Our hope is that if we do this, we can provide more preventive care that ensures residents do not feel their only recourse is to go to the hospital in a crisis. It's a place for resources and to talk with professionals to get the help they need. In costing this out, we found that this will cost around \$2.5 million. Of course, money will be saved by taking folks out of the hospital system and putting them in touch with folks who can help earlier on in the process and, most importantly, save lives. Maybe if we had had this, we might have been able to save Tanner's life at 19 years old.

The funding will open the St. Catharines and Niagara Falls sites 24 hours a day. The staff does incredible work right now, but, as it stands, the services they offer openly are not available when people are alone at night, when they are sitting at home by themselves after they've put in a day's work. So after 9 o'clock until the morning, that service will be provided for them to try to save lives, to talk to them.

This funding will also allow us to open a new site in Welland, where one currently does not exist. Think about that: We don't even have a site in Welland. Our hope is that sites across Niagara will serve all Niagara residents and the 12 municipalities. I talked to my good friend, my colleague on the other side, about this issue.

This proposal will also include transportation. Those who live in Niagara know that's important. We need the funding. That means that residents in Fort Erie, Niagara-on-the-Lake and Grimsby who do not have access to public transportation at night will be able to get the services they need to get into an office and, most importantly,

get help. Thank you to my friend from Niagara West for this suggestion. It will ensure that the residents of Niagara West have access and transportation around the clock for care as well. No matter where you are in Niagara, there will be someone at a drop-in centre ready to show you that you are not alone and that you are loved.

I'll tell a quick story. I went to Tanner's funeral. The pastor said a speech at the funeral. It was filled with young people. He was talking to the young people because there is a crisis; young people are taking their lives. He looked at them and said it didn't matter if they had addiction problems; people love them. He had to get that message across: Talk to your mom, your dad, your friends. There are people out there who love you, who are going to help you. You know what was amazing to me as I sat there as a father and a grandfather? Those young people looked at each other—some were strangers—and they hugged each other and they started to cry, because he was talking to them. They needed help. They knew they needed help. The pastor knew they needed help.

We here in this chamber have to make sure they get that help, and this motion goes a small way in getting them some help.

These facilities may not be giant complexes or massive hospitals. In most cases, there will be a few extra staff and an area for resources from our incredible group. It will be modest, but there will be help. They will save lives.

Madam Speaker, this is not a substitute for the services already offered—CMHA, Pathstone, community health clinics, distress centres, COAST, support networks set up by volunteers here today and many, many more that provide incredible, incredible services for those in need. But they can only stretch a dollar so far. We can and we must do more.

This motion takes a modest amount of the provincial budget—and I want my colleagues across to listen to this. You know what this ask is going to cost in the budget? This ask will be less than 0.002% of the provincial budget, but it will go an incredibly long way to save lives in all of Niagara. It would support our incredible front-line service workers and provide a space for community groups to centralize their services and help more people. There is so much more we can do.

As grandparents, parents, community leaders and elected officials, we can build communities where every single person knows that they are loved, where no one can feel alone and where everyone feels like they can reach out and get help when they need it. And do you know what? We can build that together.

Madam Speaker, this touches everyone—all of us. It touched me in my own life. I've seen family members and friends battle mental health. It's tough on them. It's tough on those who care so deeply for loved ones. This funding will ensure that resource centre groups can come together and provide preventive help for those struggling and help for caregivers. Part of the process is securing this funding so we have the tools available to reach everyone in time.

At the beginning of my speech, I talked about the young man we lost in Niagara who struggled to get help when he

needed it. This motion will tell Terra and tell our neighbours, our family and our friends: We're going to act together as one community. We're going to do something about this.

Madam Speaker, I guess I'm done. Thank you.

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

Ms. Donna Skelly: I am pleased to stand and speak in support of the motion from the member for Niagara Falls. I believe it is imperative that we, as a government and as politicians, do our best to help those suffering from mental health and addiction issues.

For far too long, mental health was a dirty secret, a sickness we did not talk about, an issue that affected and continues to affect families, children, seniors and co-workers.

During the election campaign, our government made a promise that tackling our province's mental health crisis would be a priority. That is why we, along with the federal government, are committed to investing \$3.8 billion to develop and implement a comprehensive and connected mental health and addictions strategy here in Ontario.

Our government will ensure that each dollar spent goes to front-line services that will actually make a difference in the lives of those suffering from addiction and mental health issues. The money will be spent on improving access to services and aid in reducing wait times.

We have to ensure that the care we provide is available to people of all ages. It's estimated that nearly 70% of mental health challenges begin in childhood or adolescence, with one in five children and youth in Ontario living with a mental health condition. Even amongst our senior citizens, nearly a third of them have mental health issues.

We must also help those who believe that suicide is the only option, because it simply is not. We in this chamber have to be part of a solution that fights the stigma behind talking about mental health. We need to be open with those around us so the people that need someone to talk to or a shoulder to cry on have the ability to get better and to live better lives. This is why wraparound services are crucial, because people need to have easy access to as much support as they require to meet their needs.

1350

As the member from Flamborough–Glanbrook, which is in the city of Hamilton, I appreciate the member opposite taking this stance in supporting mental health and addiction services in areas that are not far from my riding. As we head into the holiday season, it is incumbent on all of us to recognize the challenges facing those who struggle with addictions and mental health. Our government will continue to make mental health a priority and work towards creating an Ontario where everyone is supported on their journey towards better mental health.

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

Mrs. Jennifer (Jennie) Stevens: It is a privilege to be able to rise today and speak on behalf of the residents of St. Catharines and Niagara. I would like to thank the member from Niagara Falls for bringing this motion

forward for our three very-much-needed 24-hour mental health facilities in Niagara region.

Let me begin by sharing with you Colleen's experience with mental health issues and how they impacted her life. Colleen is a resident of St. Catharines who is here with us today in the gallery. Her son Daryl passed away in March 2015. Daryl was placed in six different long-term-care facilities during his life. He was admitted to hospital over 56 times. Daryl suffered from and had a long battle with mental health issues.

Hospitals often serve as a place to stabilize rather than heal those suffering from mental health issues. Time and time again, Daryl was told that he didn't qualify for in-patient programs. Daryl fell through the cracks.

Residents across Ontario are falling through the cracks because of the current health system and the lack of available treatment for those suffering from mental health issues. We need to bring mental health and addiction services under one roof in a facility that is open 24 hours. No one—no one—should be discharged from a hospital without receiving the care they need, no matter what time of the day or night.

We need a dedicated facility to treat all residents suffering from mental health issues and addictions. Emergency rooms throughout this province cannot solve these crises alone. The Niagara region has a suicide rate that is nearly 30% higher than the provincial average. This is a shame, Madam Speaker: 30% higher than the provincial rate. In Niagara, 14% of high school students have reported experiencing suicidal thoughts within the last year alone.

At the same time, demands for mental health services are skyrocketing. Referrals for mental health services in St. Catharines and Niagara have increased by 20% and the demand for a 24-hour mental health and addictions centre continues to climb at an enormous rate.

This government needs to listen to the people of Niagara, this government needs to listen to the front-line workers, and this government needs to listen to the families, because they are here and they are speaking loud and clear. They are here in the gallery to send a very strong message to this government: that St. Catharines, Niagara Falls and Welland need a provincially funded, 24-hour mental health and addictions centre to alleviate hallway medicine and dependence on emergency rooms and to prevent anyone from falling through the cracks ever, ever again.

The reality is that mental health incidents occur every hour and every minute of the day. Not every crisis happens during business hours, Madam Speaker. Today, we are making the government aware that adequate help is needed to provide 24-hour life-saving care within St. Catharines, Niagara Falls and Welland. This motion, put forth by the member from Niagara Falls, is not asking the government to reinvent the wheel. This motion is simply asking the government to make a firm commitment to fund a 24-hour walk-in centre for all residents struggling with mental health issues in Niagara.

This motion will save lives. It will create a preventative measure to help stop mental health episodes from getting

to the crisis point. I sincerely hope this government will do the right thing here today and give the funding that is necessary for St. Catharines, Niagara Falls and Welland to fund a 24-hour mental health resource centre, knowing this will save so many lives and prevent anyone from ever falling through the cracks again.

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

Mrs. Robin Martin: I'd like to thank the member opposite for raising this important issue in the House today.

Our government certainly does recognize and understand that mental illness is a very serious issue in our province, across Canada, frankly, and around the world. We know that it's time to take the mental health of our young people, adults and families as seriously as we take their physical health. That's why, as you all know, we've committed to a record investment in a comprehensive and coordinated mental health and addictions system—\$1.9 billion in provincial funding to match the \$1.9 billion in federal funding, for a combined total of \$3.8 billion to be spent over 10 years.

Our government, our Minister of Health and our ministry are committed to working to ensure that each dollar goes directly to the services that will make a significant difference to patients. Our funding will go toward direct front-line care, reduced wait times and improved access to mental health services for Ontarians.

I myself went to Peterborough earlier in the year, with my friend here from Peterborough–Kawartha, to look at a program run by the Canadian Mental Health Association branch in Peterborough, which is dealing with people who come to hospitals who are suicidal. They have a good program there that they have designed to make sure that people don't fall through the cracks. I think that these are important initiatives that communities on the ground have taken to try to help people who are struggling with these serious issues.

We are committed to working with people, like in the community that you're speaking of in Niagara, like the people in Peterborough–Kawartha. The programs they bring forward are very important ways for us to assess what is working and actually helping people. We're hoping that everybody can work together to ensure that everyone in Ontario is fully supported in their journey toward mental wellness.

To make this a reality, our government is committed to working closely with front-line care providers, along with organizations like the Canadian Mental Health Association, Children's Mental Health Ontario, and Addictions and Mental Health Ontario, to ensure that all Ontarians get the help they need.

We have talked with Camille Quenneville, for example, the CEO of the Canadian Mental Health Association, who said, "The intent to prioritize a reduction in wait times for mental health and addictions services is evidence that this government is listening."

Adrienne Spafford, CEO of Addictions and Mental Health Ontario, has said, "For far too long there has been too much talking and not enough action on addiction and

mental health. AMHO commends the Ontario government for its promise kept on a 10-year, \$1.9-billion investment" provincially.

I look forward to working with the members opposite and all members of this House as we continue to work together to build a comprehensive and connected addictions and mental health system that works for the people across the province.

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

Mrs. Lisa Gretzky: It is my pleasure to rise on behalf of the constituents in Windsor West to talk about the motion that my colleague from Niagara brought forward. I think that if you were to talk to any of the members in this House or anybody in the gallery, somebody at some point has either struggled with their mental well-being or knows somebody who has struggled with their mental well-being, or addiction issues. I don't think any of us could say that that hasn't happened in our lives.

1400

It's really—I'm going to use the word "unfortunate" because I'm not sure what other word to use that would be considered parliamentary—that the member from Eglinton–Lawrence went in the direction that she did in her comments after we had the member from Niagara Falls just share, quite frankly, a heartbreaking story about how this government and the one before them have failed so many people in this province—have failed Tanner.

I have a constituent—not just a constituent, I will be honest with you, but a family member—someone in their early twenties, who went to hospital, to the emergency room in Windsor, and said, "I feel like I'm going to take my own life. I want to be admitted." And do you know what she was told? "Here are some pills. Go home."

We talk about people reaching out, how important it is for them to reach out to the people around them, to look for help, to get help. But what this motion is pointing out, and what every one of these organizations from the Niagara region is saying in backing up this motion, is that the resources are not there for people when they reach out. Reaching out is a huge, huge step, and people should do that.

As a mother, I'm not a professional, so I want to know that if one of my kids comes forward and struggling, there are professionals out there and available and that my kid isn't going to get put on a wait-list for supports and services when they are telling you today—today—that they don't want to carry on with their life.

On the weekend of November 10 in Windsor, there were 34 drug overdoses—34. Four of those people died because they didn't have access to the supports and services that they need.

It's fine if the government wants to stand up and talk about how wonderful they are and what they are doing—

Applause.

Mrs. Lisa Gretzky: The member from Eglinton–Lawrence really shouldn't applaud that, because the reality is that people are dying in this province because there isn't enough support when people reach out.

Interjection.

Mrs. Lisa Gretzky: It's not a misrepresentation. Four people in my community died—

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Jennifer K. French): I will remind the members to come to order.

I've heard unparliamentary language now from both sides. I will ask both members to withdraw.

Mrs. Robin Martin: I withdraw. I don't know what I said that was unparliamentary.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Jennifer K. French): The same thing that the member from Windsor West repeated and will withdraw.

Mrs. Lisa Gretzky: I'll withdraw.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Jennifer K. French): I'll return, please, to what I hope will be respectful debate.

Mrs. Lisa Gretzky: Thank you, Madam Speaker.

The fact is that this current PC government has cut mental health funding province-wide by \$330 million a year.

I want to point out a statistic that I got from the president from our hospital in Windsor, Hôtel-Dieu Grace Healthcare. She gave it to me last night. This hospital focuses on mental health and addictions. Across this province, 10% of the health care budget, or "burden," as they call it, the disease burden, is directly related to mental health. Ten per cent of the health care budget is taken up by mental health supports. The government funds 7% of that.

The government could be doing better, and they should be doing better, and they should support this motion, and then they should listen to every other member in this House who stands up for their community and says, "We need more. Our constituents need more."

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

Mr. Sam Oosterhoff: I listened intently to the comments from the members opposite. I also want to say that I appreciate not only the sentiment that the member for Niagara Falls is expressing in this motion, but I also do agree with the intent and the action behind it.

I think if we look into the eastern and southern tiers of the region, there is great need, as there is great need in Niagara West. I always have to speak particularly for the action of Niagara West in that.

There were a lot of differences in a lot of areas during the last provincial election—philosophical differences—about the role of government, the role of the state and the role of the private sector. We had a lot of disagreements. But this was an area that, whatever party you were participating in, we agreed that there was more action that needed to be taken under mental health and promoting not only awareness of mental health, because we've had a lot of talk about mental health, but making sure we have those resources in place, that when young people such as my peers—and not just young people, but people from every walk of life and every background and every age demographic—come forward, they have the supports that they need.

I'm very proud to be part of a government that is investing billions of dollars into mental health. Quite

frankly, contrary to a little bit of the spin on the other side, I do think that is something that is very important to us on this side. We recognize not only from an upstream approach that will reduce the amount of people who end up in emergency rooms but really just from a humanitarian perspective that it's the right thing to do, to invest in mental health and make sure that it's treated no differently than we would treat any other kind of health. I know my constituents are grateful to see that we're taking this seriously and that it's a non-partisan issue that all members in this Legislature can agree we need to see action on. I know they'll be watching this debate very carefully to see that spirit also expressed.

I do want to thank those individuals who are in the gallery here today from Niagara. I want to thank them for the work that they do. That work is so incredibly important, and often goes unnoticed and unsung, so on behalf of the Legislature and my constituents in Niagara West, thank you for your passion. Thank you for your heart. Thank you for your service. It's a real honour to be able to speak to this. I also wish to thank the families—my apologies; they're sitting behind me. But thank you very much for coming.

I just wanted to add my voice today and say to the member opposite who has brought this forward, it's great to see it being a non-partisan issue that we can all get behind.

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

Ms. Bhutla Karpoche: It's a pleasure to rise on behalf of my constituents in Parkdale–High Park and as the official opposition critic for mental health and addiction services to speak to private motion 31 on mental health supports in Niagara region, tabled by my colleague. I want to thank the member for his advocacy for his community on this very important issue. Like many places across the province, Niagara is experiencing a mental health crisis. This motion tabled by my colleague is directly a result of the call to action from his community.

Access to mental health services is an issue that significantly impacts all Ontarians, whether living with mental health illness or not. The need for mental health services is so great, and yet one of the first actions taken by this government was to cut \$330 million from mental health services. Recently, we know the government also announced that they will be changing the definition of disability, which will exclude many people from accessing ODSP. That means that many with mental illnesses won't get the additional supports that they need to address their health needs. This government also froze minimum wage, took away equal pay for equal work, and made changes to the employment standards that would have protected workers. The government is failing to provide the people with supports that they need to live with dignity, and we know that greatly impacts mental health.

Speaker, we know that it doesn't have to be this way, that a better way is possible. First we need to acknowledge that mental health is health, and, as such, the services that we provide must be within the social-determinants-of-

health framework. Medical services are absolutely necessary, but they alone cannot address the problem, which is at the core driven by social and economic factors. When it comes to mental health, the key social determinants are freedom from discrimination and violence, social inclusion, and access to economic resources. People need secure and affordable housing. They need supportive housing. People need income supports and fair employment standards laws. People need the government to work actively on addressing systemic discrimination and violence in all its forms. People need integrated mental health and addiction services that are delivered close to home, in schools, in their own communities, consistently and comprehensively.

According to the Canadian Mental Health Association, mental health impacts one in five Canadians, and we know that it has a profound impact on families and communities as well. The economic burden of mental illness is reflected in the cost to society's health care utilization, lost productivity due to absenteeism from work and long-term disability, and the deterioration of health-related quality of life, which is estimated at \$51 billion a year. Mental health illness and mental health problems are the most—

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

Mrs. Gila Martow: I want to read an email I got to my office this week. The subject was “Urgent—Mental Health Crisis at Western.”

“Hi Gila, I am writing to you today to ask for a few minutes of your time that will help make an incredibly important impact on students at my university, the University of Western Ontario, before our exam season begins this Saturday. Last year, four of our students committed suicide. Last night, one of my very close friends had a crisis and came very close to making an irreversible decision—I am fearful that there are more students in this position of high stress due to the pressure of exams, among other things.

1410

“As a social science councillor on my university student council, staying active in advocating for and promoting mental health awareness is incredibly important to me. I know that with your help, we can spread this message throughout Western even faster.

“If this message is one that you would be willing to help promote, it would mean so much if you could create and send me a very quick video ... simply reminding students that it is all going to be okay. It does not have to be edited or filmed with expensive equipment. I am simply trying to get this message out there as fast as possible during this critical time. Your impact is well-known and has an extremely positive reputation—many students here are from Thornhill, including myself. Having your voice included in this message would help spread the message....

“I recognize this is a very busy time, especially with the holidays coming up, and I am reaching out to you on very short notice. However, seeing someone so close to me struggle so deeply has created an urgent rush to help Western students put things into perspective during this

critical time. If you are able, kindly send this short video back to me by this Thursday, December 6, so that I can release it on Friday, right before exams hit....

“Sincerely,

“Nikol Kamenetsky.”

Nikol, I'm very happy to send you this link and send you the video. I want to say, not just to the students at the University of Western Ontario and not just to the students at the University of Guelph, where I have two kids, but to the students across Ontario, across Canada, across the world, that there are people who are there for you, and that suicide or self-harm is never the answer. It's not a solution.

If you don't feel comfortable going to your family, if you don't feel comfortable that there are friends, social workers on campus—even the politicians are there for you. We are there. That's why we're on social media. That's why we're here every day advocating on your behalf. We have fantastic staff in our constituency offices. If you need help, please come in; please call.

And know that, yes, sometimes we all have tough days. Anybody here in the Legislature who has been through elections knows what the meaning of “stress” is. Most of us have a university education. I did optometry at the University of Waterloo. It was very stressful, especially at the end, when we had to do board exams. Anything on the four years could be asked. We all know what it's like to go through the stress.

I know that you're going to have better days, with a smile on your face. Good luck on your exams, and happy holidays. I'm looking forward to hearing from all of you.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Jennifer K. French): The member from Niagara Falls has two minutes to reply.

Mr. Wayne Gates: Thank you very much. I appreciate that. I just want to finish up really quickly on the part that I got cut off. I went a little long.

Over the past weekend, thousands of residents signed a petition asking for this. I'm sure that more will come in the coming days.

But I think what I really want to touch on is that this didn't come from me. This came from the residents of Niagara. It came from associations that we met with: CMHA, Pathstone, community health clinics, the Distress Centre, COAST, support networks and volunteers.

Do you know what they said to me? I said, “What can we do?” We can't continue to allow our community to have young people—and some adults—jumping off the bridge and committing suicide. We need to do more. It wasn't just an idea; we talked and we talked and we talked.

Do you know what they said? They said very clearly to us, “Gatesy, what we need is a 24/7 mental health and addictions drop-in centre in Niagara Falls, Welland and St. Catharines.”

I said, “Well, how do we get there?” How do we get there so that people understand that we have a crisis in Niagara—a crisis with young people committing suicide? Every eight days, somebody is committing suicide in Niagara. Think about that.

So I said, “How do we do that?” Well, guess what I did? I talked to those organizations. I said, “I'll bring a motion

forward here.” I talked to Jennie—I know I’m not supposed to use their names. I talked to the MPP from St. Catharines, from Welland. I talked to my good friend from the PCs, Sam. I said, “This is what we need. This is what they’re asking.”

Do you know what it is, to help our young people and people who need help? It’s 0.002% of the overall budget in the province of Ontario.

We can do better. We must save lives, and we have an opportunity to do that by supporting this motion.

EATING DISORDERS AWARENESS WEEK ACT, 2018

LOI DE 2018 SUR LA SEMAINE DE LA SENSIBILISATION AUX TROUBLES DE L’ALIMENTATION

Ms. Andrew moved second reading of the following bill:

Bill 61, An Act to proclaim Eating Disorders Awareness Week / Projet de loi 61, Loi proclamant la Semaine de la sensibilisation aux troubles de l’alimentation.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Jennifer K. French): Pursuant to standing order 98, the member has 12 minutes for her presentation.

Ms. Jill Andrew: I’d first like to say and acknowledge the hard work of Taylor Burciul from Sheena’s Place; Kelsey Johnston from Sheena’s Place; Ary Maharaj from NEDIC; Kelsea McCready from Body Brave; Maylynn Quan, survivor; and Emily Tam from NEDIC, along with Julia Marren from NEDIC. These are the people that I’m standing for here today: advocates, activists, researchers, educators and parents who have been fighting this cause to get Eating Disorders Awareness Week recognized for a very long time. I’m just very thankful to be here, and I just wanted to give you a round of applause off the top. Thank you for your work.

I also must thank MPP Teresa Armstrong, London—Fanshawe, and our leader, Andrea Horwath, Hamilton Centre, for being stalworths and for bringing forward Eating Disorders Awareness Week long before I came into office. I thank you, my sisters.

There is nothing more violent than when your body turns in on itself, than when you look in the mirror and see no one there, or the person you do see you despise. There is nothing more violent than moving through a world where you are laughed at, not hired, fired, refused health care, beaten, discriminated against, bullied or harassed simply because of how you look and how others read your body.

In 12 minutes I cannot be to unpack all of the extreme, complicated, devastating and nuanced realities of what eating disorders and other body-image-related issues are, how they present, and the impact they have on girls, women, diverse people from all walks of life, their loved ones and caregivers. However, I do hope to draw on some experts and service providers, and most importantly, the

words of survivors who have lived experience and who have courageously been on the front lines, fighting to have the first week of February recognized across Ontario as Eating Disorders Awareness Week, as I’ve said before, since well before my time in this House. Of course, I end with the words of survivors, because they are truly the most important and the ones that we must all leave here today with their voices ringing in our ears.

Ontario has a chance to join British Columbia, Alberta, Nova Scotia, Saskatchewan, Manitoba, Newfoundland and Labrador and the Yukon in proclaiming Eating Disorders Awareness Week. We have a chance to join 74 municipalities in Ontario that have recognized EDAW by issuing proclamations.

Eating disorders are a range of conditions expressed through abnormal or disturbed eating habits. Eating disorders are mental illnesses marked by a problematic and often obsessive relationship with food, weight, one’s physical features and body shape. In conjunction with eating and/or body-related problems, people living these realities often battle feelings of worthlessness, inadequacy, low self-esteem and isolation. These feelings are not in people’s heads; they are real.

Contrary to popular belief, anorexia nervosa and bulimia nervosa are not the only ones. There are several EDs that people are walking around, struggling, surviving and trying to thrive with. It’s estimated that 1,000 to 1,500 Canadians per year die as a result of EDs, the most deadly of mental health illnesses. Approximately 420,000 Ontarians—and some estimates put it at up to 500,000 Ontarians—suffer from EDs, and more than one million across Canada.

That’s only those who have been diagnosed. The numbers are likely much higher because, as we know, some people are afraid, some people don’t know where to access information or resources or supports, and some, quite frankly, have been shunned. Others have experienced racism and transphobia, for example, at the hands of service providers. Recognizing how the social determinants of health, stereotypes and structural inequities impact people’s ability to get treatment before it’s too late is critical to this conversation and validates why formally recognizing EDAW will help to create environments that will foster the conversations that we need to increase education awareness and therefore intervention strategies.

1420

We can’t saddle families, in some cases, with \$110,000 a month for care. Ontarians deserve better. They can no longer be let down. It is alarming that in 2016, Ontario’s Auditor General reported that the previous Ontario government spent \$10 million sending 127 youth to the United States for services because they just weren’t offered here. That same \$10 million could have helped 500 people suffering from EDs right here in our home.

It doesn’t have to be this way. We must raise more awareness in Ontario about eating disorders, eating problems and body and weight preoccupation. We cannot allow people to suffer in silence anymore. Passing Bill 61 is a huge step in the right direction, a step that we can all take together today.

Bill 61 is important to me because of my own difficult history with my body. As a child, I had experienced my own fat-shaming and body policing by well-meaning loved ones. As a kid and now an adult with chronic gastric health issues, my relationship with food and reconciling with the fact that, more times than not, eating brings me pain and discomfort is something I've had to battle with. To eat is to hurt, to eat too much is to strain, and to not eat or to not eat enough is to have my daily medication fail, have little energy and potentially relapse back into hospital. It's a vicious cycle where a win in either scenario always seems elusive to me.

Sheena's Place, based in Toronto, helped me find my body again in my early twenties. There I was, the life of the party, an A+ student in teachers' college, beaming with outward confidence but inward emptiness because of my own body vigilance. I stumbled on Sheena's Place, walked into programming sessions facilitated by Zahra Dhanani, a queer brown woman, and I walked out seeing myself on a journey towards wholeness.

The theme of eating disorders can't afford to wait. I can't say that enough. Eating disorders just can't wait. Our communities can't wait. Our parents, our kids, our educators—everyone who wants to raise awareness about Eating Disorders Awareness Week cannot wait. By grade 10, 21% of girls are already engaged in weight-loss strategies, and over 90% of them already hate at least three parts of their bodies.

We can't allow things to be this way. As I said, Ontarians deserve better. We must make Eating Disorders Awareness Week recognized throughout Ontario.

I share some words from some of the amazing people I've had a chance to speak with and hear from through letters, through voicemail, through email, through all types of ways.

Tierra Hohn is a young woman in her twenties who fought anorexia nervosa for seven years—a Black woman. She spoke so adamantly this morning about the fact that Black women get eating disorders too. It's not some sort of a situation that only impacts Caucasian women, or any other stereotype. It really doesn't discriminate. Luckily, she was able to get support, but Tierra is more concerned with those who don't get support.

Stephanie (Ivory) Conover said, "I truly believe that in my formative years, had there been more awareness and advocacy, I would not have had such a vicious battle with bulimia and depression." Also a biracial woman, she, as a teen, tried to commit suicide. Thank God she wasn't successful.

I cannot speak enough about the way that we need to broaden the definition of eating disorders. We need to include body-image issues, weight issues, weight preoccupations, body shaming—it's all part of the same part and parcel, where we are judged by our bodies and our bodies become what we see as our value, when there is so much more to life than that.

Karen McBoyle is just hoping that her daughter will live long enough to see Eating Disorders Awareness Week recognized. The funding, she complains, is not enough for

eating disorder awareness. Treatment centres are not enough. And she stresses that it's not a choice. No one chooses to see their body ravaged. No one chooses to be body-shamed or laughed at by a society that has very stifling beauty and body image ideals.

I will end with an excerpt from Amy Preskow's personal story. Amy Preskow is the daughter of Len Preskow from NIED. I will read just a few of her lines:

My Eating Disorder Is Not....

It's not a diet nor a lifestyle or a senseless teenage phase
It's not stupid, it's not silly nor the latest weight loss
craze....

Telling an anorexic to "JUST EAT" is like expecting a
deaf person to JUST TALK

Telling a binge eater to "JUST STOP"

Is like demanding a paraplegic to JUST WALK....

If you think this is a ridiculous phase or that we'd be
fine if we "just tried"

Then explain to me the shocking rate of sufferers
committing suicide

If ED's were just a stupid choice or you think that we're
just lying

Then why are millions desperate for help while millions
more are dying?

I cannot say enough how necessary it is for us to join our friends across this wonderful nation in making the first week of February recognized formally as Eating Disorders Awareness Week across Ontario. By doing this, we are helping to save lives. We are saying yes to addressing mental health issues. We are saying yes to ensuring that eating disorders and body image issues and body and weight preoccupation issues are resourced, have treatment centres, have service providers who look like the communities they are serving, who are diverse, who come from all racial backgrounds, who come from all genders, and who come from all walks of life. As people have told me, and as I know from my own personal experience, eating disorders do not discriminate.

Nobody chooses to have this issue. But what we can choose to do is to help bring awareness, education, intervention and action.

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

Mr. Vijay Thanigasalam: I appreciate the opportunity to speak to this proposed legislation, Bill 61, An Act to proclaim Eating Disorders Awareness Week.

Eating disorders, or eating problems, are really something that affects many Ontarians without discrimination. It affects people regardless of their age, gender, race or religion. I would guess that almost everyone here in this Legislature today knows someone—a friend, family member or colleague—who struggled with an eating disorder at some point in their life. Perhaps they are still struggling with it.

Proclaiming an eating disorder week would help to bring this important issue to the forefront. With so many people living with this problem, it's important that we, as

a society and as a government, recognize it. That way, we increase awareness and the conversation around eating disorders so that some of the stigma can be removed—so that information can reach those suffering with an eating disorder problem and they know that they are not alone. It is an issue that can affect anyone, anywhere, at any point in their life. Madam Speaker, the consequences can be mentally and physically traumatic, and even deadly.

The resources for the treatment and prevention of eating problems need to be more accessible to all, and proclaiming an eating disorders week would help them with that.

While I may not agree with many of the policy ideas from the member from Toronto—St. Paul's, I will say that I commend her on this piece of proposed legislation. This issue should be non-partisan and something that the government members, as well as members from the opposition and independent members, should support. I will be supporting this proposed legislation, and I urge my fellow colleagues to do the same.

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

1430

Mr. John Fraser: I want to thank the member from Toronto—St. Paul's for bringing this bill forward. More importantly, I just admire her for her courage to be able to stand up and talk about her struggle. It's an incredible thing. It's not easy to talk about that.

Eating disorders are a pernicious disease. They don't let go. They don't let go easy. I have some experience with this as well, because our oldest daughter, Kirsten, had an eating disorder right in the middle of university. It was a real struggle. It was a Gordian knot, trying to understand the wilfulness, the physical effects, the emotional effects and the inability as a parent—Kirsten and I are best friends. We're only 19 years apart in age. When she grew up, we became very good friends. When she was 21, I was 40. It was like seeing my best friend and not being able to break through. Some of us may have had some experience with that.

Making sure that families know that that they're not alone and making sure that those who suffer are not alone—Kirsten is well. It took some time. It even took time after we thought that things were done, and I think that every once in a while it's still a challenge. She's got two kids right now. I'm saying these words on behalf of her, because I am sure that she would love to have the opportunity to stand up and say that here. But she'll have to wait a while before she takes this seat if, in fact, that's what she wants to do—hopefully not.

This isn't a partisan issue. What the member is suggesting is the bare minimum. This is a really complicated, awful disease. We're lucky. We're all lucky. Not everybody is as lucky.

The thing that I think helped our daughter was that we just stayed on the journey and just didn't give up. She didn't give up, more importantly. My dad didn't give up—very close to her. He accompanied her on that journey.

When I'm talking about it—and I don't think about it all the time, because it's 20 years ago or 18 years ago. But when I think about it, it brings it all back. It brings that sense of being alone. It brings that sense of someone you love and can't reach. They're hurting themselves. They're not doing it on purpose, and they don't want to do it. They can't get away.

There's a voice. I don't know where the voice comes from. I don't know how it got there. I know that it went away. It probably goes away differently for everybody. But we have to find a way for that voice to go away, to protect people, to protect families.

I want to again congratulate the member from Toronto—St. Paul's for her efforts, for her courage, for the things that she's suggesting that we need to do. We will never be done working on this. The first step is making sure that people know that eating disorders are a disease. They're an awful disease. They are not a choice. Anything that we can do to elevate that, to let people know, support people, support each other, is what we're all here for.

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

Mr. Joel Harden: How affirming it is to have these moments in this sitting of our Parliament. It's happened a few times that I've been here, where we come together. We make a collective acknowledgement that there is something we can do.

I'm an educator. The notion of Ontario acknowledging an education week is not trivial for me. What I've committed to do with these folks back where we are in Ottawa Centre is to screen a monumental documentary about an award-winning fitness trainer from Australia who struggled with body issues. This documentary has won awards. It has taken people through the journey of shame.

I've got to tell you, friends of mine in government, that you could offer us all an early present, whether it's for Kwanza or Hanukkah or Christmas or whatever we celebrate. I have in my mind an image of events in Toronto, Ottawa Centre, all over the province, with all of us there, a full room, where we say with one voice, "We're going to start doing something about this."

It hits me in the heart, because my partner works in this field. For 14 years, my partner has been a psychiatrist at the Children's Hospital of Eastern Ontario. Her specialty is eating disorders. I'm not allowed to know anything about clients—she has sworn a Hippocratic oath—but I see what happens to the staff. I hear about how hard it is to do your very best to help, and how this is so sadly unknown as the biggest killer, of all mental illnesses.

When I've met her friends—nutritionists, psychologists, nurses, family doctors—they all say the same thing: "We are up against this enormous stigma." If there were 20 residential beds in the province of Ontario for prostate cancer, there would be riots in the streets—and for good reason, because people with prostate cancer need treatment.

But for decades—decades—we've had a situation where a mental health crisis which has paralyzed families and crippled them with debt, traumatized people and killed people has been left to fester.

It's an honest appeal, my friends in government. And it's an honest appeal to you at home to put the pressure on us to do it. I want to see, in that week in February, events right across the province of Ontario, and I want to see all of us there. I want to see us at the front of the room with people who have survived, with people who work in the field, like our beautiful friends right over there, and I want us to commit to doing something about it. I want to commit to doing something about it.

Last but not least, I just want to end with an anecdote. I dabbled a lot in philosophy as I went through my training as an educator, and there's a lot of theory about beauty. One of my favourite moments of the press conference I was so privileged to attend this morning, that the member from Toronto—St. Paul's put on, was when various speakers talked about what beauty means. We had people from the fashion industry, even, which is a constituency I have never seen involved before—in my mind—in this discussion, talking about how we need to make sure that every body matters and people need to know: You're loved and you matter. That the fashion industry wants to take part—can you imagine these town halls in February, my friends, with not just politicians but community providers and the fashion industry? Imagine who might come. Anybody in Ottawa, check our website out. Please come.

This is an enormous opportunity. My friend from Toronto—St. Paul's, thank you for giving it to us.

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

Mr. Sheref Sabawy: I would like to express my support for Bill 61, An Act to proclaim Eating Disorders Awareness Week.

This bill is about spreading awareness with regard to eating disorders and the wide range of people in our province who suffer from them. It is a priority for our for-the-people government.

I raised two children, and I understand the pressure that young people, and for that matter, old people, face through visual culture to conform to a certain body shape or type.

Dr. Gail McVey, from just down the road at SickKids Hospital, told the Harper government's Standing Committee on the Status of Women that at any given moment, between 600,000 and 900,000 people in Canada meet the criteria of suffering from an eating disorder. That's 600,000 to 900,000 too many, Madam Speaker.

1440

By declaring the first week in February as Eating Disorders Awareness Week, we are making a few statements: firstly, a statement to the people of Ontario that we need to build a healthier relationship with our bodies; secondly, a statement that we will begin to educate people more seriously about this issue; and thirdly, and maybe most importantly, it is a statement to those currently suffering that they are not forgotten, that they are in our hearts and our prayers, and that the government of Ontario will work to lift their struggle.

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

Ms. Rima Berns-McGown: I want to begin by thanking the member for St. Paul's for this incredible initiative and the heartfelt passion, the warmth and the love that went into making it happen.

I was also at the press conference this morning, and it was an incredible honour to be there with the passionate, thoughtful, knowledgeable folks who were speaking.

I also want to shout out to Sheena's Place, and particularly Zahra Dhanani, who has become a close friend and is a constituent of mine—I want to thank her for you, because you are a very incredible person—and also, a dear friend, Kate Lum, who worked there for a long time, and who helped our family when a friend of my two daughters in high school—a vivacious, bright, creative, beautiful young woman—suddenly began to struggle with this disease.

Everybody's first reaction was, "But why? Why is this happening? You're so bright. You're so smart." She has two smart, professional parents who were always loving and encouraging. Everybody was puzzled. "Why? Why is this happening?"

It really was a journey. It was a journey that involved her family, first and foremost, but all of her secondary supports: my daughters, as her friends; her classmates; and everybody who cared dearly about her.

The struggle to understand why—what was so clear was that everyone was battling the stigma. Everybody in her life—not just the affected young woman herself, but everybody was battling the stigma. It was so clear that the journey of getting this young woman to health involved battling not just the complex monster that was the disease, but the societal stigma that we were all wrapped in. What also struck me was the waste of energy that all of us took, battling the stigma, that we could have put into supporting this young woman and supporting her family.

I really feel that this initiative, which is, first and foremost, an awareness and education piece, is critical to getting us to where we need to be as a society, so that we can put in place all of the mental health pieces, all of the medical pieces, all of the social supports and get rid of the social isolation.

I really want to stress the piece about diversity, because again, this is not a disease that discriminates. Because it is so complex, we need those supports to be culturally appropriate. We need people to see people who look like them and who understand them, in all of the aspects of the treatment that is involved. So it really must be a comprehensive piece. It has to start with awareness. It has to start with compassion.

I'm so grateful to know that this is a piece where we can come together across the aisles to make this happen for everybody. Thank you so much for letting me participate in this debate.

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

Mrs. Gila Martow: I'm very pleased to rise and to speak today on An Act to proclaim Eating Disorders Awareness Week, put forward by the member opposite from Toronto—St. Paul's.

I think we're all quite aware that there are too many in our families, in our communities across the province of Ontario, who struggle with eating disorders. It's interesting that we just finished debating mental health support specifically for young people in our communities, and this is all part of that. It's all part of that same discussion of supporting better mental health supports in our communities—and especially on our campuses, in my opinion.

We all know that a lot of it stems from unrealistic portrayals of what people should look like, which people are seeing all the time on TV, on social media and in magazines. They start to think that they should look like that, and that's problematic.

I'm reminded of my daughter when she was in grade 9 or 10. She took a Photoshop software course in high school, and that just blew her mind: how you were able to completely change somebody's body with software. She realized very, very quickly that those pictures she saw in magazines were not real people; that's not what they really look like. Between the Photoshop software, the makeup, the camera, the lighting and everything that went into that, it might as well be a plastic Barbie doll that you're looking at at the end of it. I think that was really good for her. It was an important lesson for her to see that this isn't necessarily what real people look like.

I think that it's very hard for women particularly, because they go through pregnancy and it changes their body. It's hard for them when they realize that they might never wear the clothes that they wore before they were pregnant; even if their weight might be the same, it's distributed differently as they get older and have children.

I'm reminded by the member sitting with me today from Oshawa—

Mr. Lorne Coe: Whitby.

Mrs. Gila Martow: Oh, Whitby, yes—that there is the Ontario Shores Centre for Mental Health Sciences. They have a 12-bed unit for children and adolescents. They're a leader in research and clinical treatment. They have teachers available so that the kids can continue with their studies, and therapy. A lot of it comes down to not just therapy for the patients, but therapy for the families of those patients.

I'm reminded of a woman, a mother in my community, whose daughter had to take a year or two off university because of an eating disorder. The parents went for therapy as well, and what was explained to her that she said to me was so shocking—she said to me, “Gila, I would make her pasta. I would make her spaghetti, just plain, because since she was a little kid, most of our kids loved to eat pasta. I would make her spaghetti and I just couldn't understand why she couldn't eat it. She said, ‘It's disgusting. I can't eat it.’” What the clinician told the parents is that when their daughter now looked at a plate of spaghetti, because of the starvation in her brain, her reality had changed. She saw a plate of squirming worms. It was as though they were telling her to eat a plate of live worms, because that's how her brain was processing what she was seeing.

As an optometrist, that always really stuck with me, because I understand that a lot of times what is there is not

what we see. In fact, most of the time what we see with our eyes, through the lenses, depends on a lot of things going on in the health of our eyes, but it's also the type of genetic eye tissue that we have. We are actually seeing things completely upside down, and our brains are reversing it. If you look at a model of an eye, you realize that the retina is actually processing that image completely upside down and having it reversed by the brain. We just do that so naturally because that's how we are wired.

It's a type of wiring that occurs that, I guess, gets disconnected in the brain, and they have to go through the treatment. Sometimes there are medications, pharmaceutical agents, sometimes it's just counselling, but a lot of times you cannot help a person. Once they get too weak and their brain gets too starved of nutrition, they pass that point and it's very hard to get them back. It's very important to people in our communities to recognize themselves, that the earlier you get treatment, the better chance you have of survival. A lot of eating disorders are fatal.

Thank you very much, Madam Speaker. I'm really glad we're having this discussion today, even though it is the holiday season and probably most of us have the opposite problem to not eating enough: We're eating too much. I wish everybody a happy and healthy new year, merry Christmas and happy Hanukkah, and I hope that anybody in the communities who is struggling, if they can't figure out how to get help, know to come to our offices. We are there for them, whether they are struggling with mental health issues, personal issues or even an eating disorder.

1450

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

Ms. Teresa J. Armstrong: It is my pleasure to rise today and speak in support of the member for Toronto—St. Paul's Bill 61 to declare the first week of February as Eating Disorders Awareness Week in the province of Ontario. I am so proud to see her take up the torch and fight the fight in order to make sure that is something that gets acknowledged.

I also want to thank the people who were here at her media conference this morning. I was there, and it was really, really inspiring and uplifting. To hear people tell their personal stories and share them really makes a difference to us understanding what it means to have the week of February proclaimed as Eating Disorders Awareness Week, so that we can have the piece of education and awareness as an integral part of making these issues become something that we deal with.

I want to thank the people who were here, of course, with their personal stories and the members from Sheena's Place, because the member from Toronto—St. Paul's talks very highly of that agency and the help that she got.

One of the things that the member from St. Paul's brought to light is all the intersectional items and issues that combine with eating disorders, and one of the things that I'll speak about is culture.

I'm European, and I come from a culture where food is at the source and the centre of everything. It was like the Big Fat Greek Wedding in our house when my mom and

dad were around. Everything we did was around food. There was always the idea or the nonchalant expectation that you were going to be eating when you got there, and that you would be eating a lot. When you ate a lot of the food, and when you enjoyed that meal, it was a sign that you appreciated the work that went into that meal. That was my mom's proud moment, when she thought, "Oh, I'm feeding my family." She was doing it, of course, out of love. But when you have these cultural stigmas that you should be attending these events, and that's what you do, you eat to show your appreciation. I can't imagine how hard that would be for someone that has an eating disorder.

I bring that to light because that's something that happened in my household, in the Portuguese family that we had. There was always that pressure to have that meal and eat. I myself was very disciplined in what I wanted to eat and chose the kind of meal I wanted to have, and there was always attention because everybody else filled their plate full, right? I would fill my plate according to what I could enjoy comfortably.

So I don't identify fully, of course, with the situation we're talking about today, but as you can tell, it's very prevalent in our society and it doesn't discriminate. We need to do much better than we've been doing and we need to pass the bill acknowledging eating disorder awareness. It's a very small step that I think is very doable in this Legislature, in this session, that this government can actually accomplish.

I am so proud that you took it on as your private member's bill because then it's going to go to committee and it will be in the government's lap, in their agenda to bring it forward in order to pass this very important mental health stigma that we need to acknowledge.

As we've talked about, mental health comes in many forms, and this is one that hasn't been acknowledged and brought to the surface as it should be. It's affecting thousands and hundreds of thousands of people, and we can't let them down.

I applaud the member from Toronto—St. Paul's and all the people who are here advocating strongly. I hope this will be one of the bills that goes through this Legislature to make the lives of everyone better.

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

Mr. Deepak Anand: Today, I rise to speak in favour of Bill 61, the Eating Disorders Awareness Week Act. As you know, eating disorders or eating problems are not confined to a specific segment of Canadian society. As with any illness, the broad category of eating disorders can affect people across races, age groups and socio-economic backgrounds.

Let's start with the facts. According to the National Eating Disorder Information Centre, about one million Canadians are diagnosed with an eating disorder at any given point in time. To put it in perspective, this is almost equal to the population of the region of Peel.

What is more important is that the incidence rate of eating disorders has increased two to three times since the last generation, and that is alarming. Only one in two

people report this condition for themselves or someone they know. The reason for this trend is mainly the lack of acknowledgement that it is a real medical problem, possibly due to shame or to stigma usually associated with an eating disorder.

Although there is no single cause of eating disorders, research shows that it is common for those who suffer from them to have other mental health problems, such as depression, anxiety or substance abuse. On a more positive note, 89% of people believe that eating disorders are preventable, although 33% admit that they may not be able to recognize the warning signs. There are numerous statistics on eating disorders.

Madam Speaker, I'd like also to take this opportunity to bring to your attention another topic that goes hand in hand with eating disorders: the importance of raising the awareness of healthy eating, especially among youth. I believe there is a common thread between the two challenges, and addressing one will surely help address the other as well, and hopefully help reduce the incidence of both.

I'd like to acknowledge the member from Toronto—St. Paul's, who brings this act. Thank you so much for doing it. I am happy to support this. I will be supporting it.

My intention is not to impress anyone with the facts or figures; rather, it is to impress upon you the need to tackle this challenge today. That's what we're doing in this House.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Jennifer K. French): The member for Toronto—St. Paul's has two minutes to reply.

Ms. Jill Andrew: Thank you, Madam Speaker. There are many members to thank: from Mississauga—Malton, Ottawa South, Scarborough—Rouge Park, Beaches—East York, London—Fanshawe, Ottawa Centre, Mississauga—Erin Mills and Thornhill. Thank you very much for your words of support of Bill 61 to proclaim Eating Disorders Awareness Week the first week of February throughout Ontario.

Eating disorders can't wait. Thank you to NEDIC and thank you to NIED for this powerful statement: Eating disorders can't wait. Families can't wait. The children can't wait. I see that there are kids right now in our gallery. I am certain each one of them knows someone who has been impacted by an eating disorder or has a body image issue around shape, weight or just their looks in general.

I am thankful that the entire House across party lines sees that this is not a partisan issue. As I say, this is a life-saving humanity issue. This is a matter of putting everyone first, getting the treatment we need, addressing the issues, raising educational awareness, and empowering people to have access to treatment and to find that treatment.

I really want to leave on this note of diversity as well. One of the gentlemen I spoke to—his pseudonym was Chris—is a trans man. He said to me, "Jill, make the bill stick. The bill will save lives." But he was too afraid to give his real name because of the transphobia he experiences at work. So there are so many layers to this. But I'm just glad that we know that eating disorders do not discriminate.

CAREGIVER RECOGNITION ACT, 2018
LOI DE 2018 SUR LA RECONNAISSANCE
DE L'APPORT DES AIDANTS NATURELS

Mr. Roberts moved second reading of the following bill:

Bill 59, An Act to enact the Caregiver Recognition Act, 2018 / Projet de loi 59, Loi édictant la Loi de 2018 sur la reconnaissance de l'apport des aidants naturels.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Jennifer K. French): Pursuant to standing order 98, the member has 12 minutes for his presentation.

Mr. Jeremy Roberts: I am incredibly pleased and honoured to rise today on my first private member's bill, the Caregiver Recognition Act.

When I sat down to brainstorm what I was going to put forward for my first bill, I knew that I wanted to put forward something that reflected both the challenges that my constituents back home in Ottawa West–Nepean are facing and also the values that drove me to seek election here today.

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As I've said before in this chamber, I'm privileged to represent the riding with the largest seniors' population in all of Ontario. Many of these seniors are acting as caregivers for their spouses or are relying on their children as caregivers to themselves so that they can stay in their home longer. Moreover, it has been my own personal experience as a caregiver to my younger brother, Dillon, that drove me to seek elected office in the first place.

Time and time again when I was at the doors throughout the election, I would hear moving stories about families who were in crisis, whether it was dealing with a child with a disability, a parent dealing with the struggles of dementia and Alzheimer's, or perhaps a family member or friend dealing with mental health or an eating disorder. These stories always were told to me by caregivers: by folks who were doing everything that they could in their power to care for those loved ones, and they were dealing with those tremendous burdens. And so, between all of these experiences, I knew that the topic of my first bill needed to be caregivers.

Caregivers are all around us. They're family members and friends who, time and time again, put their loved ones above themselves, often at great personal sacrifice. Whether it be a spouse caring for a spouse, a parent caring for a child or a child caring for a parent, each of these caregiving stories is playing out day in and day out. For me, my story was of a sibling caring for a sibling. When I think of my childhood with my brother, Dillon, many stories come to mind, some of them good and some of them not quite so good.

I remember that a couple of summers back he and I were driving together out to go swimming at our family cottage, which is one of my brother's favourite activities. My brother was in the backseat; I was in the front. As I was driving along, I happened to look in the rear-view mirror and I saw that all of the cars behind me were swerving. I couldn't quite figure out why. All of a sudden,

I heard this giggle behind me. I turned around to look and my brother had his hands in my tennis bag and was lobbing tennis balls out the window like miniature grenades. They were bouncing along the road and all of the cars were having to swerve. Next thing you know, I saw him reaching for my tennis racket, giving a big chuckle, and then out the window that went as well.

In hindsight, Madam Speaker, I laugh about this story, because oftentimes when you're taking care of a loved one with special needs or dementia or Alzheimer's, you have to laugh; otherwise you'd cry. But it certainly was just one story and one side of my relationship with my brother.

The much more challenging times came when he was dealing with the significant behavioural issues that come with being on the autism spectrum, with having a severe developmental delay and with having epilepsy. There were many days that my father and I would have to physically hold my brother down because he was so upset, so enraged: trying to pull out people's hair, punching holes through walls and wouldn't stop screaming. We couldn't figure out what it was that was making him so upset. I often say that if I could have one wish in this world, it would be to tear that terrible disease out of his body, but unfortunately I can't do that, and so you roll with the punches, as they say.

Both of these stories reflect a common theme, and that's that being a caregiver is a 24/7 job. You don't get to choose when you're going to be a caregiver. When you love somebody—a family member or a friend or a spouse—you will do whatever you have to, to make sure that they are cared for and that they have their needs met. My brother needs help with everything, whether it's going to the washroom, eating his breakfast, taking his medicine or putting on his clothes. With every single one of those pieces, he needs help. If it weren't for caregivers—my parents and me, our family friends—my brother certainly wouldn't be where he is today.

I had a tough moment last week when I was here in this chamber, because my brother had to go into surgery. He had had a 10-minute-long grand mal seizure, went face first into the cement and lost his four front teeth, and had to go in for dental surgery. My parents were calling me from the hospital, and I couldn't be there with my brother, which was tough for me, because I've always been with him through the tough times. But my parents told me he knew that I was there with him. I always give my brother a little beep on the nose, so they gave him a beep from me.

My experience as a caregiver shaped who I am today and why I'm standing here in this chamber, but it also took a toll, and it took a toll on my parents as well. All of us have dealt with issues with mental health, and challenges with maintaining good, healthy work relationships and friendships, because we've had to devote so much time to helping my brother.

This story—my story—is one that I've heard repeated back to me many times throughout my time as a member of provincial Parliament. I spoke to a lady recently who told me about the care that she and her husband are giving to her ailing mother, who is dealing with the devastating

effects of dementia. They told me a story. They have reached a point now where they can't leave anything edible out in their kitchen because the mother will come along and try to eat all of it. One day, she came into the kitchen and found her mother gnawing on a pumpkin that was sitting in the kitchen as a decoration. They hadn't thought about that as being something edible, but the mother saw it and off she went.

That, again, might be a bit of a funny story, but the stories that weren't quite so funny were the ones she shared with me about trying to give her mother a bath at the end of the day, and how her mother would scream and scream because she didn't want to have a bath.

These are stories that unfortunately relate to absolutely everyone. Caregivers are giving their energy, their time, their love and their care to help others, and I don't think we often take enough time to recognize that.

Rosalynn Carter, the wife of President Jimmy Carter, was a champion for caregivers. She had a wonderful quote. She said, "There are four kinds of people in the world: those who have been caregivers; those who are currently caregivers; those who will be caregivers; and those who will need caregivers." I think that quote is very meaningful, because caregivers will play a role in each and every one of our lives as well as those of our constituents.

What will this bill accomplish? This bill does two things. First, it establishes a Caregiver Recognition Day, the first Tuesday in April. That will be an opportunity for us to share stories about caregivers and their contributions, and be reminded of the important role they play in our communities.

I would be remiss if I didn't recognize the previous work of the member from Nickel Belt, the chief opposition whip, who has previously introduced similar legislation to this as well.

The second piece of this legislation was drawn from legislation passed in Manitoba, and that is that the bill outlines a set of principles about the important role that caregivers play in our communities, and outlines principles about how important it should be for government to recognize those contributions and to recognize that the health of caregivers matters as well.

Those principles outlined in this Caregiver Recognition Act will now serve to help guide future government policy. Part of this bill indicates that government ministries should take these principles into account when developing new legislation.

Is this bill a silver bullet for caregivers? No, it certainly isn't. It's a conversation-starter. It is my hope that this bill will kick-start a robust conversation on how we can better support our caregivers and recognize all that they contribute to our health care system, to our education system, to our social services system and to our communities more broadly. I hope that it will be a vanguard for future change over the next four, eight, 10 and even 20 years.

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To all of those caregivers struggling at home today: I want you to know that we here in this chamber are listening. This is a bipartisan issue that touches all of us

and that all of us should seek to support. It's my hope that someday in the future, a young Jeremy sitting at home looking after his brother will know that his government is there to have his back and support those caregivers at home.

A last thing, Madam Speaker, if I can: just a shout-out to my brother—a beep for you, watching at home. I'm always there for you.

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

Ms. Teresa J. Armstrong: I'd like to congratulate the member from Ottawa West—Nepean on his first private member's bill. It's a very exciting time.

As you can see, a lot of the things that we bring forward are driven by our experiences, perhaps personally, or oftentimes from the family members and constituents we represent, as well.

It is my pleasure to rise today and speak on caregiver recognition. Of course, the member from Nickel Belt, with the support of the Ontario caregiver association, also introduced legislation to recognize the important work that caregivers do, and I am proud of all the hard work that she has also put into this issue. We know that it's not a partisan issue; it's an issue that we all agree with. It's non-partisan, crossing party lines.

Both bills would increase recognition and awareness of family caregivers by proclaiming the first Tuesday of every April as Family Caregiver Day. The first Tuesday of April was selected to align with the motion of the Parliament of Canada.

"Family caregiver" is the term used for a family member, friend or person of choice who gives unpaid care to someone who has care needs due to a disability; a physical, neurological or mental condition; a chronic illness; or frailty of age. This is an incredibly challenging task for anybody, let alone a family member or friend.

This task is no easy feat. According to Health Quality Ontario, one third of informal caregivers are distressed, which is twice as many as four years ago. It is therefore of the utmost importance that their valuable contributions to society be acknowledged and supported.

Over 2.6 million Ontarians are caregivers to a family member, a friend or a neighbour. These caregivers devote countless hours of unpaid care to those who need it the most, and their efforts often go unrecognized and overlooked. These caregivers, however, form the backbone of our health care system.

Many of these people do not consider themselves caregivers. They believe that assisting family, friends and neighbours when they fall ill and are in need of help is simply a moral obligation to help. In today's increasingly strained health care system, the help they extend to those in need can be so demanding and stressful that it begins to take a toll on their physical and emotional health.

Caregivers need to be recognized for the important role they play and to feel comfortable to reach out for help when they themselves are in need.

In October, I brought to this House the case of the Turgeon family—Christine Turgeon, whose husband,

Marcel Turgeon, suffers from dementia. His condition worsened and he began to act abusively. They were married for 53 years. They were two elderly people at home—and of course, she’s at home 24 hours a day, seven days a week. There was some home care, but all the responsibility would lie to her when they weren’t there. That’s very difficult.

Throughout this entire period, Christine was the primary caregiver, as I mentioned. She searched for a long-term-care home for her husband but was told there wasn’t one available. What ended up happening was that, because of this, she was forced to put Marcel in a long-term-care home two hours away. Part of the problem is that we have to get those things in our health care system working properly because, when caregivers can no longer do the care that they have the opportunity to do, and there’s not enough home care provided to continue that person to be at home, they need to have those resources.

Again, I hope this bill will move forward so that we can make sure that we give all of the attention and recognition to what caregivers provide for their family members and friends in our society.

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

Ms. Natalia Kusendova: Today, I rise in support of my colleague from Ottawa West—Nepean’s Bill 59, the Caregiver Recognition Act. I’m honoured to speak in support of all caregivers across this province. Caregivers are probably the largest group of health workers in our system, yet they are largely overlooked and underappreciated. They come in all shapes and sizes—whether it is the single mom that takes time off of work to take care of her sick kids, or a working professional taking care of their ailing and aging parents, or a senior who may be even 80 years old, taking care of her husband as he reaches the end of life. These are the unsung heroes, or angels, of our health care system. According to Stats Canada, as of 2012, over eight million Canadians identify as caregivers.

In my experience working as a registered nurse at a local hospital, I have had the pleasure of working alongside many of these angels. Even this past weekend, I worked an ER shift at the hospital because they were severely understaffed and needed support during this holiday season. I took care of a 98-year-old woman who was approaching the end of life and came in with a new onset of seizures. Her daughter, who was probably around 60 years old, shared with me her story of struggle, taking care of her mom, who needed around-the-clock care, while struggling with her own health issues.

She spoke about the inadequacies of our system and the lack of supports for patients and their caregivers at home. She told me that her mom qualified for only two hours of home care every other week, based on her condition. As a nurse, I could clearly see that the patient required much more help than that. What this meant to this mother and daughter is that she would only get a full bath once every two weeks. The remainder of the time, the daughter had to do all the heavy lifting while trying to recover from a back injury herself.

She is the angel in our health care system. The angel stayed at her mom’s bedside for the full 12 hours of my shift, only leaving to put money into the parking machine. She fed her mom, she changed her clothes and bedding, and assisted me with all of the nursing procedures. She ensured that her mom’s favourite jazz songs were playing from her cellphone. She spoke to her mom in a calming voice. Every time she opened her eyes, she reassured her that she is safe and loved.

At the end of my shift, I could clearly see the exhaustion, coupled with anxiety, in this woman’s face. I encouraged her to go home and rest, reassuring her that her mom will be well taken care of. But she refused, stating that she was afraid of something happening to her mom while she was gone. She said, “You nurses are so busy, caring for so many patients; it’s easy for things to fall through the cracks.” Unfortunately, Madam Speaker, she was not wrong.

I can say that without the help of caregivers such as the one I just described, our health care system would be in even bigger trouble than it already is. Caregivers receive very little assistance or recognition from the government and society at large despite their vital role in our communities. Caregivers constantly balance the demands of supporting ailing loved ones with their own work, health and personal life. Their dedication and support in caring for the sick is admirable and ought to be officially recognized.

This is why I am proud to support the Caregiver Recognition Act. This bill seeks to officially acknowledge the significant contributions that caregivers provide to our province each and every single day.

This act will do two things. First, the bill will establish that, henceforth, the first Tuesday of the month of April will be declared Caregiver Recognition Day in Ontario. This is an important first step in ensuring that caregivers are recognized for their hard work and contributions to our health care system.

Second, this bill outlines a set of general principles pertaining to caregivers that the government should take into consideration when developing new policies. It affirms that caregivers should be treated with dignity and respect and should be supported in their efforts to achieve greater economic well-being and sustainability for themselves.

1520

Notre gouvernement s’est engagé à mettre fin aux soins de santé dans les couloirs en Ontario. En tant que tels, nous reconnaissons à quel point les soignants sont essentiels pour aider notre système de soins surchargé.

Speaker, the services caregivers provide are absolutely indispensable, especially during this time, as our government is working diligently to restructure and reinvent our province’s overburdened health care and long-term-care services. I am proud to support this bill and support my colleague.

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

Ms. Judith Monteith-Farrell: I rise to speak in support of the private member’s Bill 59 to recognize the work

that caregivers do in Ontario. Caregivers are individuals who provide unpaid support for family members, friends and persons and choose to help people with disabilities that are physical, neurological or mental health issues. They help people with chronic illnesses like MS or ALS. They help with the frail and the aged. Caregivers come from every corner of society. Millions of people in Canada are unpaid caregivers for older parents and family members with disabilities and chronic illnesses.

Across the province, millions are called upon to be a caregiver to a loved one, but when the need strikes, caregivers are often thrown into a role without any preparation. One day, a loved one needs someone to look after them as they navigate the health care system. Caregiving work is often invisible, and the important help they provide often goes unrecognized and unrewarded. All of this can cause a caregiver a great deal of stress and exhaustion.

Speaking to the National Post last month, Christa Haanstra from the Change Foundation said that, "Family caregivers provide the vast majority of care that happens in between appointments with physicians or in between hospital stays or different interactions with the health care system.... There's a lot more health care happening in the home, provided in large part by family caregivers.... We really think about them as the glue that keeps the health care system together."

The Change Foundation did a detailed survey online in May. They found that caregivers really appreciated the time they spent helping, but many ran into problems. Some 61% said they took on the role because they had no choice. More than half said that the caregiving role negatively impacted their personal life. One third said they experienced financial costs, including 8% of respondents who stated they lost their job because of their caregiving responsibilities.

We have a silent crisis on our hands in Ontario. I know this is the case in Thunder Bay. I have received countless letters and visits to my office from constituents worried about their loved ones. They step in to make sure the relatives who are ill are looked after. This takes a giant toll on these caregivers.

Caregivers deserve recognition for their work. Ontario currently does not have an official day recognizing the contributions made by caregivers. This bill will proclaim the first Tuesday of April in every year as Caregiver Recognition Day. It sets out general principles about caregivers, including recognizing the economic and social contributions they make to society. It calls for ministers and government agencies to work together on this issue. While this proposed legislation will not create legally enforceable obligations, it is a very good start.

Thank you to all of the caregivers in this province. I know that the work you do is hard and I hope the bill does a small part to ease your pain. I urge everyone to vote in favour of this bill.

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

Mr. Deepak Anand: I rise again to speak in favour of Bill 59. According to the Ontario Caregiver Coalition,

there are three million unpaid caregivers in the province of Ontario, caring for a family member, friend or a neighbour. About 20%, or 500,000, are family caregivers between the age of 15 and 24. About 10%, or about 350,000 caregivers, are themselves seniors.

Caregivers juggle family commitments, work, education and their own health and well-being. Nearly half of Canadians will end up being caregivers. Their work often goes unnoticed by the community, but their contributions are vital.

In Ontario, 29% of adults were caregivers at some point in the last year, and 28% of them cared for age-related needs while 11% cared for cancer patients, as cancer changes from a death sentence to a chronic disease.

Madam Speaker, the work is not glamorous. It can be repetitive and unpleasant. For many, it is putting your life on hold and driving a loved one to countless doctors' visits. For others, it is taking over the planning of day-to-day tasks like home maintenance, scheduling and managing finances. Often, caregivers don't have the time or resources to invest in their own care as much as they care for others. This could take a toll on their mental and physical health.

Ontarians are aging. As we get older, Ontario will find more and more stress put on its already stressed infrastructure. According to the Canadian Association for Retired Persons, informal, unpaid caregivers save health care systems across Canada approximately \$26 billion. Care in the communities, especially within the families, is effective and less expensive. It is our responsibility, as members of this House, to stand up for our constituents who care for their loved ones day in and day out. They are unsung heroes.

It is likely that each of us will end up caring for a family member or a friend, just as we might end up needing care for ourselves as well. This is an opportunity to show caregivers that they do critical work and they are valued by us—valued by society.

Many families here in Ontario are taking on an all-too-often unrecognized task to care for the ones they love. It is our job to recognize their sacrifices and lighten their burden. We need to do what is right for our communities and give caregivers the respect and the priority they deserve.

Madam Speaker, as we all know, today is the last day that we are sitting in 2018. I'd like to take the opportunity to thank all of my fellow members for their guidance and support, and a big thank you to our support staff, who are the wheels of this mighty machine.

I'd also like to thank our constituents for placing their trust in us and giving us the opportunity to represent them.

Merry Christmas and happy holidays to everyone here in the House and in my riding, and to all fellow Ontarians.

Finally, Madam Speaker, I'd like to thank the member from Ottawa West—Nepean for her passion and for doing such an important task of bringing an important bill to the House. I will urge all the members to give their support to the Caregiver Recognition Act.

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

M^{me} France Gélinas: Moi aussi, j'aimerais dire quelques commentaires au sujet du projet de loi 59 qui va reconnaître l'apport des aidants naturels.

Je commence par féliciter le député d'Ottawa-Ouest-Nepean pour cette bonne idée. C'est par pur hasard qu'on a tous les deux déposé un projet de loi vis-à-vis les aidants naturels la même journée. Donc tout de suite après, on s'est parlé. Il a partagé son projet de loi avec moi. Je peux vous dire qu'on va appuyer son projet de loi. C'est une bonne idée. C'est un pas dans la bonne direction.

Est-ce qu'on a beaucoup parlé du rôle des aidants et aidantes naturels et des tâches qu'ils ont à faire? Est-ce que le projet de loi va changer ça? Pas vraiment; pas directement. Mais en ayant une journée qui reconnaît les aidants naturels, c'est qu'on est en train de changer la perception des gens, la perception des Ontariens et Ontariennes face aux aidants naturels. On est en train de dire, nous, comme parlementaires, que ce sont des gens importants dans notre communauté, ce sont des gens qui font un travail important dans notre communauté et que ça vaut la peine de les reconnaître.

On a entendu parler de plusieurs cas où les gens n'avaient pas les soins à domicile dont ils avaient besoin, et les gens ne recevaient pas les soins à l'hôpital dont ils avaient besoin. C'était toujours un aidant ou une aidante naturels qui prenait ces tâches, mais ces gens-là ne sont pas payés, ces gens-là ne sont pas reconnus et ces gens-là, souvent, en ont lourd sur les épaules.

1530

Ce qu'on essaie de faire avec le projet de loi—moi, c'était le projet de loi 58; le député d'Ottawa-Ouest-Nepean, c'est le projet de loi 59—c'est quand même assez simple. Ce qu'on va faire, c'est que le 1^{er} mardi du mois d'avril de chaque année sera un jour de reconnaissance de la part des aidants naturels. Je crois que cette année le premier mardi va tomber le 1^{er} avril. Le 1^{er} avril, bon, il se passe d'autres choses habituellement cette journée-là, mais c'est quand même une journée importante.

It will be a pleasure for me to support Bill 59, the Caregiver Recognition Act. This is something that you've heard this afternoon: that often when our home care system is failing, it is the caregiver who picks up the slack. When our hospitals, our nurses and workers are running off their feet, it is the caregiver who picks up the slack. Whether you're looking at people with developmental disabilities, illnesses, discharges from hospital, with frailty, aging—aging is not a disease, but as frailty comes with it, it is always the caregiver who steps up to the plate and makes our community great.

To dedicate the first Tuesday in April to recognize them is a way for us, as legislators, to say that those people matter, those people are important, and the work that they do is something worthwhile. We will recognize you and we will make sure that the people of Ontario recognize you for what you do, and maybe take this opportunity to go and visit somebody whom you know cares for somebody else,

which is something that you might not have done otherwise.

I wholly support this. Congratulations on this bill.

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

Mrs. Robin Martin: I want to thank my colleague from Ottawa West-Nepean for bringing forward this important piece of legislation and prompting an important discussion about the contributions of caregivers here in Ontario.

The legislation is built around the idea that valuable social and economic contributions are made by caregivers. We all, I think, know some of those caregivers, and we should acknowledge and support the good work that they do. I am proud, therefore, to support this legislation and to support our caregivers here in Ontario.

I know that we have mentioned statistics already in the discussion about how many people—I think 30% is the number of people in Ontario who are actively caregiving at any time. All of us, as my friend said, will be in one of those four categories: likely needing caregivers, giving care ourselves, about to give care in the future, or having had someone whom we had to give care to in the past.

Personally, I've had this experience myself. I'm so young yet, but I've probably spent more than half of my life caregiving to members of my family. My parents, unfortunately, were separated and then divorced, and they each needed help. I was the person who had to be there to give the care to those people. And, of course, my own children—and I have a daughter with special needs, so that involved the same kind of devotion that my friend from Ottawa West-Nepean has shown to his brother.

I really recognize the toll that this takes on your life. In some ways, it's a pleasure to do it, because we love our family. We love those people we're caring for. We get to spend more time with them. We get to know them. But we're also doing it in the times when it's not so easy and in the times when it's really taking a toll. Some of the things that you have to do are very difficult to do. Sometimes your patience is tried. But you do it because you love them and because it's your duty to do it. I think it's really apt that we recognize this great duty and service that people are providing to all of us. It's nice to be able to recognize that they're giving something very fundamental to those people.

I know that at the door as we were canvassing, we did meet many people in very difficult circumstances. I think I've mentioned before one Filipina lady that I met who had two teenage boys with severe autism. I just looked into her eyes, and I could see her struggle. The amount of care that she is having to provide on a daily basis is truly overwhelming.

We all support the legislation. We're looking forward to working with you and passing it.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Jennifer K. French): I return to the member for Ottawa West-Nepean, who has two minutes to reply.

Mr. Jeremy Roberts: I'd like to start by thanking the members for Eglinton-Lawrence, London-Fanshawe,

Mississauga Centre, Mississauga–Malton, Thunder Bay–Atikokan and Nickel Belt. All of you shared some very heartwarming stories. I think it just goes to show how each of us, whether it has been ourselves or a family member or a friend, have experienced that role of caregiver. So I appreciate you each taking the time to share that.

Je veux spécifiquement remercier la députée de Nickel Belt pour sa contribution à ce sujet. C'est un sujet qui est sans politiques, et je pense que c'est bon qu'on peut tous être ici pour supporter cette initiative.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Jennifer K. French): The time provided for private members' public business has expired.

MENTAL HEALTH AND ADDICTION SERVICES

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Jennifer K. French): We will deal first with ballot item number 40, standing in the name of Mr. Gates.

Mr. Gates has moved private member's notice of motion number 31.

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

Motion agreed to.

EATING DISORDERS AWARENESS WEEK ACT, 2018

LOI DE 2018 SUR LA SEMAINE DE LA SENSIBILISATION AUX TROUBLES DE L'ALIMENTATION

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Jennifer K. French): Ms. Andrew has moved second reading of Bill 61, An Act to proclaim Eating Disorders Awareness Week.

Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? I declare the motion carried.

Second reading agreed to.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Jennifer K. French): I return to the member: which committee?

Ms. Jill Andrew: To general government.

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

CAREGIVER RECOGNITION ACT, 2018

LOI DE 2018 SUR LA RECONNAISSANCE DE L'APPORT DES AIDANTS NATURELS

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Jennifer K. French): Mr. Roberts has moved second reading of Bill 59, An Act to enact the Caregiver Recognition Act, 2018.

Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? I declare the motion carried.

Second reading agreed to.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Jennifer K. French): Which committee?

Mr. Jeremy Roberts: Social policy.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Jennifer K. French): Is that agreed? Agreed.

Orders of the day.

RESTORING TRUST, TRANSPARENCY AND ACCOUNTABILITY ACT, 2018

LOI DE 2018 VISANT À RÉTABLIR LA CONFIANCE, LA TRANSPARENCE ET LA RESPONSABILITÉ

Mr. Fedeli moved third reading of the following bill:

Bill 57, An Act to enact, amend and repeal various statutes / Projet de loi 57, Loi édictant, modifiant et abrogeant diverses lois.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Jennifer K. French): I return to the Minister of Finance for his statement.

Hon. Victor Fedeli: I want to begin by painting the picture of the overall fiscal situation. This is a sentence that is probably the most critical sentence that we have learned in the last few months. The previous government, the Liberal government, was spending \$40 million a day more than they brought in. That's the reality: \$40 million being spent every day more than they took in. That's what we have inherited, Speaker.

1540

This is a \$15-billion structural deficit from the previous Liberal government. That is more than \$24,000 for every man, woman and child in our province. In fact, in the 25 minutes that the parliamentary assistant—Doug Downey, who I'll be sharing my time with—and I will spend, that will burn up almost \$600,000 just in interest, in the short 25 minutes that the two of us will spend speaking. That's the reality: \$1.4 million an hour; \$40 million a day being spent more than we take in; \$347 billion in net debt, the highest of any sub-national government on the planet. We've been here a few short weeks since the commission of inquiry has given us their information that told us of this \$15-billion deficit, and we have found \$3.2 billion in efficiencies and savings.

Speaker, \$3.2 billion in efficiencies—let me tell you briefly what we mean by “efficiency,” because we get asked that periodically. For instance, the previous government put OHIP+ in place, which was giving everybody under the age of 25 free pharmacare. We can certainly discuss the merits of that at another time, but I'm here to talk about the finances of it. We know, of course, that the public service—the Ontario government, the federal government, municipal governments—we all have benefits plans that include the children under 25. We have private companies that include the children under 25. So we know we're paying twice for this. Our government, within the first week, looked for the efficiency in that. We said that if you have a benefits plan where your children are covered, go to your benefits plan for your free pharmacare; if you don't have a benefits plan, come to the province of Ontario and we've got you covered. The end result was, everybody under 25, just like the day before, still has free pharmacare in Ontario. Nobody lost a job, and we saved

almost \$300 million by doing that. That is an efficiency. So we found \$3.2 billion in efficiencies and savings.

The first thing we did was begin to return this money to the people—because that’s what our Premier, Premier Ford, said during the campaign. He said, “I want to return money to the people. I want you to have more money in your pocket.” This is a government that is for the people. So what we did in the fall economic statement was return \$2.7 billion of those savings back to the people of Ontario: the families of Ontario, the individuals in Ontario and, yes, the job creators, the businesses of Ontario—\$3.2 billion in, \$2.7 billion in relief to families out the door.

Speaker, this came in many different ways, but none is as widely accepted as the LIFT credit—this is low-income individuals and families. This is one of the most generous tax credits in the history of our province. If you are earning \$30,000 per year or less, you will no longer pay personal income tax in the province of Ontario. That is the lift that people need. Hopefully, the NDP will join us in giving this lift to low-income individuals and families. If passed, it would provide minimum wage workers with up to \$850 in Ontario personal income tax relief; for couples, up to \$1,700. This relief would be provided to 1.1 million people in the province of Ontario. That’s the lift they need.

I know the member from Hamilton West—Ancaster—Dundas—I’m going to pick on you, only one last time this year. Here’s her quote on the LIFT: “You’re talking about people who earn so little that they in fact don’t need a tax break.” Well, Speaker, I’m sorry, but I believe, our party believes and certainly Premier Ford believes and has instructed us to give 1.1 million people in the province of Ontario a tax break, a much-needed tax break; the much-needed relief that they have been looking for.

We also went into the Liberals’ 2018 budget. They were about to increase taxes on small businesses by \$160 million, starting in January. I’ve been a business person all of my life, Speaker, and I can tell you, cash is king. Capital is what you need to run a business. The moment that this \$160 million is put back into the pockets of the business community, that cash will be turned into opportunities for job creation. That’s what business people do. That’s what we do, Speaker. We invest. We invest in our businesses, we grow our companies and we hire people. That’s what we business people actually do.

That’s \$160 million, but I can tell you, Speaker, 150,000 additional filers—seniors, those with disabilities and those who claim Ontario’s medical expense tax credit—would have suffered the most from the Liberal tax increases that were about to go in on January 1. Again, we hope the NDP will support us in bringing relief to seniors, those with disabilities and those who claim the Ontario medical expense tax credit. Those 150,000 filers will now pay \$35 million less in income taxes. These are the incentives that we’re providing families.

If you look at the cap-and-trade carbon tax that has been eliminated—

Interjections.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Jennifer K. French): I apologize for interrupting the minister. I would invite

everyone to be respectful, please, and allow the debate to continue without heckling. The opposition will have their turn.

Please continue.

Hon. Victor Fedeli: Thank you, Speaker.

Certainly, the cap-and-trade carbon tax, which we have scrapped, is going to save families \$260. If you have natural gas, that’s \$80. But everybody who purchases gasoline at the pumps is now paying 4.3 cents per litre less.

Mr. Gilles Bisson: Oh, that’s not true.

Hon. Victor Fedeli: That is an absolute fact.

Interjection.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Jennifer K. French): The member for Timmins will come to order.

Hon. Victor Fedeli: I will not have him impugn, Speaker.

Mr. Gilles Bisson: Your Minister of Energy—

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Jennifer K. French): The minister for—who are you? The member for Timmins will come to order.

Hon. Victor Fedeli: We have relief that is coming to families in all of the taxes that I talked about, and now with the cap-and-trade tax off, this is another huge savings. Now I’ll switch to businesses for a second, because that cap-and-trade tax is also a huge savings to businesses. For natural gas, their bills will be reduced by \$285.

We are talking about bringing huge relief to families in terms of passive income tax. This is the tax that the federal Liberals are bringing in on January 1. We have looked at that passive income tax and said, “No, we pay enough taxes. We’re done with that.” We don’t want our businesses to have to struggle through this passive income tax problem that the federal government is going to impose on January 1.

1550

This will save 7,900 businesses up to \$40,000 each. Again, that money is money that they will invest back in their businesses. I’m a business person. I know that the second you have your hands on a nickel, you put it back into your business so that it can grow. That’s what we business people do.

In order to help make Ontario open for business, we are hopefully going to be passing in the spring one of the largest regulatory changes in terms of red tape. I know that Minister Smith introduced this in the Legislature yesterday. Speaker, think about it: Here in Ontario, we have 331 statutes. We have 380,000 pieces of red tape. We are going to be reducing red tape. This isn’t a bumper sticker about red tape reduction; this is a serious red tape reduction. This is not one in and two out; this is 380,000 pieces of red tape that will be reduced by 25% by the year 2022.

Miss Monique Taylor: Point of order.

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

Miss Monique Taylor: I was just wondering if this was included in Bill 57, what the minister is speaking of right now.

Hon. Victor Fedeli: Actually, it was.

Miss Monique Taylor: It's the new bill?

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Jennifer K. French): I thank the member for her point of order.

I return to the Minister of Finance to, of course, keep his remarks to the bill.

Hon. Victor Fedeli: Yes. If you look carefully, you will find "open for business" on just about half of the pages of the fall economic statement—because unlike the NDP, this is a government that knows that business is what is going to drive job creation in the province of Ontario. If the bill was carefully considered, you would know that our plan is to reduce red tape by 25% by the year 2022. It builds on the repeal of Bill 148 and improvements made with Bill 47.

Speaker, we are open for business. Ontario is open for business again. If you read the bill carefully, you will see many more enhancements for small business, for medium-sized business and for large business. On one of them, if I can remember the page—it's either 120, 121 or 122; it's two of the three pages—you will find the accelerated capital cost. This is probably the single most important piece of the bill.

The accelerated capital cost—maybe I'll take a second to explain that, Speaker. The accelerated capital cost is a singularly important difference between the United States and Ontario. If you're making capex decisions—if you're deciding on your capital expenditures—you are looking in the States, knowing they have this huge allowance. We are spending \$680 million on capital cost allowances in the province of Ontario. That is going to be a game-changer for business.

I know a little later my parliamentary assistant, Doug Downey, will be talking about supporting veterans, which was in the bill; protecting amateur hockey, which was in the bill, protecting the Ontario Hockey League; celebrating Special Hockey Day—I cannot imagine that the NDP will not be supporting this bill and allowing the celebration of Special Hockey Day. I cannot imagine that they would not stand up and support Special Hockey Day. It will be fascinating to watch them vote against that if that is indeed what they do. I can't imagine that that's what they will be doing.

You will continue to see and hear many other programs when my parliamentary assistant, Doug Downey, has his time to speak. Thank you.

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

Ms. Sandy Shaw: I would just like to address the minister. I appreciate that what you're offering here, essentially, for the people of Ontario is half of a loaf, which I could only expect because when you talked about me, you only gave me half a quote. I would say that you need to be fair to the people of Ontario and fair to me as a fellow parliamentarian.

This Bill 57 is an omnibus bill. It's absolutely the heavy-handed kind of legislation that this government, when they were in opposition, railed against. Yet here we are with this omnibus bill.

There's so much in this bill, so many regressive actions in this bill. Given that the holidays are upon us, we could

imagine that the people of Ontario might have expected some presents in this bill. While I will agree with you that the commitment to supporting special hockey in Ontario is a present, for the most part what is in this bill is basically a whole bunch of lumps of coal for the people of Ontario.

You can name a bill anything you want. But when you look into this bill, it's quite clear that this bill has nothing to do with transparency, accountability, and certainly not trust.

Let's start with the government's unparalleled action of getting rid of independent officers of this Legislature.

The very fact that they have gotten rid of the child and youth advocate, the French-language commissioner and the Environmental Commissioner—these are things that the people of Ontario never asked for, didn't expect that this government would be doing, and they're unsure—let me just say they don't trust, as the name of the bill says, the reasons for this government having done that.

My colleagues will speak specifically to those cuts to independent officers of the Legislature, who quite frankly make this House much stronger—and we need those; we don't need fewer of those.

If it wasn't bad enough that this bill is an omnibus bill—and there's so much in here for the people of Ontario to consider, and for the people of this House to be able to respond to—I think what is also very telling about this government is that they are really determined to ram this bill through the House.

I'm a new MPP, as are many of us here. The thing that is most deeply disappointing to me is what I see as a disregard for what is the most important thing in this House, which is the ability for us to have reasoned debate, for us to have our opinions expressed. The very fact that this government is limiting debate speaks to their lack of respect for the norms and the traditions of parliamentary democracy. That, for me, is something that I was really shocked to discover. I'm deeply disappointed that this is the direction that this government has taken.

It has been said before: We understand that the government was elected—you have a majority; you were given that—and that you will get your legislation passed; there's no doubt about that. So my question is, what are you so afraid of? Why are you so afraid to hear the voices of the people of Ontario? Why are you so afraid to hear from Her Majesty's loyal opposition?

It's the absolute height of hubris, if I may, for one government to think that they have all the answers, that they know all the answers, and that they are not willing to listen, to open up their minds and to listen. Perhaps they might hear something that would inform this legislation and would, in fact, make this legislation better.

That is something that I feel speaks to the bill, which has the name about trust, transparency and accountability; but this government's actions do not speak to that.

It's quite clear that with this bill, not only are we limiting debate in this House, but this government is in fact not listening to the people of Ontario. The fact that so much of the legislation that this government is passing is not going to committee says to me that they do not want to hear from the very people who put them in these seats.

Yet again I will ask, what, in fact, is this government afraid of? Why are they afraid to hear the voices of the people of Ontario?

We went to committee with this bill. There are some 15 million people in this province. But how many people do you think this government allowed to speak to this bill? The answer is 20—20 people, in one day, were allowed to speak to the bill. This bill, which makes so many substantial changes to their lives: 20 people were allowed to speak, and so many—hundreds and hundreds of people—who wanted to speak were shut out. They've been shut out from this House, and they've been shut out from having their voices weighed and heard by this government.

1600

The thing that is most shameful to me, the thing that I can hardly believe this government is standing behind, is the fact that they have cut the child and youth advocate. The fact is, when Mr. Irwin Elman came to testify before the committee, he confirmed that yes, in fact he or his office had not been consulted on this change. He also confirmed that he found this out through the media. That is just—

Miss Monique Taylor: Shameful.

Ms. Sandy Shaw:—shameful. Beyond just disrespectful, it's just plain rude that you would not, at the very least, let a person who is so compassionate and so passionate about the children and youth of Ontario—that you would shut out his voice and not even inform him.

The fact that they talk about trust and transparency but seem quite clearly afraid to hear the voices of the people of Ontario is really something that is telling of the style of this government. In fact, the reason they put forward for cutting these independent officers is about cost savings, but there were absolutely no cost savings identified in the fall economic statement, no cost savings identified in the bill, and when we spoke to a number of the ministerial staff, they said these cost savings were yet to be identified.

My question is, is this something that was in fact a value-for-money audit, that you determined that the lives or the health and well-being of children were something you could balance on this budget? That is something I find unbelievably odious.

If this government is not listening to the people of Ontario, not listening to Her Majesty's loyal opposition, it's certainly clear from the hirings and firings that we've seen lately, which have been directed from the Premier's office, that there's somebody who has the ear of this government, and that appears to be the insiders and friends of the Fords. They seem to have been given more consideration. Their opinions seem to weigh more than the people of Ontario.

What we also see in so many regards with this bill is that I would have to say that we're going back to the future. This bill really is just ripping the pages out of, if not the entire playbook of Mike Harris. This is signalling that we are moving towards austerity budgets, and time and time again we have seen that austerity budgets do not work, and they most certainly do not work for working

people, the working people of Ontario. We now know with this bill, beyond a shadow of a doubt, that cuts and privatization, as we saw in the Mike Harris era, are what this government will consist of. It is going to be the Mike Harris playbook all over again.

If we talk about privatization, I would say that the people of Ontario have still not forgiven the Conservatives for the sell-off of the 407. When I was campaigning, I heard it time and time again. People were still disappointed by the sell-off of the 407. Here we have a government, without consultation, in Bill 57, among others, privatizing Ontario Place. They dissolved the board of Ontario Place without any consultation. We know that when Premier Ford was a councillor, his pet project was to put a casino in Ontario Place, and the people of Toronto were vehemently opposed to that. But here, we're going to see that plan perhaps sneak in through the back door with the dissolution of the board of Ontario Place. That speaks directly to privatization.

I would like to say that during this campaign, people in Ontario were looking for a strong vision of hope. They wanted to know that life in Ontario could be better for everyone. But this bill makes it clear: This government will not in fact make life better for the people of Ontario. Instead, with this bill we are going from bad to worse. This bill is so deeply disappointing in so many ways, and the people of Ontario deserve so much better.

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

Mrs. Marie-France Lalonde: Point of order.

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

Mrs. Marie-France Lalonde: I would like to ask for unanimous consent that I'll be sharing my time with the member from Glengarry–Prescott–Russell.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Jennifer K. French): The member from Orléans is seeking unanimous consent to share her time with the member from Glengarry–Prescott–Russell. Is it agreed? I heard a no.

Mrs. Marie-France Lalonde: Madame la Présidente, then I will be sharing my time with the member from Ottawa South, please.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Jennifer K. French): Okay. I recognize the member for Orléans.

M^{me} Marie-France Lalonde: Merci, madame la Présidente. Premièrement, bonjour, bon après-midi et de joyeuses fêtes à vous et à tout l'Ontario.

It is a pleasure to rise in the Legislature for the last time this session as we wish everyone a happy holiday, merry Christmas and a happy Hanukkah.

Last week, my colleague shared why we would be opposing this bill. Malheureusement, moi, je suis ici pour vous parler en français dans cette belle Assemblée législative pour vous dire que les coupures de Ford n'ont pas passé inaperçues dans les dernières semaines. Plus de 14 000 personnes se sont mobilisées samedi dernier pour dire haut et fort—le crier au gouvernement Ford—qu'on est pas d'accord du tout avec les changements—un recul—sur les acquis ici en Ontario.

C'était une réalité, l'Université de l'Ontario français. M^{me} Dyane Adam en faisait référence à une émission télévisée : les programmes étaient élaborés, le site était choisi, on avait une charte universitaire—donc, c'était une loi—et on avait des employés. Alors, le train avait démarré. Ce qui est arrivé le 15 novembre, c'est que le gouvernement conservateur y a coupé les vivres.

L'université, c'était environ 85 millions de dollars sur les prochains huit ou neuf ans, et on savait que la porte du fédéral était pour être ouverte. Encore une fois, je demande pourquoi le premier ministre de l'Ontario ne fait pas la demande pour avoir accès au financement fédéral, jusqu'à 50 % qui a été mis sur la table? Je ne comprends pas du tout. Pourquoi a-t-on peur du fait français dans ce gouvernement?

Encore une fois—je sais qu'il me reste quelque temps—je veux vraiment être ici aujourd'hui pour dire mon mécontentement et le mécontentement des francophiles et francophones—on parle de millions de personnes—qui disent : pourquoi s'attaquer au commissaire? Pourquoi enlever le statut d'indépendance au commissaire aux services en français ici en Ontario? Est-ce que le gouvernement a peur d'être imputable de son apport à la francophonie ici? Est-ce qu'on va faire des coupures encore au sein de la francophonie, comme dans les années Harris?

Madame la Présidente, je ne peux pas comprendre qu'aujourd'hui, en 2018, je suis dans cette Chambre ici, représentant non seulement Orléans mais l'Ontario, pour dénoncer ces coupures et ce recul, qui va avoir une perte significative.

Donc, je demande au gouvernement, s'il vous plaît—ce n'est pas encore trop tard; on n'a pas encore voté—changeons ce projet de loi.

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

Mr. Doug Downey: I'm pleased to rise today to talk to Bill 57. I think I may have misheard the member from Hamilton West—Ancaster—Dundas because she called it an "omnibus bill," and I thought it was an "awesomeness bill" that she said.

We sat in committee and we went through a lot of these issues, and I'm absolutely thrilled—I'm going to start with some that the minister indicated I would touch on. The first is supporting our veterans. It's something that I think most of us in this House want to support. It's a very simple thing that we've done, that we've put in the bill: to take them off the tax roll, because the Legions in Ontario are in varying states of sustainability, so this little bit helps. Anything we can do to help with veterans is the right thing to do. Madam Speaker, I don't know if the opposition takes issue with this. We did a lot of roll call votes in the committee. I don't remember what we did on this one, but I would certainly hope that they would support this.

The other thing that I know they support is our support for the OHL. They have to support that; it's part of the Canadian fabric.

1610

The Barrie Colts, who are in my area, my local team, are such a joy to watch. To meet these young kids who

have so much talent, whether it be a kid like Troy Timpano, who was a goalie for the Sudbury Wolves, who came from Toronto—the kids get to travel. They get an education out of this. It's a way to a great life. They learn how to be competitors and teammates, just as we're teammates here with our own teams. Don Cherry even felt compelled to come out and say what a wonderful thing it was that we were doing to support the Ontario Hockey League.

In addition to that, we have Special Hockey Day. The member from Peterborough spoke about it this afternoon in a statement earlier. I just want to make sure that anybody watching knows that Special Hockey Day, if this is to pass, will be March 27 of next year. I look forward to that as well.

Madam Speaker, these are all things that aren't even controversial. They're just good ideas that anybody could and should support.

We get into other things that are very practical. One thing that is important is to recognize that we don't all have 9-to-5 jobs. We heard that earlier when we were talking about support and caregivers and the different issues that we were talking about in private members' bills. Not everybody is on a 9-to-5 job. Some things need to be open longer, whether it be mental health services or otherwise.

To recognize the shift workers that we have—my father drove trains for 35 years, so he drove up—

Mr. Gilles Bisson: Did you go for a ride?

Mr. Doug Downey: I got to go for rides all the time, Mr. Bisson.

Ms. Donna Skelly: So did I.

Mr. Doug Downey: And my colleague behind me was also from Capreol, of course, which is where the bunkhouse was.

Madam Speaker, the point is this: Shift workers, whether they be in hospitals, police, fire or front-line services of any kind, or they work at Honda, or they work at any one of the other great manufacturers in our province, don't all work 9 to 5, so we're extending Beer Store, LCBO and eligible retailer hours—open seven days a week, from 9 a.m. to 11 p.m. for those that qualify. That's a recognition of the kind of lifestyle that people have and the convenience that they would like to have. Again, it's a very practical thing. We're not making anybody do anything, but we're creating opportunities. We are literally opening Ontario for business; it's just another way that we've been doing this. Bill 57 is chock-full of these things that are opening Ontario for business.

I want to turn next to red tape reduction. We're going to take it down 25% by the year 2022. That's a pretty short period of time. It's a big job. We have 380,000 regulatory requirements in this province, and you've heard us say this. But I want to take it away from the abstract, these big numbers, the 25% and the 380,000. The reduction of red tape, to the people in my riding, to small business owners like Rush Hydraulic or Coldriver Manufacturing—what it means is less time spent filling out paperwork, less time being frustrated with government, less time dealing with the bureaucracy, and more time working and producing product that we can ship around the world.

I have Bayside Medical Supplies in my riding. They export medical equipment to over 80 countries, everything from incision blades to oxygen masks. It's phenomenal, and it started out in a lady's basement and in her garage 35 years ago. Now it employs hundreds and hundreds of people. When I sat down and talked to her and her leadership team about the red tape that they have to deal with—it is just mind-boggling.

If we get rid of 25%, you have to realize, Madam Speaker, that there's still 75% of that red tape there. It's still going to take an awful lot of resources to try to comply and deal with things. Some of these things are just downright outdated. Some don't make any sense at all. Our government has already reduced some regulation, taken out several entire regulatory regimes, and nobody noticed because nobody was using them. They weren't protecting anybody. We have to balance the protection of the public with the dampening of our economy.

If you talk to any business owner, the government doesn't come through their door once. If I talk to my local Ford dealership or my GM dealership and they want to do an expansion, the bureaucracy they have to go through and the inspections they have to go through are really just mind-numbing and soul-crushing. It's important that we get some of these things out of the way that aren't accomplishing anything. It's just a make-work project.

The College of Trades is a really good example of that. I dropped in to some local hairdressers—only to talk, obviously—and they said—

Interjections.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Jennifer K. French): The volume in the room is getting such that I'm having a difficult time hearing the member who is speaking, and he is right beside me. So I am going to encourage folks to sit quietly please, or move the conversations elsewhere.

I return to the member. I apologize.

Mr. Doug Downey: Thank you, Madam Speaker. I can yell a little louder, if that's helpful. I don't mind some chatter.

The red tape reduction is so important, and the Ontario College of Trades—when I was at the hairdressers chatting with them about the \$135-a-year fee each for a piece of paper that hangs on the wall, they don't know why they pay it, they don't know what they get from it and they don't know what they're supposed to do with it.

I just happened to be in a pub, and I was talking to a lady who had been hired by the Ontario College of Trades to go down and do the exams for the hairdressers. I said to her, "What would you possibly examine them on?" She says, "To tell you the truth, I'm going down to make sure they all pass, because this is such a silly thing. If I don't do it, somebody else is going to do it and start causing havoc in the industry." Can you imagine? These are our tax dollars at work.

We're stripping out red tape and regulations, actual regulations. The way that government interacts with the business community in Ontario is so important to the growth of our economy, and we are so laser-focused on this. Bill 57 is chock full of things that we are doing to make life better for businesses and for employees.

I'll just use another example, another example of barriers that don't need to be there. I started off talking about the Legions and the volunteer community that we have in all of our communities. We value them. We do all sorts of things to try to promote them, talk about them and encourage them. Then we get double-hatters, and all of a sudden, a certain class of people aren't allowed to volunteer in their own community in the way that they want to volunteer. Madam Speaker, it makes no sense. It makes no sense at all.

For years, for 15 years—and I was on municipal council in 2000 when double-hatters were being talked about—the Liberal government did nothing and the NDP did nothing to deal with the double-hatter issue except maintain the barriers. I tell you, Madam Speaker, the people that I talk to when I go back to my riding of Barrie–Springwater–Oro-Medonte are so excited about the direction this government is going and the things that we are doing to right the ship and turn the ship and get us back on track, to get government only connecting with business where it makes sense, reducing tax rates, supporting our culture—the OHL is part of the culture, of the Canadian fabric—and getting the LCBO and other stores literally open for business. Then, on top of that, we're making life more affordable with the Housing Supply Action Plan to keep up with the population growth, because it has stagnated and we have not, as a government—until now—been dealing with the explosive population growth.

The area in the Attorney General's riding between Bradford and Bond Head—I grew up down there. There will be 80,000 homes—not people, but homes—built in the south end of Simcoe in the next couple of decades. We are not positioned yet to accommodate that kind of growth, but we will be, because this government is so focused on doing the right things.

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

M. Guy Bourgouin: Laissez-moi commencer en disant à mon confrère conservateur que pas tout le monde est excité. Il y a 14 000 Franco-Ontariens, je peux vous le dire, qui ne sont pas trop contents du gouvernement conservateur.

En étant aussi un Franco-Ontarien de la famille francophone, je suis offusqué par la décision des conservateurs de supprimer le commissariat à la langue française, une institution indépendante, de supprimer plusieurs subventions culturelles et d'annuler le financement de l'Université de l'Ontario français. Vous mettez en péril le droit constitutionnel des Franco-Ontariens et Franco-Ontariennes à être servis et être éduqués dans leur langue.

Autrement dit, votre projet de loi fait des Franco-Ontariens des citoyens de deuxième classe. Vous avez consciemment et délibérément tourné le dos à 600 000 Franco-Ontariens.

1620

Vous dites que le commissariat ne perdra pas ses pouvoirs en tant qu'adjoint de l'ombudsman. Mais l'ombudsman lui-même vous dit de préserver l'indépendance du bureau du commissaire. Pour pouvoir s'assurer de l'impartialité du commissaire, il faut qu'il soit

directement guidé par la loi. En vertu de la loi, l'ombudsman n'est pas capable d'agir en tant que défenseur des droits des Franco-Ontariens et des Franco-Ontariennes. C'est l'ombudsman qui vous le dit, ça. Comment pouvez-vous fermer les yeux d'une telle façon?

La semaine passée, nous avons eu 14 000 personnes dans 41 lieux dans la province. Mes collègues et moi, nous avons participé à ces manifestations. Aussi, j'ai eu la chance de parler avec des dizaines d'organisations francophones dans toute la province. Les francophones vous demandent une seule chose : de revenir en arrière sur ces coupures insensées à notre héritage, notre culture, nos droits et notre futur en tant que peuple fondateur. Vous avez essayé d'apaiser la résistance des Franco-Ontariens en rétablissant le ministère des Affaires francophones, entre autres choses. Mais ça ne change rien—rien pantoute.

Aussi, vous avez dit que ces suppressions sont des résultats de ce que vous appelez la « responsabilité fiscale » de votre gouvernement. Vous dites que ces institutions sont trop coûteuses pour notre province. Mais nous avons tous entendu plusieurs spécialistes et des parties prenantes qui vous disent que transférer les pouvoirs du commissaire à l'ombudsman ne sauve pas d'argent. Vous devriez le savoir, mais je vous le dis encore : nos droits, notre culture et notre éducation ne sont pas une simple « responsabilité fiscale ».

Laissez-moi vous dire en concluant qu'en tant que porte-parole de l'opposition officielle en affaires francophones et en tant que membre de la famille franco-ontarienne, je ne vais pas arrêter de lutter contre vos politiques d'oppression, de négligence et de division. Le transfert des pouvoirs du commissariat et la suppression du financement de l'université signifient que les droits constitutionnels des Franco-Ontariens sont sérieusement menacés.

On ne va pas rester les bras croisés. Comme on dit : « L'avenir appartient à ceux qui luttent », et c'est exactement ce que nous allons faire.

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

Mr. John Fraser: It's a pleasure to say a few words about Bill 57, the fall economic statement.

Ce projet de loi 57, c'est une claque dans la face de la communauté franco-ontarienne. Pour plusieurs années, la communauté franco-ontarienne travaille fort pour améliorer et protéger les services en français.

The elimination of an independent French Language Services Commissioner in this bill is wrong, and the government should reverse its position. Francophones in this province have fought for many years for services in French, for health, education, getting a driver's licence. This country and this province were founded on two nations, and we need to respect that. I am concerned, too, that they wouldn't let, through unanimous consent, a Franco-Ontarian in this chamber speak for two minutes. That's shocking.

Forty seconds is a lot of time to finish up. Children need an advocate. The environment needs a commissioner. The public accounts need the controller's signature. Political

fundraising needs an "own funds" attestation simply because it puts people at risk.

This is a flawed bill. I can't support it, and I encourage all my colleagues to vote against it.

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

Miss Monique Taylor: I'm going to start by saying how privileged I am to be able to stand in this House and to speak, to have a voice in this province—as well as the rest of us who sit in this House.

Our children did have a voice in this House. In 2007, there was an act created, the Provincial Advocate for Children and Youth Act, 2007, that gave the children and youth of this province a voice that was brought into this House. Now, today, we see that voice being taken away. We see it being taken away from Black youth, Indigenous youth, children and youth in and from care, LGBTQ2S youth, youth in criminal justice. These are our most vulnerable children and youth in our province, and their only inlet to this House was through the provincial advocate's office.

My first duty when I was first elected in 2011 and became the critic for children and youth services was to go to the Youth Leaving Care hearings that were right downstairs in our very own committee room. The youth took over that room. They put on hearings. They had youth from across the province, youth who were in care and youth who had been in care. That was the greatest roller-coaster of my life and the beginning of being a critic for children and youth in this province. That taught me so many lessons. It taught me about the good things that happened within our system, but it also showed me that the bad completely outweighed the good that we see in our child welfare system.

Then, just recently, I flew to Thunder Bay, because the Feathers of Hope was sitting. There, I heard from youth who cried. They cried and begged us, as people of change, that we have a mandate to do something for those voices, for those kids, to make sure that they have mental health services in their communities, to ensure that they're safe as they're standing at bus stops, to ensure they have proper schooling. The Indigenous youth in our province are so overrepresented in our child welfare system. As well, Black youth are overrepresented in our child welfare system.

This was the work of the child advocate. These were the voices that were raised, that were brought here to this Legislature. The advocate did it through several programs. Our Voice Our Turn was youth in and out of care. We Have Something to Say was youth with disabilities. You Are Not Alone is LGBTQ2S. Feathers of Hope is Indigenous youth. HairStory was Black youth. I Do Care is about youth having a voice in their own health care and treatment decisions.

All of that is being taken away with the vote of the Conservative caucus today. That is a shameful dark day in this province, that our children will not have a voice.

Now, I understand that they're putting the Ombudsman in place. The Ombudsman does great work. But the Ombudsman will not deal with the same mandate that the child advocate dealt with. These are just a couple of pieces:

“Reporting directly to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario, the advocate’s office provides an independent voice for children and youth, including children and youth with disabilities and Indigenous children and youth.”

The last line says, “The office is guided by the principles of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child and has a strong commitment to youth involvement.” The Ombudsman won’t possibly be able to do that, Speaker.

The Office of the Ombudsman has a role to play, and it’s complaint-based. The office of the child advocate does proactive measures like all of the groups that I talked about already. They empower young people to speak their truth. The Ombudsman will not be able to do that.

Now, the Ombudsman is going to have a greater role in so many fashions. Again, I want to say how clearly I believe in the Ombudsman’s office. I put forward bills right here in this Legislature to ask for the Ombudsman to have greater oversight of the children’s aid societies, because parents don’t have a voice. Perfect, that would have been great companion legislation to ensure that we really did have some extra oversight when it comes to children’s aid societies. It would have been a wonderful thing to happen. I would have patted myself on the shoulder and said, “You know, Monique Taylor, you helped push that through.” But instead, I’m standing here saying that the Ombudsman isn’t enough. The Ombudsman is not enough to ensure that the children and youth of this province have a voice. That is absolutely so sad for the kids of this province.

1630

I hope that members on the other side will vote with their conscience and see that this truly is a bad bill.

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

Mr. Mike Schreiner: I’m proud to rise up and speak on debate on Bill 57. Before I do so, since this is our last day here, I want to wish everyone in this House and my constituents back in Guelph very happy holidays, and just say what an honour it is to be Guelph’s MPP in this House.

Bill 57 speaks to 65 different pieces of legislation, so I’m going to focus on two aspects of this bill that deeply trouble me: the way in which this bill reduces oversight and transparency in government, and opens the door to bringing big money back into politics.

Yesterday, the Auditor General’s report highlighted why government oversight is so important. The AG report had a long list of reasons why we need more government oversight, not less government oversight, in this House. For example, yesterday, the AG revealed that TSSA’s lack of oversight puts public health and safety at risk. I’m especially worried that TSSA is failing to inspect 111,300 natural gas and oil pipelines in this province, giving industry too much power to self-regulate, just a few weeks after the environment commissioner revealed that last year alone raw sewage was dumped into our lakes and rivers 1,327 times. Yet Bill 57 eliminates the Environment Com-

missioner’s office as an independent, stand-alone government watchdog to sound the alarm on these types of threats to public health, safety and the environment.

Last week, I participated in a rally where young children, our most vulnerable children in this province, came, holding signs saying, “We want a voice. We want a voice at Queen’s Park.” They had a voice that was called the Ontario child advocate. With Bill 57, those children lose that voice.

French language minority rights in this province are now under threat. We had a French Language Services Commissioner to stand up for Franco-Ontarians. We had a proposal to fund a French-language university to support Franco-Ontarians. Bill 57 takes that away.

Our democracy is stronger with independent bodies able to monitor government performance and report on the impacts of legislation. Those officers reflect what we as a society, what we as a province, believe is important. It’s clear from Bill 57 that the environment, vulnerable children and French-language speakers are not as important in Ontario anymore, and I believe that that is wrong.

I will say—and I’m going to do this in the spirit of the holidays. I’m going to give the government a compliment about something that happened at committee, because more of this needs to happen. The fact that amendments were made in Bill 57 to raise the threshold to two thirds of a vote in this House instead of a majority vote in this House to suspend independent officers of the Legislature was a good thing. That, to me, signals why we need to have more co-operation at committee in this Parliament and why we actually need to have parties working together to improve legislation. Unfortunately, that hasn’t happened in the last six months, and I’m hoping that that changes in the new year. That’s my Christmas wish.

Ms. Sandy Shaw: You’ll get a lump of coal.

Mr. Mike Schreiner: I don’t want a lump of coal this year.

I want to close by saying that Bill 57 opens the door to bringing back big money in politics. It brings back cash-for-access events, it raises donation limits, and it removes the simple requirement to certify donations, which closes the loophole to corporate and union donations in politics.

I will be voting against this bill, Madam Speaker, because it reduces accountability, it reduces transparency, and it opens the door to big money in politics.

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

Mr. Ian Arthur: There’s so much in this bill that to try to fit it in a summary in five minutes is going to be difficult.

I want to point out the glossing over of the terrible parts of this bill by the government. They talk about a national day for special hockey. They talk about the OHL. But none of them want to address the substantive problems that are in this bill and the terrible things that it is going to do to our environment and to the citizens of Ontario. They don’t want to have those conversations. They don’t want to talk about the independent commissioners. They don’t want to talk about how we’re really not open for business.

There's this difference between the rhetoric and the reality of the situation that is developing. The rhetoric is that we have giant signs that say we are open for business, and the reality is that no company wants to come here. You are changing it from bad to worse. If you think it was bad before, it is going to get so much worse under this government.

I want to talk a little bit about why we need an independent Environmental Commissioner, someone whose job it is to hold this Legislature to account so that we protect this province for future generations.

You are gutting that office. The rhetoric says that you are moving it under the Attorney General, but the reality is, when you look at the amendments that were tabled in committee, which actually made this bill substantively worse—you are now giving yourselves the option of having to offer the employees a job and then they accept it. There's no guarantee that all the current employees are going to be offered their jobs under this new house. So you are setting yourself up to gut this office, to make it irrelevant, to make it a desk in the Attorney General's office with no real power.

This office used to be—a citizen could request of the commissioner, under the Environmental Bill of Rights, to have a special report done on an environmental issue that was important in Ontario. That is gone. There is no ability for citizens to have that accountability from the Legislature anymore.

This was not done to save money—although, with the Environmental Commissioner, if you gut her entire staff, if the office becomes a desk in the Attorney General's office, then I understand where the savings are. They're in cuts and jobs, and Ontario is going to be worse off, and our environment is going to pay.

There is also no obligation to report—again, an amendment that changed the language requiring the reports that are brought forward. So now the Attorney General may request a report but does not have to. That's a really important difference. That is really bad. It used to be that we had this guarantee that we would know how we were doing environmentally, that we would have this report that was brought forward to the Legislature and that was accessible to everyone, so we knew if we were making progress on reducing greenhouse gas emissions, so we knew if toxic substances were continuing to be leaked into our environment, so we knew if sewage was being spilled in our lakes and rivers. That is gone. That is no longer part of the Environmental Commissioner's job.

What are they going to report on? The government's own environmental plan only requires a review every four years. So we aren't even going to know if this environmental plan is doing its job.

And that plan is laughable; there is no word for that plan other than “laughable.” We are facing a climate crisis, the single biggest issue facing this province, this country and this planet, and you deliver a plan that tells us how to stop our basements from flooding? That's nice advice. That's a great thing to throw on one of your many websites. I feel like that's a great, responsible use of government funds.

But it does not in any substantive way address climate change or the climate crisis.

Interjections.

Mr. Ian Arthur: I supported the cap-and-trade program. I voted—

Interjections.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Jennifer K. French): The government members are encouraged to hold their horses for one more minute and to respect that the member has the floor to continue.

Mr. Ian Arthur: Now that I've lost a bit of time there, I'll try and speed this up. I want to draw attention to one more thing here, and that's schedule 29. This is going to allow the government to borrow up to \$1.9 billion “to discharge any indebtedness or obligation of Ontario”—no elaboration on what that's actually for.

The gas plant scandal was only \$1 billion. This is \$1.9 billion for miscellaneous indebtedness or obligations that you're going to incur. So you know what's coming down the pipe. You know that you're going to be on the hook for something in the future, some action that this government has taken that you're going to need a whole lot of money to make go away.

That money belongs to taxpayers. It should not belong to this government to justify bad governance, which is what you're going to use it for.

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

Ms. Mitzie Hunter: This Bill 57 buries the gender wage gap. It freezes French-language services—

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Jennifer K. French): Pursuant to the order of the House dated November 28, 2018, I am now required to put the question.

Mr. Fedeli has moved third reading of Bill 57, An Act to enact, amend and repeal various statutes.

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

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

All those opposed to the motion will please say “nay.”

In my opinion, the ayes have it.

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

The division bells rang from 1642 to 1652.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Jennifer K. French): Order. Members will please take their seats. Please take your seats.

Mr. Fedeli has moved third reading of Bill 57, An Act to enact, amend and repeal various statutes.

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

Ayes

Anand, Deepak	Hogarth, Christine	Rasheed, Kaleed
Baber, Roman	Jones, Sylvia	Rickford, Greg
Babikian, Aris	Karahalios, Belinda	Roberts, Jeremy
Barrett, Toby	Ke, Vincent	Romano, Ross
Bethlenfalvy, Peter	Khanjin, Andrea	Sabawy, Sheref
Bouma, Will	Kramp, Daryl	Sandhu, Amarjot
Calandra, Paul	Kusendova, Natalia	Sarkaria, Prabmeet Singh
Cho, Raymond Sung Joon	Lecce, Stephen	Scott, Laurie
Cho, Stan	Martin, Robin	Skelly, Donna
Clark, Steve	McDonell, Jim	Smith, Dave
Coe, Lorne	McKenna, Jane	Smith, Todd

Cuzzetto, Rudy	McNaughton, Monte	Surma, Kinga
Downey, Doug	Miller, Norman	Tangri, Nina
Elliott, Christine	Mulroney, Caroline	Thanigasalam, Vijay
Fedeli, Victor	Oosterhoff, Sam	Thompson, Lisa M.
Fee, Amy	Pang, Billy	Tibollo, Michael A.
Fullerton, Merrilee	Park, Lindsey	Triantafilopoulos, Effie J.
Ghamari, Goldie	Parsa, Michael	Walker, Bill
Gill, Parm	Pettapiece, Randy	Yakabuski, John
Hardeman, Ernie	Phillips, Rod	
Harris, Mike	Piccini, David	

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

Nays

Andrew, Jill	Hassan, Faisal	Sattler, Peggy
Armstrong, Teresa J.	Horwath, Andrea	Schreiner, Mike
Arthur, Ian	Hunter, Mitzie	Shaw, Sandy
Begum, Doly	Karpoche, Bhutla	Simard, Amanda
Bell, Jessica	Kernaghan, Terence	Singh, Gurratan
Berns-McGown, Rima	Lalonde, Marie-France	Singh, Sara
Bisson, Gilles	Lindo, Laura Mae	Stevens, Jennifer (Jennie)
Bourgouin, Guy	Mamakwa, Sol	Stiles, Marit
Fife, Catherine	Mantha, Michael	Taylor, Monique
Fraser, John	Miller, Paul	Vanthof, John
Gates, Wayne	Monteith-Farrell, Judith	West, Jamie
Gélinas, France	Morrison, Suze	Yarde, Kevin
Glover, Chris	Natyshak, Taras	
Gretzky, Lisa	Rakocevic, Tom	

The Clerk of the Assembly (Mr. Todd Decker): The ayes are 61; the nays are 40.

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

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

Third reading agreed to.

REQUEST TO THE INTEGRITY COMMISSIONER

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Jennifer K. French): I beg to inform the House that I have today laid upon the table a request by the member for Brampton North to the Honourable J. David Wake, Integrity Commissioner, for an opinion pursuant to section 30 of the Members' Integrity Act, 1994 on whether the member for Etobicoke North, Doug Ford, has contravened the act or Ontario parliamentary convention.

Orders of the day. I recognize the government House leader.

Hon. Todd Smith: Madam Speaker, Her Honour awaits.

ROYAL ASSENT SANCTION ROYALE

Her Honour the Lieutenant Governor of Ontario entered the chamber of the Legislative Assembly and took her seat upon the throne.

Hon. Elizabeth Dowdeswell (Lieutenant Governor): Pray be seated.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): May it please Your Honour, the Legislative Assembly of the province has, at its present meetings thereof, passed certain bills to which, in the name of and on behalf of the said Legislative Assembly, I respectfully request Your Honour's assent.

The Deputy Clerk (Mr. Trevor Day): The following are the titles of the bills to which Your Honour's assent is prayed:

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

An Act to repeal the Green Energy Act, 2009 and to amend the Electricity Act, 1998, the Environmental Protection Act, the Planning Act and various other statutes / Loi abrogeant la Loi de 2009 sur l'énergie verte et modifiant la Loi de 1998 sur l'électricité, la Loi sur la protection de l'environnement, la Loi sur l'aménagement du territoire et diverses autres lois.

An Act to enact, amend and repeal various statutes / Loi édictant, modifiant et abrogeant diverses lois.

An Act to revive Crystal-Kirkland Mines, Limited.

An Act to revive 2063434 Ontario Limited.

An Act to revive Brownwood Holdings Limited.

An Act to revive 850148 Ontario Inc.

The Clerk of the Assembly (Mr. Todd Decker): In Her Majesty's name, Her Honour the Lieutenant Governor doth assent to these bills.

Au nom de Sa Majesté, Son Honneur la lieutenant-gouverneure sanctionne ces projets de loi.

Hon. Elizabeth Dowdeswell (Lieutenant Governor): Speaker, with your permission: As this long year draws to a close, I want to take a moment to say a very sincere thank you to each and every one of you for the service that you provide to the people of Ontario. The work that you do in this place, in both form and substance, is absolutely critical to a well-functioning democracy, which we hold so precious.

As you return to your families and friends, may I wish you all a most joyous holiday season, however you choose to celebrate it. I hope it will also be a time of reflection for you, and I wish for all of us a year ahead in 2019 that is full of good health, peace and prosperity.

Thank you. Merci. Meegwetch.

Her Honour was then pleased to retire.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Orders of the day? I recognize the government House leader.

Hon. Todd Smith: Speaker, I move adjournment of the House.

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

This House stands adjourned until February 19, 2019.

The House adjourned at 1705.

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
Arnott, Hon. / L'hon. Ted (PC)	Wellington—Halton Hills	Speaker / Président de l'Assemblée législative
Arthur, Ian (NDP)	Kingston and the Islands / Kingston et les Îles	
Baber, Roman (PC)	York Centre / York-Centre	
Babikian, Aris (PC)	Scarborough—Agincourt	
Bailey, Robert (PC)	Sarnia—Lambton	
Barrett, Toby (PC)	Haldimand—Norfolk	
Begum, Doly (NDP)	Scarborough Southwest / Scarborough-Sud-Ouest	
Bell, Jessica (NDP)	University—Rosedale	
Berns-McGown, Rima (NDP)	Beaches—East York / Beaches—East York	
Bethlenfalvy, Hon. / L'hon. Peter (PC)	Pickering—Uxbridge	President of the Treasury Board / Président du Conseil du Trésor
Bisson, Gilles (NDP)	Timmins	Opposition House Leader / Leader parlementaire de l'opposition officielle
Bouma, Will (PC)	Brantford—Brant	
Bourgouin, Guy (NDP)	Mushkegowuk—James Bay / Mushkegowuk—Baie James	
Burch, Jeff (NDP)	Niagara Centre / Niagara-Centre	
Calandra, Paul (PC)	Markham—Stouffville	
Cho, Hon. / L'hon. Raymond Sung Joon (PC)	Scarborough North / Scarborough-Nord	Minister for Seniors and Accessibility / Ministre des Services aux aînés et de l'Accessibilité
Cho, Stan (PC)	Willowdale	
Clark, Hon. / L'hon. Steve (PC)	Leeds—Grenville—Thousand Islands and Rideau Lakes / Leeds—Grenville—Thousand Islands et Rideau Lakes	Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing / Ministre des Affaires municipales et du Logement
Coe, Lorne (PC)	Whitby	
Coteau, Michael (LIB)	Don Valley East / Don Valley-Est	
Crawford, Stephen (PC)	Oakville	
Cuzzetto, Rudy (PC)	Mississauga—Lakeshore	
Des Rosiers, Nathalie (LIB)	Ottawa—Vanier	
Downey, Doug (PC)	Barrie—Springwater—Oro-Medonte	
Dunlop, Jill (PC)	Simcoe North / Simcoe-Nord	
Elliott, Hon. / L'hon. Christine (PC)	Newmarket—Aurora	Deputy Premier / Vice-première ministre Minister of Health and Long-Term Care / Ministre de la Santé et des Soins de longue durée
Fedeli, Hon. / L'hon. Victor (PC)	Nipissing	Chair of Cabinet / Président du Conseil des ministres Minister of Finance / Ministre des Finances
Fee, Amy (PC)	Kitchener South—Hespeler / Kitchener-Sud—Hespeler	
Fife, Catherine (NDP)	Waterloo	
Ford, Hon. / L'hon. Doug (PC)	Etobicoke North / Etobicoke-Nord	Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs / Ministre des Affaires intergouvernementales Premier / Premier ministre
Fraser, John (LIB)	Ottawa South / Ottawa-Sud	
French, Jennifer K. (NDP)	Oshawa	Third Deputy Chair of the Committee of the Whole House / Troisième vice-présidente du comité plénier de l'Assemblée législative

Member and Party / Député(e) et parti	Constituency / Circonscription	Other responsibilities / Autres responsabilités
Fullerton, Hon. / L'hon. Merrilee (PC)	Kanata—Carleton	Minister of Training, Colleges and Universities / Ministre de la Formation et des Collèges et Universités
Gates, Wayne (NDP)	Niagara Falls	
Gélinas, France (NDP)	Nickel Belt	
Ghamari, Goldie (PC)	Carleton	
Gill, Parm (PC)	Milton	
Glover, Chris (NDP)	Spadina—Fort York	
Gravelle, Michael (LIB)	Thunder Bay—Superior North / Thunder Bay—Supérieur-Nord	
Gretzky, Lisa (NDP)	Windsor West / Windsor-Ouest	First Deputy Chair of the Committee of the Whole House / Première vice-présidente du comité plénier de l'Assemblée
Hardeman, Hon. / L'hon. Ernie (PC)	Oxford	Minister of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs / Ministre de l'Agriculture, de l'Alimentation et des Affaires rurales
Harden, Joel (NDP)	Ottawa Centre / Ottawa-Centre	
Harris, Mike (PC)	Kitchener—Conestoga	
Hassan, Faisal (NDP)	York South—Weston / York-Sud— Weston	
Hatfield, Percy (NDP)	Windsor—Tecumseh	Second Deputy Chair of the Committee of the Whole House / Deuxième vice-président du comité plénier de l'Assemblée législative
Hillier, Randy (PC)	Lanark—Frontenac—Kingston	
Hogarth, Christine (PC)	Etobicoke—Lakeshore	
Horwath, Andrea (NDP)	Hamilton Centre / Hamilton-Centre	Leader, Official Opposition / Chef de l'opposition officielle
Hunter, Mitzie (LIB)	Scarborough—Guildwood	
Jones, Hon. / L'hon. Sylvia (PC)	Dufferin—Caledon	Minister of 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	
MacLeod, Hon. / L'hon. Lisa (PC)	Nepean	Minister of Children, Community and Social Services / Ministre des Services à l'enfance et des Services sociaux et communautaires Minister Responsible for Women's Issues / Ministre déléguée à la Condition féminine
Mamakwa, Sol (NDP)	Kiiwetinoong	
Mantha, Michael (NDP)	Algoma—Manitoulin	
Martin, Robin (PC)	Eglinton—Lawrence	
Martow, Gila (PC)	Thornhill	
McDonell, Jim (PC)	Stormont—Dundas—South Glengarry	
McKenna, Jane (PC)	Burlington	
McNaughton, Hon. / L'hon. Monte (PC)	Lambton—Kent—Middlesex	Minister of Infrastructure / Ministre de l'Infrastructure
Miller, Norman (PC)	Parry Sound—Muskoka	
Miller, Paul (NDP)	Hamilton East—Stoney Creek / Hamilton-Est—Stoney Creek	
Mitas, Christina Maria (PC)	Scarborough Centre / Scarborough- Centre	
Monteith-Farrell, Judith (NDP)	Thunder Bay—Atikokan	
Morrison, Suze (NDP)	Toronto Centre / Toronto-Centre	
Mulroney, Hon. / L'hon. Caroline (PC)	York—Simcoe	Attorney General / Procureure générale Minister of Francophone Affairs / Ministre des Affaires francophones
Natyshak, Taras (NDP)	Essex	
Nicholls, Rick (PC)	Chatham-Kent—Leamington	Chair of the Committee of the Whole House / Président du comité plénier de l'Assemblée Deputy Speaker / Vice-président

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	
Phillips, Hon. / L'hon. Rod (PC)	Ajax	Minister of the Environment, Conservation and Parks / Ministre de l'Environnement, de la Protection de la nature et des Parcs
Piccini, David (PC)	Northumberland—Peterborough South / Northumberland—Peterborough-Sud	
Rakocevic, Tom (NDP)	Humber River—Black Creek	
Rasheed, Kaleed (PC)	Mississauga East—Cooksville / Mississauga-Est—Cooksville	
Rickford, Hon. / L'hon. Greg (PC)	Kenora—Rainy River	Minister of Energy, Northern Development and Mines / Ministre de l'Énergie, du Développement du Nord et des Mines Minister of Indigenous Affairs / Ministre des Affaires autochtones
Roberts, Jeremy (PC)	Ottawa West—Nepean / Ottawa-Ouest—Nepean	
Romano, Ross (PC)	Sault Ste. Marie	
Sabawy, Sheref (PC)	Mississauga—Erin Mills	
Sandhu, Amarjot (PC)	Brampton West / Brampton-Ouest	
Sarkaria, Prabmeet Singh (PC)	Brampton South / Brampton-Sud	
Sattler, Peggy (NDP)	London West / London-Ouest	
Schreiner, Mike (GRN)	Guelph	
Scott, Hon. / L'hon. Laurie (PC)	Haliburton—Kawartha Lakes—Brock	Minister of Labour / Ministre du Travail
Shaw, Sandy (NDP)	Hamilton West—Ancaster—Dundas / Hamilton-Ouest—Ancaster—Dundas	
Simard, Amanda (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	
Smith, Hon. / L'hon. Todd (PC)	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	
Thompson, Hon. / L'hon. Lisa M. (PC)	Huron—Bruce	Minister of Education / Ministre de l'Éducation
Tibollo, Hon. / L'hon. Michael A. (PC)	Vaughan—Woodbridge	Minister of 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	
Walker, Hon. / L'hon. Bill (PC)	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	
Yakubski, Hon. / L'hon. John (PC)	Renfrew—Nipissing—Pembroke	Minister of Natural Resources and Forestry / Ministre des Richesses naturelles et des Forêts
Yarde, Kevin (NDP)	Brampton North / Brampton-Nord	
Yurek, Hon. / L'hon. Jeff (PC)	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

Chair / Président: Stephen Crawford
Vice-Chair / Vice-président: Jeremy Roberts
Ian Arthur, Stan Cho
Stephen Crawford, Doug Downey
Sol Mamakwa, David Piccini
Jeremy Roberts, Sandy Shaw
Donna Skelly
Committee Clerk / Greffier: Timothy Bryan

Standing Committee on General Government / Comité permanent des affaires gouvernementales

Chair / Président: Dave Smith
Vice-Chair / Vice-présidente: Natalia Kusendova
Jessica Bell, 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

Chair / Président: John Vanthof
Vice-Chair / Vice-président: Taras Natyshak
Roman Baber, Rudy Cuzzetto
Amy Fee, Vincent Ke
Andrea Khanjin, Marie-France Lalonde
Taras Natyshak, Rick Nicholls
Jeremy Roberts, Marit Stiles
John Vanthof
Committee Clerk / Greffière: Jocelyn McCauley

Standing Committee on Justice Policy / Comité permanent de la justice

Chair / Président: Parm Gill
Vice-Chair / Vice-président: Aris Babikian
Roman Baber, Aris Babikian
Nathalie Des Rosiers, Jill Dunlop
Parm Gill, Lindsey Park
Ross Romano, Prabmeet Singh Sarkaria
Sara Singh, Monique Taylor
Kevin Yarde
Committee Clerk / Greffière: Jocelyn McCauley

Standing Committee on the Legislative Assembly / Comité permanent de l'Assemblée législative

Chair / Présidente: Jane McKenna
Vice-Chair / Vice-président: Vijay Thanigasalam
Robert Bailey, Rima Berns-McGown
Lorne Coe, Michael Coteau
Mike Harris, Faisal Hassan
Jane McKenna, Christina Maria Mitas
Sam Oosterhoff, Gurratan Singh
Vijay Thanigasalam
Committee Clerk / Greffière: Valerie Quioc Lim

Standing Committee on Public Accounts / Comité permanent des comptes publics

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

Standing Committee on Regulations and Private Bills / Comité permanent des règlements et des projets de loi d'intérêt privé

Chair / Président: Randy Hillier
Vice-Chair / Vice-président: Kaleed Rasheed
Will Bouma, Paul Calandra
Lorne Coe, Randy Hillier
Mitzie Hunter, Laura Mae Lindo
Paul Miller, Billy Pang
Kaleed Rasheed, Amarjot Sandhu
Jamie West
Committee Clerk / Greffier: Eric Rennie

Standing Committee on Social Policy / Comité permanent de la politique sociale

Chair / Présidente: Nina Tangri
Vice-Chair / Vice-président: Deepak Anand
Deepak Anand, Doly Begum
Jeff Burch, Amy Fee
Michael Gravelle, Joel Harden
Belinda Karahalios, Robin Martin
Sheref Sabawy, Nina Tangri
Effie J. Triantafilopoulos
Committee Clerk / Greffier: Eric Rennie

Select Committee on Financial Transparency / Comité spécial de la transparence financière

Chair / Président: Prabmeet Singh Sarkaria
Vice-Chair / Vice-président: Doug Downey
Roman Baber, Doug Downey
Catherine Fife, Robin Martin
Lindsey Park, Ross Romano
Prabmeet Singh Sarkaria, Sandy Shaw
John Vanthof
Committee Clerk / Greffière: Valerie Quioc Lim