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LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY
OF ONTARIO

Thursday 15 November 2018

ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE
DE L'ONTARIO

Jeudi 15 novembre 2018

The House met at 0900.

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

ORDERS OF THE DAY

GREEN ENERGY REPEAL ACT, 2018

LOI DE 2018 ABROGEANT
LA LOI SUR L'ÉNERGIE VERTE

Resuming the debate adjourned on November 14, 2018, on the motion for third reading of the following bill:

Bill 34, 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 / Projet de loi 34, 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.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Further debate?

Mr. Dave Smith: Back in the early 1990s, I had the opportunity to work for Ontario Hydro in the customer energy services department. It was the demand management division of Ontario Hydro. At the time, the Darlington nuclear plant was still under construction, so we had some concerns in the province over the amount of electricity generation that we had.

In customer energy services our mandate was to shift the electrical consumption from prime time off to a different time. It was about \$3,200 per kilowatt to build new generation at the time, so we were looking to incentivize different companies and people to make that change, to shift past eight o'clock at night, and we were doing it in the neighbourhood of about \$2,000 per kilowatt to do it.

We had some really interesting ways of changing that consumption. We wanted the total amount of electricity that was being used to remain the same; we just wanted to change the time of day that it was being used. One of the things that came out during that period of time was something called thermal cool storage. Now, anyone who has been in the restaurant industry is aware of how a fountain pop machine works: You plug it in, it has a cooling bank in there and, basically, it freezes an area and you run the pop through that to cool it. Thermal cool storage was basically the same concept. You would use electricity in off-peak hours in a very large facility and you would warehouse, essentially, ice. With that ice, there would be a series of pipes that would run through it, and during the day, to cool your office building or your warehouse, you would run air through all of those pipes to cool it, then back into the warehouse.

It was a great way of taking a very large consumer who needed to cool a facility—a large facility—and move that consumption to a different time of the night. It worked really well because those large producers weren't paying a peak consumption fee. Instead, it brought that down and it flattened their usage. It was one of the great ways at the time that we saw conservation.

The reason I bring this up is that the Green Energy Act, when it was first implemented, was done because we were trying to reduce the amount of electricity that was being used. We wanted to change, or Ontario wanted to change, the style of electrical generation, to move away from something that was a polluter and go to more green energy: solar power, wind, things like that. The focus, though, was taken away from changing people's habits to making electricity a lot more expensive.

When they first came out with the FIT program, they were offering 81 cents per kilowatt to generate electricity with solar panels. At the time, we had just shifted to time-of-use rates and the retail price for electricity was around nine cents per kilowatt, so you had a deficit of 72 cents. Anyone who is in industry, anyone who is in business, anyone who didn't take discovery math, would understand that purchasing at 81 cents and selling at nine cents is not an effective business model. What we ended up doing was that we put that burden on the people of Ontario.

The Liberals also introduced what they called their fair energy act, and they borrowed against the future of our children and our grandchildren to try to reduce the cost today. They gave all kinds of reasons why they did that to reduce the electrical cost, but the reality was that it was a poor decision that they had made. We have this sunk cost now that we're stuck with, and we are all paying for it, because of the foolish decisions that were made.

I'm not suggesting that green energy is a bad thing, because green energy is not a bad thing. But everyone in industry, every business knows that there is a time to adopt technology and there's a time to wait before you adopt technology. Ontario adopted a technology well before its time, and we're paying the price for it today.

One resident in my riding, Kathy Katula, is a very nice lady. She has four children, three grandchildren. She's not much older than I am. At a town hall meeting with Justin Trudeau in 2015, she stood up and talked about the carbon tax, and she used her electrical bill as an example. I'm going to give a quote from her: "Something is wrong now, Mr. Trudeau. My heat and hydro"—and she heats with electricity—"now cost me more than my mortgage. I ... work 75 hours a week, I stay and work 15 hours a day just so I don't lose my home."

She pays more for electricity than she does for her mortgage.

Another quote from her: “I make \$50,000 a year.”

Interjection.

Mr. Dave Smith: It’s not, my NDP opponent across from me has just said, a living wage. Fifty thousand dollars a year is a living wage, but she is “living in energy poverty.”

0910

The people of Ontario should not be struggling to make those choices between heating their home and feeding their family, yet we have a great example of someone who was. She worked hard to provide for her family, but she wasn’t able to because the cost of electricity was way too high.

The Green Energy Act added to hydro rates in a significant way. Prior to 2003, electrical rates in this province were among the lowest in North America. It provided a comparative advantage for our industry over other jurisdictions. Today, electrical rates are among the highest in North America. We have a vast rural part of this province that does not have access to things like natural gas. We’re trying to address that, but there’s still a large part of the province that has to heat with electricity, and they’re not able to pay those bills.

One of the things that’s really interesting, Mr. Speaker—Madam Speaker, I’m sorry. I’ll read another statistic. At the end of 2015, more than 565,000 customers in Ontario were behind on their hydro bills; \$172 million is what they were behind. They were behind because the cost of electricity had tripled in that short period of time. Decisions were made for ideological reasons, not because it was in the best interest of the province, not because it was in the best interest of the people in this province.

Today we can generate more than 36,000 megawatts of electricity at any given time, but we consume only around 21,000 megawatts of electricity. That has been our peak consumption since 2009—14,000 megawatts more than what we need. Now, I mentioned earlier that in the 1990s, when I worked for customer energy services, we were building Darlington at the time. We had a surplus of about 3,500 megawatts at any given time. We now have a surplus of more than 14,000. Interestingly enough, about 7,000 megawatts are generated through solar power. But solar-powered electricity, the Green Energy Act itself, that solar power represents almost a third of the cost of electricity, yet it’s only 11% of what is actually being used. That’s an unsustainable model. We find ourselves in a hole now; in a hole that we have to get out of.

Yesterday one of my NDP friends from across the way suggested that cancelling the Green Energy Act was not going to save anyone any money. I will go based on her theory that cancelling green energy is not going to save money, but I’m going to say one thing to that: When you find yourself in a hole, the first thing you need to do is stop digging. Cancelling the Green Energy Act stops the digging. We’re not getting any deeper.

During the summer, we cancelled some renewable energy projects, saving Ontarians more than \$700 million.

Almost \$800 million was saved by doing that. That’s a cost that would have been added on to people, that would have been digging the hole deeper. We’re not doing that. We’re making sure that people do not have to choose between heating their home and buying food; between heating their home and paying their mortgage; between keeping the lights on and being able to read. We can’t have a province where people cannot afford to live in their houses. That’s not what we’re here to do. We’re here to try to make life easier for everyone.

I talked a little bit about our peak capacity and our generation capacity. Now, I’ve heard people as well from the NDP say to me at different times, “Green energy is not polluting. It’s saving the environment.” I will agree with you there as well, that solar panels do not produce greenhouse gases once they have been produced. But they do when they’re being manufactured.

Here’s the problem I have with it: We produce about 7,000 megawatts of electricity through green energy, but we have 14,000 megawatts of surplus. We didn’t need to build a single solar farm, we did not need to erect a single windmill, and we would still have 7,000 more megawatts of electricity than what we can consume. The Green Energy Act was an ideological act put forward not because it was in the best interest of this province, not because it did anything for the environment—because it did not. We shut down all of the coal-fired plants. We did not need that electricity. We did not have to replace it with something that was costing 81 cents per kilowatt to generate. It’s not sustainable. It’s not sustainable.

When they implemented the Green Energy Act, they didn’t take into account what the municipalities wanted. It was thrust upon them, and it was thrust upon mostly rural Ontario. The ideology that the Liberals had at the time—they were predominantly in the GTA. They wanted to make sure that someone else was paying the price and not their ridings. So they thrust it into other ridings, and they forced the municipalities to have it.

Let me tell you about my own riding: \$38 million was spent refurbishing and improving the airport in Peterborough. We now have the largest runway between Pearson and Ottawa. It was done to enhance a lot of the businesses. It was done to bring industry into our area. But the arrogance of the Liberals: They decided to approve a windmill farm that would block aircraft from landing at the Peterborough airport that had just been expanded. We fought against the Liberals for a number of years, and they did make some concessions. The problem is, the runway can sustain an Airbus A310—it’s long enough for it—but the turbulence caused by those windmills prevents an airplane of that size from landing in Peterborough.

It was not a wise decision. They did not take into account the needs of the municipality when they did that. In fact, they limited the municipality in what they could do. They took away opportunities for people in my riding by doing that, and there was no benefit to it—zero benefit. We did not need that electricity. We were already over capacity.

The Green Energy Act was also supposed to be about being green and looking after the environment. Madam

Speaker, every time I drive into Queen's Park, I come down Highway 115 and I enter the Oak Ridges moraine. The Oak Ridges moraine is a section of this province that was set aside to protect it. Industry couldn't build in that area, yet the Liberal government approved an industrial windmill farm where they laid massive concrete pads over top of green space, destroying a section of the Oak Ridges moraine because of their ideology. They said this was about green energy, this was about saving the environment, and yet they destroyed a section that had been set aside to protect the environment.

I don't understand the logic behind that. They wiped out a section of the Oak Ridges moraine. The people in that area did not want those windmills. They did not want that type of energy being generated there. They fought against it, but it fell on deaf ears, because the Liberals just did not care. Their interest was in their ideology.

0920

Two concessions from my house is some of the best farmland in this province. I'm proud of the rural area that I live in. I'm proud of the farmers who are in my area. Farmland that has been farmed for more than 150 years has a proposal for solar to be placed on it. They're going to pave over—they were going to pave over—prime agricultural land, farmland, to put up a solar farm. They're closing a farm to do this. Luckily, it has been cancelled. They were planning to wipe out agricultural land.

There is nothing more green than a farm. Farmers look after their land, they look after the environment, because it's their livelihood, yet the Liberals were planning on placing cement over top of prime agriculture and taking away that agriculture. It pitted a company against the residents in my area. The people in my area were very upset about it. They protested against it. There was meeting after meeting after meeting. There were discussions with the Liberal government, and it all fell on deaf ears. They weren't interested in facts; they were only interested in their ideology.

Cancelling the Green Energy Act is the right decision to make. It stops digging that hole any deeper. It allows us, then, to make the changes that we need to make to start to reduce the electrical costs for the people in this province, to bring us back to a position where Ontario can truly be open for business again. It brings us back to a position where we can start to have that comparative advantage once more, so that businesses, so that industry, can thrive. If we don't do this, we're making the hole deeper. This is the right thing to do.

The previous Liberal government shoved wind and solar farms upon us, and they did it in a way that was not respectful of the people of this province. They did it in a way that did not consider the needs of the municipality. They did it in a way that appeased the voter base that they had in the urban centres that they had, and they pitted urban ridings against rural ridings. That's not how you build a conducive province. That's not how you lift the people of the province up. You lift the people up in this province by giving them opportunity, by making sure that tomorrow is better than today and the day after tomorrow is better than tomorrow was.

That's what we're doing. We're building a better Ontario. We're making Ontario open for business again. We made that promise to the people of this province and we are keeping that promise.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Jennifer K. French): Questions and comments?

Mr. Jeff Burch: Thank you to the member from Peterborough-Kawartha. I'll tell you, if I was a Conservative I'd be staying away from the whole topic of hydro-electricity, because I think we all know that it was the Conservative Party, the last Conservative government, that set the stage for privatization. They dismantled Ontario Hydro into three separate crown agencies to get it ready for privatization. They split it into generation, transmission and system management, and that was for the purpose of privatizing hydro.

Why is hydro expensive? Because it was privatized. So the root cause—all you have to do is get a big mirror and put it in front of you while you talk: That's who is responsible for the rise in hydro prices. It's the Conservative Party and the last Conservative government that set the stage for the privatization of hydro.

Another thing, Speaker, is that cancelling someone else's plan for the environment is not having a plan. That's just cancelling someone else's plan. As I've said before, I don't know how a member in this House, when the two greatest challenges we face as a society are income inequality and climate change—and they've failed hugely in their first 100 days on both.

Here we have climate change as the greatest challenge we face. How do you go home to your family and say, "I'm a member of provincial Parliament and we have no plan in the year 2018 for climate change"? No plan whatsoever. They keep saying, "Oh, we're going to bring a plan forward." Well, why didn't they bring a plan forward before they cancelled the current plan, which, actually—as they know very well—had a number of good things in it, which my friend from Kingston is going to talk about, issues around the economic development potential that renewable power offers. Those are the things we should be talking—

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Jennifer K. French): Thank you. Further questions and comments?

Mrs. Nina Tangri: Today we're talking about the repealing of the Green Energy Act. Firstly, the Liberal Green Energy Act allowed our energy rates to triple, drastically—drastically—crippling our manufacturing sector. Because of this, thousands and thousands of jobs were lost in the province of Ontario. I call this the "Liberal triple cripple," Madam Speaker. Unfortunately, it really hurt all Ontarians.

Local communities lost the ability to control where facilities were being built. Our government will now restore and respect our local communities. The people of Ontario should decide. They should have the power to say no to these unneeded energy projects in their communities. But at the same time, we still promote efficient standards and energy conservation, which is so important for all of us here in Ontario. High energy prices have made it very,

very difficult for many families now having to choose between eating and heating, and that should never have to be a choice or an option for all the people of Ontario.

In conclusion, we—our government for the people of Ontario—want to make sure that we do absolutely respect our local communities. We respect our businesses and our manufacturing sector. We are now open for business. We're now bringing businesses to Ontario. Businesses are finally starting to expand and hire more people in much-better-paying jobs. That's why I fully support cancelling what I call, again, the "Liberal triple cripple" Green Energy Act.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Jennifer K. French): Further questions and comments?

Mr. Ian Arthur: I just want to clarify a couple of things on the end of the speech from the member from Peterborough.

Disturbance of the ground on a solar farm is about 5%, and about 40% of the surface is over-sailed by the actual solar panels. Because of how they're designed, they actually rotate so there's never any single part of the ground underneath the solar farm that's necessarily shaded all the time. This actually opens the door for some incredible dual-use purposes. Farmers, I think we can all agree, need as many forms of income as we can possibly give them. They are some of the hardest-working people in Ontario, and if we can give them a competitive advantage by building a solar farm that allows for grazing, that allows for growing, this is just smart design. This is saying we need both.

We need energy. We need our prime farmland to produce food. We can actually do both with a little bit of intelligent design. Now, I'm the first to admit that I don't know that the Liberals' design was particularly intelligent. I'm not going to defend all of those solar farms, but I think that it's a baby-with-the-bathwater mentality. We are saying, "We don't like badly designed technology, so let's just not pursue that technology at all." We can actually do both. I think that the future is in renewables and I think the future is in supporting our farmers. We can absolutely do both, Madam Speaker.

I would like to see a plan from this government where they pursue renewable energy, where they invest in where the future is inevitably going and where they continue to support farmers at the same time. Farmers need the extra income, and it's very sad to hear the member from Peterborough against farmers earning that extra income.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Jennifer K. French): Further questions and comments?

0930

Mr. Paul Calandra: I want to thank the member for his comments. He was bang-on on a lot of the comments, but ultimately, how can you not talk about what the NDP are saying here? They're talking out of both sides of their mouth. They're having such a difficult time talking about this.

They talk about the high cost of hydro, but what they're doing by saying that they support the Green Energy Act is telling the people of Ontario that they actually want to

increase their hydro rates going forward. That's what they're saying. They say that the Green Energy Act wasn't a good act the way the Liberals did it, yet they voted for it. Not only did they vote for the Green Energy Act, they voted for 97% of everything that party did, and now they're trying to say, "No, we didn't support that." Madam Speaker, they are all over the map.

I'm excited that the member for Kingston and the Islands is coming up next, because he's going to talk about how the price of green energy has come down. He's going to cite Bloomberg, but he's not going to talk about the fact that Bloomberg has also said that if we brought in an Energy East pipeline and took oil from the west, we could bring down our cost of energy even more.

This party talks about farmers, yet it was Environmental Defence and the David Suzuki Foundation, two hyper-partisan organizations, that gleefully brought this policy forward, the Green Energy Act, which is responsible in my riding for evicting farmers.

They want green energy because they say the price has come down, but they still want to subsidize it. They talk about solar energy and they're happy to pay 19 cents a kilowatt hour. They will talk about Alberta and Saskatchewan paying 3.5 cents, but they're happy that Ontario will pay six cents for wind energy.

It's not fair to the people of Ontario. What we're saying to the people of Ontario is that if you want to put more money back in your pocket, if you want to bring jobs and investment back, then the best way to start to do that is to bring the cost of energy down. Repealing the Green Energy Act starts us on the right path, but we're not done there—

Interjections.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Jennifer K. French): Order.

I return to the member from Peterborough—Kawartha for his response.

Mr. Dave Smith: I'd like to thank the members from Niagara Centre, from Mississauga—Streetsville, from Kingston and the Islands and from Markham—Stouffville for their comments.

I'm going to address the gentleman from Kingston and the Islands first: Have you been to a solar farm? Have you seen that it's only four and a half feet off the ground? My Ford 800 series tractor is six feet tall. I am 6 foot 3, almost 6 foot 4. Sitting on my tractor, I can't get underneath one of the solar panels. Most farmers have tractors. In fact, I don't know of a farmer who doesn't have a tractor. They can't take that tractor into the area where those solar panels are, so they can't turn that land.

You could say that they could have something other than cash crops. Sure they could, but the farm that I'm talking in particular about was a corn farm. That corn farmer cannot grow corn, because corn is going to grow over six feet tall, which would then block, if he was able to plant it in the area of solar panels, the solar panels. However, as you said, the solar panels will turn so that they stay with the sun, so the corn can never grow to its proper height because it would be blocked constantly by those solar panels.

I admire that you're trying to put forward an idea that might work, but it's a vast project with a half-vast idea, unfortunately.

What we need to do is we need to get this province back in the position where it is the economic engine of this country. We know that agri-business right now makes up the largest portion of our GDP. Some 850,000 people work in agri-business. Paving over farmland is not an effective way of getting the environment back. It's not an effective way of growing our economy, and that's what we need to do.

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

Mr. Ian Arthur: Green energy is a topic I have followed for years, and I'm happy to be able to contribute to the debate on this bill. I very much appreciate the contributions to the debate that have come from both sides of the House so far, although in particular I would like to point to the member from Toronto–Danforth for his contribution.

Let me begin by saying that I believe the transition to green, renewable energy is both inevitable and ultimately good. Removing ourselves from this sector is short-sighted, both for our planet and for the good jobs needed to make Ontario thrive. Climate change is the single biggest threat faced by our province, our country and, in particular, will be felt by my millennial generation and those who come after us.

In light of some of the fearmongering that has been pursued by this government in relation to green energy, I think it's important to outline a few facts about this sector. It is one of the fastest-growing industries on the planet. In January 2017, the World Economic Forum stated that solar and wind had become the cheapest form of new energy on the planet and that prices had continued to drop—55% in the last five months alone. Solar is now priced at 3 cents per kilowatt hour, and it's projected to go to 1.5 cents per kilowatt hour in the next couple of years. Paired with storage, renewables is the future of generation and is unavoidable.

I'd like to draw attention to a piece of research by Morgan Stanley: "Numerous key markets recently reached an inflection point where renewables have become the cheapest form of new ... generation."

It goes on to say that this is a "dynamic we see spreading to nearly every country we cover by 2020." Let that sink in: In nearly every country, renewables will be the cheapest form of new energy by 2020. That's just over a year away.

Here we are in Ontario. We got into green energy under the Liberals when it was unaffordable, and now we're paying to get out of green energy when it is affordable so we can once again pay more for electricity. Electricity is measured in decades. We need to set ourselves up now for the future. We're setting ourselves up to pay more. In what money-in-pockets, cost-saving world does this make sense?

The smart money—the money being spent by investors rather than that which is currently being wasted by this government fighting the inevitable, is moving into renewables. More than half of assets under management in

Canada now consider sustainability, with assets in this area topping \$2.1 trillion at the end of 2017. In the US, there is almost \$12 trillion currently invested in sustainable growth areas. The area has grown 400% since 2010.

If this government cannot arrive at the same conclusion as funds like BlackRock, one is forced to wonder how deep in the sand they have managed to bury their heads. But when I think of how this government is gutting legislation left, centre and, actually, right, surprisingly, just a few scant weeks ago—they got rid of a lucrative market-based solution for fighting climate change—a market-based solution that was pioneered by Presidents Reagan and Bush. So I guess the answer is that it's pretty deep in the sand indeed.

There is no doubt that the Liberal green energy plan was flawed and that energy costs in Ontario were too high. But to say, as this government so often has, that the high costs are solely the result of the Green Energy Act is a massive oversimplification that does not reflect the complexity of the disaster that the Liberal Party of Ontario so meticulously crafted. That system relied on ever-increasing amounts of private generation and distribution. The privatization of our distribution network, Hydro One, was the defining issue of the election for so many across this province. The borrowing scheme concocted by the Ontario Liberals and adopted by this very government I stand across from now—once denounced and now embraced—will add billions to our debt, although they care little, as the burden of that debt will be primarily on the shoulders of the youngest in this chamber and across Ontario.

Yes, in the effort to kick-start the sector and place ourselves at the forefront of the green energy revolution that will inevitably happen, the Green Energy Act did increase our bills. But today, it's important to understand that it is a small portion of our sector. It does account for a larger portion of what we pay. But we wanted to make sure that we were at the forefront of this growing area, and now we are backing out of it.

This act before us has become a political target. When one gets into the nuts and bolts of what Bill 34, the current legislation, does, one can see that the government understands this as well. The outcome of this bill is a politically motivated restructuring of policy so that it favours those whom this government deems to call friends. Put another way: This bill fails to address the shortcomings of the Liberal act and in so many respects worsens our province's ability to provide affordable, sustainable energy in Ontario.

0940

The previous Liberal government of the day decided to buy into technology at the very top of their cost curves, but the crux of the issue before us is why we would possibly back out now that those costs have moved in our favour. This government has decided to once again choose the more expensive option for power in our province. They have done this by keeping the worst aspects of the Green Energy Act by moving them into other acts, and by creating an uneven playing field that is tipped against green energy generation in Ontario.

The legislation does this in two ways. First, it states that renewables, and only renewable energy projects, must

demonstrate demand before they can be pursued—demonstrate demand. This may be well and good, but I would question why this government is forcing this on green energy markets and not everyone else, and also, why the ability of the market shouldn't just dictate the demand. To me, that sounds like rhetoric that should be coming from that side of the House.

Anyone wanting to build a gas plant, refurbish a nuclear plant or, God forbid, build another coal plant would have to provide no such justification to do so. It is almost as if this government knows the industry is moving towards full renewable generation and is looking for ways to protect the interests of those not involved in this wickedly growing section of the world economy. This is a blatant attempt to alter and influence the functioning of the energy market beyond what the market would naturally dictate.

There is a second aspect that clearly and directly targets renewable energy, and that is the right of refusal, without appeal, given to municipalities with regard to green energy projects. I support giving municipalities more say in what happens in their jurisdictions, but I would ask why this government does not feel it necessary to give this same power to municipalities when it comes to gas, nuclear and coal. Why is it that the province is retaining the ability to force unwanted potential fossil fuel and nuclear generation projects onto the very municipalities they are claiming to be giving independence to? The energy market should be competitive, cost-effective and open, but this legislation creates an investment environment that is anything but technology-agnostic.

These two items alone should indicate that the government is moving in the wrong direction. More importantly, they illustrate the stark contrast between the open-for-business rhetoric and the reality: the practical, on-the-ground outcomes of their legislation.

One does not have to look far outside our borders to see leadership in renewable energy. Headline after headline, study after study, and investment after investment all point to the remarkable future of green energy. Those who lead will thrive, while, under the mis-leadership of this government, we in Ontario will fall behind.

Some of the most recent headlines: Overseas, the city of Bristol has committed to becoming carbon-neutral by 2030. This just happened on Wednesday.

On November 7, New Zealand passed a bill banning new permits for offshore oil and gas exploration. Their prime minister stated, "We all signed up to the Paris agreement that said we're moving towards carbon-neutrality, and now we need to act on it." She states, "The whole world is going in this direction."

I'm in the midst of drafting a letter to Prime Minister Ardern asking her to correct this statement with an asterisk for Ontario and the red US states. My, what company this government chooses to keep.

California, the fifth-largest economy in the world, has committed to 100% renewable energy by 2045. They have rewritten their building codes, requiring all new residential homes to come equipped with solar panels.

But this didn't happen overnight. The state began investing years ago, when those technologies were more

expensive, and now are reaping the benefits of that investment. Their transition was methodical, environmentally conscious and fiscally responsible. They arrived at their targets years ahead of schedule.

What California did to achieve this was to steadily raise its floor, looking higher and moving in a consistent direction. They provided a stable, predictable, long-term business environment which draws innovators and market risk-takers. Market dynamism eats targets for breakfast.

If only this government could find some actual business savvy rather than the rhetoric and slogan-filled prostration we hear every day, and provide the regulatory certainty needed for businesses to flourish in Ontario.

One of the most fascinating examples of intelligent renewable energy policy is the Hornsdale Power Reserve in Australia. Paired with a wind farm, this massive smart battery has demonstrated how a grid can be effectively managed with a very high share of wind and solar and do so faster, cleaner, and smarter than traditional technologies. Built in just 62 days, this has played a key role in managing peak demand while also earning money for the state where it is located. It has been so effective at generating revenue that it is projected to pay for itself in a few short years. South Australia, based on the massive success of this project, aims to have shares of wind and solar, which are already at 50%, jump to 71% by 2021 and 100% by 2025.

Storage is key, and was a major missing part of the previous Liberal government's legislation, but it's not even touched on in this government's legislation. May I remind the House that we currently pay 13 cents per kilowatt hour during peak times and six cents at off-peak times. Imagine if there had been some foresight and we had invested in storage paired with renewable energy at three cents per kilowatt hour.

In Alberta, the government has just increased solar rebates for homeowners and not-for-profits. They have committed to issuing contracts so that 55% of the government's energy needs are to be filled by solar, and these actions are creating jobs. The green energy sector has grown 500% in three years in Alberta. Alberta is now leading and getting good deals on large-scale renewable energy projects as well. Last December, a competitive supply auction gave the province wind energy at 3.7 cents per kilowatt hour. That's 72% less than what we pay during peak times, and nearly half off the off-peak price in Ontario.

This success in securing good contracts on behalf of their citizens is not limited to Alberta. In Saskatchewan, the average bid for 29 projects competing for a licence to build was the same 3.7 cents. The average was 3.7 cents. The winning bid was dramatically below that.

It would seem that the government here in Ontario has no intention of being part of this cheap power. I must assume that this is either because they have no faith in their own ability to secure the sort of good contracts that our counterparts in other provinces are able to, or that they could secure cheap renewable contracts but are, in fact, protecting vested interests in expensive fossil fuel and nuclear-based generation, and they plan to do so on the

backs of the hard-working people of Ontario with the tax dollars that they collect.

While renewables are projected to continue decreasing in cost, nuclear is set to increase to 16 cents per kilowatt hour in just a few short years. Think on that for a moment. A projection for wind and solar under three cents and a projection for nuclear for 16 cents: Which would you choose if you were trying to get a good deal for the people of Ontario?

Sadly, the actions being taken by this Conservative government will take its toll on the people of Ontario in many, many other ways. Wind energy investment in Ontario alone was responsible for 64,000 direct and indirect full-time-equivalent positions. Globally, 50% of growth in new power generation in 2017 was in renewable energy—50%. Why are we excluding ourselves from this market? We hear so often about the losses of manufacturing jobs, but the government must address the changing nature of manufacturing. These are global trends that this province cannot escape. The manufacturing jobs of the future are in renewable energy, in the construction and operation of the future planetary energy system.

There are currently 26 facilities in Ontario that once built cars and trucks that were to be scrapped in 2008, but they're still making things. The workers were retrained, they were rehired and now they are building solar panels and windmills. Manufacturing jobs—if you really want manufacturing jobs, they are in renewables. Invest in them, bring those jobs to Ontario, and make sure that we can grow and thrive as a province.

Furthermore, these jobs are often in rural and remote areas of the province, areas that need the sort of investment that comes from green energies. These projects, as we've just discussed, help farmers, with one estimate stating that 60% of the Ontario farming community actually has renewable energy on their properties and receives payment from it.

0950

I think we can all agree that farming is a really hard job, so why is the government bent on not allowing the farms to benefit from energy generation and the income that comes with it? I don't understand how this government does not see the growth potential this bill excludes us from. Global investments are being made in renewables. The sector is experiencing massive and increasing investment, and yet here in Ontario we are shutting the door on that very investment. This government has shown the world that this province does not have the stable regulatory environment needed for investments, and we will begin to feel the consequences of this exclusion.

Whenever someone feels a need to plant signs proclaiming something to the world, like those ridiculous "Open for Business" signs, something is fishy. Actions speak louder than words, and this government's actions have done anything but open this province for business.

Action needs to be taken now. The IESO said that we will once again experience an electricity shortfall within the next five years—five years. We need to begin investing in the cheapest form of energy—which is renewables—now,

so that we can meet our future demand. In the world of electricity planning, five years is not a very long time.

The good news is that solar and wind, if made in Ontario—creating manufacturing jobs in Ontario—have the fastest lead times of any electricity option available. And Canadians support renewables: 93% support solar; 86% support wind; 91% support hydro power. I guess the remainder is made up of folks like the outdated mayonnaise collection that was found on the cover of a recently published cover of Maclean's magazine.

We need to take action because the health of our citizens is at risk. Emissions from natural gas combustion in Toronto are related to 23% of premature deaths and 20% of hospitalizations from air pollution in Toronto. Climate change is causing unprecedented increases in health costs as they relate to vector-borne diseases like West Nile and Lyme disease. Health outcomes are yet another reason to move away from fossil fuels and into renewable energies.

Investing in renewables is a key aspect of our obligation to fight climate change. If action is not taken, we will end up paying for our mistakes. The eastern Ontario drought of 2016 cost farmers millions. The flooding across our province cost huge amounts and the wildfires are going to cost even more.

This government ignores the need for decisive leadership in green energy technology and the battle against climate change at their own peril. This threat is existential. It transcends borders, and our response should transcend political boundaries.

It is mobilizing people across the planet and here in Canada. Just last week, tens of thousands took to the streets in Quebec demanding decisive action on climate change—50,000 people in Montreal alone, Madam Speaker; and 150,000 people signed a petition in one week in Quebec.

Climate change will be the defining issue of elections to come. It has affected and will continue to affect the people of Ontario in ever-increasing ways, and it will do so much to bring this government down, for you have chosen to land on the wrong side of history. This is the era of climate change and the battle for our planet. The numbers of youth and others who are joining this movement grow every day and their voices have moved from sounding the alarm to saying that we will not accept this prescribed future. This future that was defined by the old and wealthy will finally be defined by us.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Jennifer K. French): Questions and comments?

Mr. Rudy Cuzzetto: I'm proud to rise here today to support Bill 34, the Green Energy Repeal Act, introduced by the Minister of Energy, Northern Development and Mines.

I'd like to read from an editorial in the Globe and Mail from December 2, 2015. It's titled "Ontario's Liberals Have Completely Broken the Electricity System."

"Ontario's Auditor General announced that, between 2006 and 2014, thanks to incompetence and mismanagement on the part of the province's Liberal government, Ontarians overpaid for electricity to the tune of \$37

billion. And over the next 18 years, consumers will be overpaying to the tune of another \$133 billion.”

Madam Speaker, that’s \$170 billion. That’s more than the GDP of most provinces in Canada. It’s more than the GDP of most countries in the world.

The Globe tried to put these numbers into context: “Electricity overpriced by \$170 billion is equivalent to \$12,326 in excess costs for every man, woman and child in Ontario. Over 27 years, that averages out to \$457 per person” every year. For a typical family, “we’re talking about a power utility bill roughly \$1,188 higher than it should be” every year.

“[T]his isn’t a \$16 glass of orange juice. It’s you and your family buying 85 of these \$16 glasses of orange juice this year and next year and every year after, forever.”

Madam Speaker, that was the energy policy of the previous Liberal government. I urge all members to join with me to support the Green Energy Repeal Act.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Jennifer K. French): Questions and comments?

Mr. Joel Harden: Thank you, member from Kingston and the Islands, for that fantastic speech. I really hope our friends from the Conservative Party were listening, because there are nuggets in there that we can agree upon. We may not have the same political perspective, but hopefully we share an interest in math.

I’ve been hearing a lot about math, Madam Speaker, in this chamber lately. This government wants to mandate a math test on teachers. My brother is a teacher—he’s sitting in the members’ gallery right over there—and I wonder if we can entertain a quick math question in the one minute and 25 seconds I have left. My friends in the Conservative Party are all about fiscal prudence. They want to save the province money. That’s part of the understanding, at least that I have, of why they want to repeal the Green Energy Act.

At this moment right now, our reliance on centralized nuclear power costs—the member from Markham–Stouffville and I have jostled on this a little bit, but depending on whose numbers you believe—between six and eight cents a kilowatt hour. We could, right now, save the province of Ontario millions, perhaps a billion dollars, if we imported hydroelectricity from Quebec at a cost of five cents a kilowatt hour. So, Madam Speaker, what’s higher, six to eight cents a kilowatt hour, or five cents a kilowatt hour?

Now, I have a PhD in political science, not math, but I’m going to venture a guess that five cents is cheaper than six to eight cents, and I wonder why this government is resolutely saying no to the notion that a neighbouring jurisdiction to ours is prepared to give us hydroelectricity to help us deal with a sunset industry, the nuclear industry, which is what I want to talk about in the time I have later on this morning. We have to deal with the legacy that this is attaching to our province. If our friends are actually interested in saving the public money in the province of Ontario, let’s look at options that are very clear, very available and highly affordable.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Jennifer K. French): Questions and comments?

Mr. Paul Calandra: Well, simply put, to the member opposite, the reason we’re not taking power from Quebec

is because we actually don’t need the power from Quebec. Why would we put more debt on the backs of Ontario taxpayers and future generations for power that we don’t need? Look, in 2009, when the Liberals and the NDP and their friends with Environmental Defence and the David Suzuki Foundation were crafting this Green Energy Act, they told us that this would solve all the problems. It would give us abundant hydro power, it would be cheap, it would create lots of jobs, but more importantly, it would allow us to catch up to other jurisdictions—Europe—who are so far ahead of us.

And here we are, 10 years later, and apparently we still haven’t caught up. Renewables account for 10% of energy generation, but 40% of the global adjustment. The member talks about Alberta and Saskatchewan, how they’re at the forefront, creating manufacturing jobs. It’s down to 3.5 cents, maybe even less, I think he said, yet they did it without a green energy act, Madam Speaker. They did it without a green energy act.

The member talks about the jobs in manufacturing. It is uncontested. Some 75,000 jobs were directly lost in manufacturing because of the high price of hydro in this province. That is an absolute fact. That doesn’t even account for the losses of jobs in the mining sector and other sectors of the economy, just in the manufacturing sector.

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What the members opposite don’t seem to realize is that you do not build a climate change plan on the backs of energy ratepayers. You do not do that. They are twisting themselves into knots on this one. They want to keep the Green Energy Act, which is responsible for billions of dollars’ worth of debt. They want to keep subsidizing the industry, and what we’re saying is no. It has to stop. We have to put Ontario taxpayers first. That’s what this act does. If you truly want to respect taxpayers, bring the cost of hydroelectricity down across the board, bring back jobs to Ontario, then support ending the programs that cost this province billions of dollars.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Jennifer K. French): Further questions and comments?

Mr. Terence Kernaghan: We heard the member opposite from Markham–Stouffville talk about the high price of hydro. I’d like him to take a look at an actual campaign platform. I know the Conservatives didn’t have one—not a fully costed one and not one that was presented to the public. But if you take a look at the NDP platform, that was one in which we suggested that the way to reduce hydro prices was to buy back hydro. We know that a publicly owned utility working in the best interests of the public—something that focuses on being cost-efficient and on cost savings for people, instead of privatization—would be something that this province needs.

We heard the member from Niagara Centre so eloquently speak about how the last Conservative government started breaking up the Ontario hydro system so that they could increase privatization. Privatization never benefits the people of Ontario. It means higher prices. It means less health and safety. It is a disaster. Time and time again, it is proven.

I'd also like to indicate to this House that we should be taking a look at the models from Sweden. Over in Sweden, they take and turn waste into energy. They incinerate their waste. In fact, in Helsingborg, they incinerate 700,000 tons of garbage per year and are able to turn that into heating and into electricity. This also reduces their reliance on landfills. We know that there is less methane gas put into the environment, which is 20 times more potent than carbon. In fact, only 1% of Sweden's waste ends up in landfills.

Yet we have this government, which is so intent on moving backwards with—as the member from Kingston and the Islands also said, they're more concerned about ridiculous signs than they are about the future of people in Ontario. I think it's a disgrace, and I think we need to be thinking about what environment our children will be inheriting.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Jennifer K. French): I return to—

Interjection.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Jennifer K. French): Order, please. I return to the member for Kingston and the Islands for his response.

Mr. Ian Arthur: If this was simply the repeal of the Green Energy Act, I might actually struggle more with what I was going to say and how I was going to argue in this chamber. It may have been more like the outdated Drive Clean program, which you didn't actually hear me speaking against.

But—this is the fundamental point of my argument—this is not just about the repeal of the Green Energy Act and the outdated preference it gave to the expense that was green energy in the past. This creates an uneven playing field for future renewables in Ontario. It is not just a repeal. It does more than simply getting rid of something. You have replaced it with something. You've replaced it with something that is going to block green energy from flourishing in Ontario, and that is short-sighted. That is going to exclude us from jobs, exclude us from investment and set us years behind the rest of the world. Sadly, it will be long after this government's time has come to an end that we will end up paying for the true cost of these incredibly poor decisions.

It is not a repeal. It is a repeal and a replacement with something that favours outdated technologies which cost a lot of money. It's just mind-boggling to hear them speaking of cost savings and how green energy was so expensive and then to be faced with the cheapest possible form of new generation, which we are going to need within five years, and to push that aside and say, "Nah, we're not going to do that." To me, that points to the ideological part of this legislation, the part that really is driving it. It's an ideological question, not a practical policy question, to save Ontario money.

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

Mr. Mike Schreiner: I rise today to defend Ontario's place in the fast-growing clean economy. The Ford government may be interested in building goofy signs that

we're open for business, but their actions actually tell a completely different story. Unfortunately, Bill 34 tells job creators in the clean economy that Ontario is closed for business to the fastest-growing sector in the global economy. The \$26-trillion clean economy is an opportunity Ontario cannot close the door to.

Globally, two thirds of power generation investment last year was in renewable energy. China, believe it or not, led the way with 45% of solar installations in the world. The reason it's happening is not necessarily because it's green; it's because it's the lowest-cost option. Globally, more people now work in the renewable energy sector than in the oil and gas sector. Again, China is leading the way, believe it or not, with 3.5 million people employed in renewables.

Even in Canada, as we speak today, more people work in the renewable energy sector in Canada than work in the oil and gas sector. This is despite the fact the oil and gas sector has received, and continues to receive, billions of dollars in subsidies, and they've received those subsidies for decades now. Studies show that every dollar invested in renewable energy creates seven times more jobs than the same dollar—

Interjections.

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

Interjection.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Jennifer K. French): Stop the clock, please.

The members from Ottawa Centre and Markham-Stouffville will respect the fact that they are not indeed the speakers at this time. Thank you.

Interjection.

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

I return to the member from Guelph.

Mr. Mike Schreiner: I appreciate that. Thank you, Madam Speaker.

For every dollar invested in renewable energy, you create seven times more jobs than the same dollar invested in the oil and gas sector. So I ask, why is the Premier closing the door to the clean economy in Ontario?

On behalf of my constituents in Guelph, I want to be on the record today that Guelph is open for business when it comes to the clean economy. Despite the Premier's anti-clean-economy actions, I want investors and job creators around the world to know: Come to Guelph and invest.

Guelph city council has made a commitment to be carbon neutral by 2050. They've made a commitment that our city will be powered by 100% renewable energy by 2050. Guelph is skating to where the puck is going to be, not where it's been. I believe we should follow the Great One's ideas when it comes to economic investment. I want those same economic benefits to flow to communities all across Ontario.

Let's be clear. The previous Liberal government made huge mistakes in the way they implemented the Green Energy Act. As a matter of fact, I was the first political party leader in Ontario, way back in 2010, to speak out

against the way in which the Liberals were implementing the Green Energy Act.

Hon. Sylvia Jones: Not true. I have a speech on it.

Mr. Mike Schreiner: No, no. I have a speech on it, too. Believe me, a lot of environmental groups called me and were very upset about my criticism of it, because I knew it would lead to problems further down the road.

Here's the reality. The previous government bought a little bit of renewable energy at a really high price, but now that the price is really low, the current government is getting out of the game. This buy-high, sell-low strategy just doesn't work. It doesn't work for investing; it doesn't work for economics.

I'm going to be voting against Bill 34, by the way. I'm mostly voting against it because it singles out, as the member from Kingston and the Islands pointed out, renewable energy to prove market demand and doesn't apply it to any other source of energy. Why is the government targeting renewables and not looking at the big picture?

I know that the whips won't allow you to vote against Bill 34, so I want to talk about two things that I'd ask the members opposite to consider as we move forward. First of all, make it clear to global investors that you may be opposed to the way in which the Liberals rolled out renewable energy, but you're not opposed to renewable energy, period. Unfortunately, by targeting renewables, that's the message you're sending, and I don't think we should send that message to global investors. If you could make that clear, I think that is critically important to say that publicly and be on the record.

The second thing I'm calling on the government to do is to conduct an independent public review of all sources of power generation, renewable and non-renewable. Include Quebec and Manitoba water power; include energy efficiency and conservation.

Over and over again, I asked the Liberal government to conduct an independent public review so we could have an honest conversation about energy prices in this province, so we could make a decision that puts the people of Ontario first instead of it being driven by ideology. I would ask the government to do that, because here's the reality: When Darlington is rebuilt, you're going to be looking at 16-cent-a-kilowatt-hour nuclear power. Guelph Solar tells me they can build solar now at eight cents a kilowatt hour; we can buy Quebec water power for five cents a kilowatt hour.

I don't want to get into the details of that debate today, but I'm asking you: Conduct an independent public review so we can make an informed decision that benefits the people of Ontario moving forward.

Third reading debate deemed adjourned.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Jennifer K. French): Seeing the time on the clock, this House stands recessed until 10:30.

The House recessed from 1011 to 1030.

INTRODUCTION OF VISITORS

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Before I ask members to introduce their guests, I wish to introduce some guests of my own.

In the Speaker's gallery today are John Armstrong, Stuart Moulton, Cindy Goldrick, Sabrina Francescut, Krista Crozier, Devon Blackburn and Steven Fischer. They are visiting Queen's Park with the Ontario Kinesiology Association, reminding members about the importance of getting active. Welcome to Queen's Park.

I should add that I had a meeting with them this morning, and we're going to have a weekly bulletin available for members starting on Monday, hopefully, with some tips as to how we can all improve our health and our mental health.

Mr. Joel Harden: I'm very proud to introduce to the House today my brother Adam Davidson Harden, a teacher from the Limestone board in the great city of Kingston, and his friend Colin Carmichael, who was just elected as an education trustee in your riding, Minister Thompson, from the great area of Goderich. Welcome, both of you.

Hon. Todd Smith: I'd like to welcome two special guests from central Ontario. First of all, Doug Mitchell is joining us today. He is a retired school teacher, he is a real estate agent and he's a two-time volunteer of the year in Haliburton. He's here with his son, who's a good boy himself, Kelly Mitchell. Welcome to Doug and Kelly Mitchell.

Hon. Greg Rickford: I'd like to introduce the youngest and best Progressive Conservative EDA president in this province, Eric Melillo from Kenora, Ontario. Welcome to this magnificent place.

Ms. Marit Stiles: It gives me great pleasure to introduce and welcome Matthew Hollingshead, a constituent of mine from the Regal Heights neighbourhood in Davenport and a staff member at the Centre for Addiction and Mental Health. Welcome to Queen's Park.

Mr. Stan Cho: Happy FES day to everybody this morning.

Regardless of political stripe, I think it's incredible when Ontario's youth get involved in the political process. Today, I am really happy to introduce the Ryerson Campus Conservatives who, over the last two years, have grown their membership from 14 members to over 100. With us today, we have Spencer Campbell, Eric Wang, Alexander Fogel, Sydney Perelmuter, Trisha Ordon, Konrad Gajewski, Jared Burke, Sarah Weaver, Colby Badhwar, Damian Rostoski and Priyank D'sa; as well as two executive members who were instrumental in my campaign, good friends Keyaan Nejad and Reese Nemeth. Thank you for being at Queen's Park.

Mr. Daryl Kramp: Today I'd like to welcome a constituent of mine, a broadcaster extraordinaire, a long-time municipal politician and a tremendous contributing member of the community in the Belleville region, Jack Miller.

Mr. Mike Harris: I have a group of public policy and administration students that I'd like to welcome today from Seneca College, and also their professor and my former campaign manager, Jon Olinski.

Also, my case file manager in our constituency office is here today as well, Emily McLaughlin.

Mr. Parm Gill: I want to welcome grade 5 students from my riding of Milton. They attend Bruce Trail Public School and they will be joining us in the gallery shortly.

Mr. David Piccini: I'd like to welcome to Queen's Park today Shayne Fields from my riding and Eva Guta from Durham—Whitby, actually, Lorne's riding. Welcome to Queen's Park.

In addition, I would like to welcome a young Conservative activist and a big, big fan—probably one of the biggest—of our Premier, Doug Ford: Spencer Campbell.

Mr. Dave Smith: I'd like to welcome a friend of mine, Mr. Kelly Mitchell, and his father, Doug, to the Legislature today.

Mr. Mike Schreiner: I, too, would like to welcome Krista Crozier, who is the incoming president of the Ontario Kinesiology Association, who also is from the great riding of Guelph. Welcome.

Hon. Todd Smith: I'd like to welcome my new executive assistant in Bay of Quinte, David Joyce, who is with us today; and also a long-time friend and colleague, Jack Miller. He's already been introduced, but Jack spent many years on Belleville council, he's been a long-time sports voice in the Quinte region and currently is the voice of the American Hockey League's Belleville Senators. Welcome to Queen's Park.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): I would like to welcome any of the other guests who haven't been introduced.

ORAL QUESTIONS

ETHICAL STANDARDS

Ms. Andrea Horwath: Speaker, media reports from last night have raised concerning questions about the Premier's standards for cabinet ministers. According to multiple reports, a female staffer working for the then opposition Conservatives came forward with a complaint of sexual misconduct concerning the Minister of Finance.

According to one report, she was paid a financial settlement shortly thereafter and signed a non-disclosure agreement. Was the Premier aware of this and, if so, what action has he taken?

Hon. Doug Ford: Through you, Mr. Speaker: There was a thorough third-party investigation. There wasn't a shred of evidence whatsoever.

Interjections.

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

Supplementary?

Ms. Andrea Horwath: The Premier stated emphatically this week that he has zero tolerance for sexual misconduct and that he will always act decisively to deal with it. Will the Premier allow for an independent investigation of these allegations? It seems to us—and others have said the same—that when there's a non-disclosure agreement, there's obviously something there that people don't want to have disclosed.

I ask the Premier: Will he have an independent investigation called and ask the minister to step aside while it's being conducted?

Hon. Doug Ford: Through you, Mr. Speaker, to the Leader of the Opposition: I have 100% confidence in Minister Fedeli. I stand beside him, shoulder to shoulder. He's a man with honour. He has integrity.

Again, a third-party investigation took place, which the Leader of the Opposition was well aware of—just playing politics. But what I find ironic is that you would actually take a person who in my opinion has zero credibility, Patrick Brown, who lacks credibility—it's shameful that the NDP are siding with someone who would go after and claim that one of our ministers, when she came out publicly and said that she had mental health issues—you would actually believe a person like that? You would actually take that person's side? That's disgusting. That is absolutely disgusting, that you would side with someone like Patrick Brown.

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Once again, I'll remind members to please make their comments through the Chair.

Start the clock. Final supplementary.

1040

Ms. Andrea Horwath: Last week, the Premier said that any staff person who comes forward will be protected and that he would take any allegations seriously.

Reports indicate that serious allegations have been made. Will the Premier allow for an independent investigation of these allegations and ask the minister to step aside while it's being conducted?

Hon. Doug Ford: Through you, Mr. Speaker: Serious allegations? Serious allegations from Patrick Brown? You've got to be kidding. With zero credibility? You actually have the nerve to come in here and throw these accusations? A person who attacks people who come out and say they have a mental illness issue—what message does that send across the province? What does it say when someone has the courage to come up and speak out? Why isn't the Leader of the Opposition standing up and supporting our minister? That is absolutely disgusting.

I'll tell you what Patrick Brown has done: He has brought a super-strong team together—even stronger. We're even more united than we've ever been.

But, Mr. Speaker, the Leader of the Opposition knows that there's zero evidence—zero evidence. The media came out and said that there's not a shred of evidence. I find it absolutely shameful and disgusting she would even bring this up in this—

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Order.

Next question.

ETHICAL STANDARDS

Ms. Andrea Horwath: I want to return to the Premier concerning his expectations and standards for his cabinet team, and the message that that sends to the province. Over the last two weeks, there have been serious questions raised about how the Premier handles complaints of sexual misconduct.

As the Premier has stated, all complaints need to be dealt with seriously. They also need to be dealt with transparently. Why is the Premier unwilling to call for an independent investigation into these serious allegations?

Hon. Doug Ford: Again, in case the Leader of the Opposition didn't hear me four other times, there was a thorough investigation—a thorough investigation, with zero evidence. And when the media even comes out yesterday and says there is no evidence—I'll even listen to the media. For the Leader of the Opposition to bring this up in the House and start playing politics with someone's life is pretty serious.

I stand shoulder to shoulder with my Minister of Finance. Every single day, I am proud that he's there. I'm proud of the hard work he has done. He's turning the province around.

I can't wait, Mr. Speaker, to hear the fall economic statement about the mess that the NDP put us into and the Liberals put us into. We're still going to be working through that. It's shameful, disgusting, and you should be apologizing.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Supplementary.

Ms. Andrea Horwath: Two weeks ago, the Premier said that the member for Simcoe–Grey had left cabinet and the PC caucus for health reasons. Then it emerged that he, in fact, was asked to leave following an allegation of sexual misconduct. The Premier then claimed that he would take all allegations seriously and he urged people to come forward.

That seemed to be what happened in this case, but the Premier is saying that he refuses to take these particular allegations seriously. Why is the Premier refusing to call a transparent, independent investigation whereby the information is given to all people who are interested? This is the Minister of Finance that we're talking about, Speaker.

Hon. Doug Ford: This just shows the lack of integrity in this House. It shows the lack of integrity through the leader of the NDP.

These accusations, again, that happened a long time ago, were thoroughly investigated by a third party. Zero evidence came out; there wasn't a shred of evidence. Again, to politicize this—and listening to a guy like Patrick Brown? You've got to be kidding me. Someone who wants to attack someone and saying that they faked mental illness—you've got to think about that.

The Leader of the Opposition should look around this room. Maybe the other people have so-called faked it. That's a serious, serious accusation.

You know something? You want to talk about credibility? There is no credibility on the other side—the opposition.

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

Ms. Andrea Horwath: Speaker, over the last week, the Premier has been evasive about the standards that he expects from cabinet ministers and staff, but this is a serious allegation that requires a serious response. The allegation isn't just one of sexual misconduct, but that the PC caucus used public dollars to buy someone's silence.

Will the Premier allow for an independent investigation of these allegations—

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): I have to ask the Leader of the Opposition to withdraw.

Ms. Andrea Horwath: Withdraw.

The allegation isn't just one of sexual misconduct but that public money was used to ensure that this information didn't come to light.

Will the Premier allow for an independent investigation of these allegations and ask that the minister step aside while it's being conducted?

Hon. Doug Ford: Through you, Mr. Speaker: Again, the Minister of Finance has integrity. He's a man with honour. He's a man who is fighting day in and day out to clean up the mess that the NDP and the Liberals created in the last 15 years. The NDP voted 97% of the time with the Liberals to destroy this province, and I won't stand here for a second and listen to the leader of the NDP throwing stones in a glass house. Patrick Brown has as much credibility as a rock.

Interjections.

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

I haven't been counting the standing ovations, but there have been several so far. I will remind members that when the standing ovations occur, I sometimes can barely hear the member who has the floor. If I can't hear the member who has the floor, I'll have to stand up and interrupt them.

Start the clock. Next question.

MINIMUM WAGE

Ms. Andrea Horwath: My next question is also for the Premier.

A single mom working full time for the minimum wage will lose almost \$2,000 annually as a result of the Premier's minimum wage freeze. Most people working for minimum wage don't pay any taxes at all; they just don't make enough money.

Does the Premier really expect that working mom and the other working people struggling to make ends meet on the minimum wage to believe that a tax cut will actually make up the difference?

Hon. Doug Ford: Through you, Mr. Speaker: Actually, when I campaigned, I talked to hundreds and hundreds of businesses. The majority of them were small businesses. Over 80% of people are employed by small businesses. I heard over and over again that they were laying people off. From coffee shops to restaurants to hardware stores, they were getting rid of people. Tens of thousands of people lost their jobs under Bill 148.

What our government is going to do is we're going to make sure we give a tax break—0% tax—to people making minimum wage.

I talked to thousands of people who got laid off. I went to universities. The students came up to me and said, "We aren't being hired anymore." We went to people with disabilities who said they're no longer being hired. As a matter of fact, they're being fired.

We're going to turn the province around. This is going to create tens of thousands of jobs. We're going to create an economic boom in this province. We're going to create jobs in this—

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

Ms. Andrea Horwath: Well, I talked to hundreds of moms and hundreds of workers who simply cannot make ends meet on the current minimum wage. People are here today from across Ontario to assert their right to basic dignity on the job, to take a paid day off when they get sick without having to pay a doctor for a doctor's note, to be able to pay the bills with a livable minimum wage. It's not much, but the Premier wants to take it away.

The majority of people earning minimum wage don't even earn enough to pay taxes; that is a fact. But an increase in the minimum wage was going to make a real difference in their lives. The Premier's wage freeze will take nearly \$2,000 out of a full-time worker's pocket. Instead of offering empty gimmicks, why doesn't he just allow the minimum wage to increase to \$15 an hour?

Hon. Doug Ford: Through you, Mr. Speaker: I'd like to know what the Leader of the Opposition said to the thousands of single moms I met who don't have a job because of Bill 148, the bill that they supported. They supported laying people off. That's what they support. What are you going to say to the thousands of people who don't have the money in their pocket, who don't have the \$2,000 or even \$3,000?

We support the front-line people of this province. We support the hard-working people. That's why they're going to pay 0% tax. We're going to create tens of thousands of jobs.

1050

As you've seen, the unemployment rate is the lowest it's been in decades under our administration, because companies feel confident. We're creating an environment to create great-paying jobs. We're going to have this province booming once again. We will be the rock of Canada.

Interjections.

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

Next question.

MINIMUM WAGE

Mr. Prabmeet Singh Sarkaria: My question is to the Minister of Economic Development, Job Creation and Trade.

First off, I'd like to congratulate the minister on the important legislative progress he's made on the Making Ontario Open for Business Act as it heads to committee. On this side of the House, it's clear that months and months of meetings with various stakeholders across this province, including job creators, workers and union leaders across Ontario led to the creation of this bill.

There also seems to be a lot of rhetoric on the other side, from the opposition, about this government's commitment to one of the country's highest minimum wages. Can the minister inform us how the history of debate on the minimum wage in this House has influenced government policy?

Hon. Todd Smith: Thanks to the honourable member for the first good question of question period this morning.

It's an honour to rise in the House to bring some attention to prior debate in this House on this issue. Here's what the member of Timiskaming–Cochrane had to say about a rising minimum wage: "If you're going to create jobs, let's talk about the real issues. Minimum wage is one of them. But if you're going to trumpet that the minimum wage is that much higher, let's look at everything that is that much higher...."

"We ... went from the lowest hydro costs to the highest hydro costs in the country." Thank you, Liberal government supported by the NDP.

Not only are we committed to providing one of the highest minimum wages in the country, I want to be certain the member opposite realizes that we're doing exactly what he was asking for. Our government for the people is making life more affordable. The same member said this: "And employers, many of them, rightfully so, are very worried," and that's a fact. We're bringing predictability—

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

Mr. Prabmeet Singh Sarkaria: Thank you to the minister for informing us about what the official opposition had to say about minimum wage during previous debates.

It seems to me that the official opposition had some sage-like advice as to how to proceed with an increase to minimum wage. The members opposite should be happy that we took their recommendations on how to proceed. Debate in this House regularly influences government policy because it's important that members be heard as voices of their constituents.

Does the minister have any more examples of how debate in this House influenced the government's policy regarding Bill 47?

Hon. Todd Smith: Well, as a matter of fact, I do. Thanks again to the honourable member for the question.

It's very inspiring to know that the government for the people is doing exactly what the members opposite have been asking about. The member for Niagara had this to say: "We also need a strong, practical plan to implement increasing the minimum wage. We need to make sure small business has the time to assess the wage increases and have their input heard." That's exactly what we did leading up to this bill. We've heard from countless job creators, workers and union leaders and even the opposition about minimum wage—we heard the member opposite loud and clear.

But I don't want to leave anyone out. The member from Nickel Belt said, "If we were to increase to \$14 an hour right now, a lot of those small businesses would not survive. Those people have come to see me. They have shown me the books." Increases to minimum wage, Mr. Speaker, shouldn't be about politics; they should be about stability for our job creators.

CHILD ADVOCATE

Miss Monique Taylor: My question is to the Premier. Ontario's Provincial Advocate for Children and Youth provides independent, non-partisan oversight to the people

of Ontario. The advocate's job is to protect children and to be a watchdog on behalf of the children of this province and raise their voice to the government. Can the Premier confirm if he plans to scrap their office later today?

Hon. Doug Ford: Minister of Children, Community and Social Services and women's issues.

Hon. Lisa MacLeod: I do appreciate the opportunity, and I appreciate the question from the member opposite. We are going to continue to support children in this province. This is a very important portfolio that I've been privileged to have been assigned by the Premier of Ontario. We have been working with many members of the Legislative Assembly, including the independent officers of this House, and we will continue to work with those who want to seek to protect children in care, children in the justice system. I can assure everyone in this Legislature that the fiercest child advocate in this province will be me.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Supplementary.

Miss Monique Taylor: I don't think I know how to respond to that. I'm going to go back to the Premier, Speaker. The child advocate provides vital oversight. It is a voice for children in this province who so often don't have one. The child advocate calls out governments when their policies harm innocent children. The fact that the Ford government wants to do away with their voice says something terrifying about the plans for this province for our most vulnerable children. How can the Premier possibly justify this decision?

Interjections.

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

Minister?

Hon. Lisa MacLeod: Well, you know, I'm going to say thank you to the Premier. I've never worked with a leader who has been this attentive to the people of the province of Ontario, and, I can tell you, over the last 24 hours, personally attentive and supportive of me personally and our Minister of Finance. I can tell you something: If you want a fierce advocate in the province of Ontario, it's Premier Doug Ford.

MENTAL HEALTH AND ADDICTION SERVICES

Ms. Lindsey Park: My question is for the Minister of Health and Long-Term Care. This government appreciates the importance of financial and social supports for those suffering from mental health issues. That's why during the election we promised to prioritize fixing our mental health system. With one in five Ontarians affected by mental health, it's clear that this is an issue that affects every person in this province and in my riding of Durham, either directly or indirectly.

Can the minister please inform the House of what our government is doing to address mental health in this province?

Hon. Christine Elliott: I'd like to thank the member from Durham very much for her question and for the

continued great work that she's doing in her riding. She was absolutely correct when she said that our government promised to make mental health and addictions a priority in the province of Ontario. That is why our government is committing to spend \$3.8 billion over 10 years to finally—I say finally—develop and implement a comprehensive and connected mental health and addictions system in our province. This initiative will also include housing supports to further alleviate pressures on the system.

I envision an Ontario where patients don't need to be in crisis to receive timely access to mental health and addictions treatment. The fact that we are so far from that reality is, quite frankly, shocking to me. We can do better, and we must do better. We will create a mental health and addictions care system that works for all of the people in Ontario.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Supplementary.

Ms. Lindsey Park: Thank you to the minister for that response. I'm proud that our government for the people is delivering on a clear promise that we made to the people of Ontario. Our government understands that front-line workers are the backbone of our health care system. They go above and beyond the call of duty every single day.

Speaker, our government appreciates Ontario's front-line workers in our health care sector and will ensure that these hard-working Ontarians are supported with the resources necessary to succeed every day. Can the minister please tell the House how our government will ensure that funding will benefit those who need mental health and addiction services?

1100

Hon. Christine Elliott: Thank you again for the question. The Premier and I have committed to ensuring that each dollar goes directly to services that will make a significant impact for patients in this province. Our funding will go toward improving front-line care, reduced wait times and improved access to mental health and addictions services.

We know we need to work with our partners to find the right solutions. This includes organizations like the Canadian mental health organization, Children's Mental Health Ontario, and Addictions and Mental Health Ontario. Our government is committed to building a comprehensive and connected mental health and addictions system that works for the people of Ontario.

ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION

Mr. Ian Arthur: Mr. Speaker, my question, through you, is to the Premier. Today the media reported that the government intends to make cuts to the Office of the Environmental Commissioner and might even abolish that office altogether. Is the Premier firing the Environmental Commissioner? Or otherwise, what changes will he be imposing on her office?

Hon. Doug Ford: President of treasury.

Hon. Peter Bethlenfalvy: Through you, Mr. Speaker, I thank the member opposite for that question. I'm going

to remind everyone in this House this is not the rumour economic statement; it is the fall economic statement.

We've been working hard since day one to restore trust in this province, to renew accountability, and to re-establish transparency—

Interjection.

Hon. Peter Bethlenfalvy:—which may be funny to the Leader of the Opposition, but which I think the rest of my caucus and the rest of Ontario take very seriously. Every action we take is about restoring fiscal planning so that we can provide and support the core services for not just this generation but also to support future generations, because that's what we were elected to do.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Supplementary.

Mr. Ian Arthur: It would be very easy to dispel a rumour with a simple answer.

The Environmental Commissioner of Ontario is an officer of the Legislature whose job it is to provide independent assessment of the state of Ontario's environment. The commissioner administers the Environmental Bill of Rights, which guarantees the public's right to be notified and consulted on government decisions. The commissioner's most recent report flagged the potential loss of funding for the water protection act framework.

This is the same party that already brought us the Walkerton crisis and is currently being sued under the Environmental Bill of Rights. Is the Premier targeting the ECO because he does not want to answer to the public on his environmental record?

Interjections.

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

President of the Treasury Board.

Hon. Peter Bethlenfalvy: I would like to clarify to the member opposite that—and I'm sure he would agree—it would be unethical for us to front-run the fall economic statement. I welcome him to the House at 1 o'clock to hear all the facts.

I also want to acknowledge the great work that the Minister of the Environment, Conservation and Parks is doing. He is a man full of integrity, who has been leading the charge, and we have full faith and confidence in him.

I also want to take this opportunity to stand shoulder to shoulder with the minister of many things, who has been brave through this period. Also, to the Minister of Finance: I'm wearing a yellow tie because we stand in solidarity. But I'll go one more, Mr. Speaker: I'm wearing yellow socks.

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Stop the clock. Order. I need to hear the next member who has a question.

Start the clock. I recognize the member for Scarborough–Guildwood.

PUBLIC SERVICES

Ms. Mitzie Hunter: My question is to the Premier. Your government's own research shows that investments of the past Liberal government that we were making in

health care, education, justice and social services have aided this province. These investments provided much-needed services—

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): I apologize to the member for Scarborough–Guildwood. I'm going to give you extra time. The government has to come to order. I apologize once again.

The member for Scarborough–Guildwood.

Ms. Mitzie Hunter: These investments provided much-needed services to the people of Ontario, like basic income, social supports, environmental protection, fair workplaces and even teaching things like consent, which we sorely need.

They were also made, according to the FAO, because Ontario had to catch up. This province was behind because of years of austerity that it was subject to under a previous Conservative government. Will your government's economic statement bring back austerity measures and eliminate programs and services that the people of Ontario rely on?

Hon. Doug Ford: President of the Treasury Board.

Hon. Peter Bethlenfalvy: Thank you to the member opposite for that question. Our government was elected because we said that we would do things differently than the previous Liberal government.

We need to reform public services that put reliability and the taxpayer at the centre of everything we do to get the finances in this province back in order. We need to reform public services in a way that puts reliability and the taxpayer at the centre. Every action that we take has been about responsible fiscal planning and a more sustainable government, precisely so that we can protect front-line services and jobs while investing in priorities for the people of Ontario.

Mr. Speaker, I very much look forward, as I'm sure the whole House does, to hearing from the Minister of Finance at 1 o'clock. You're all invited for the fall economic statement.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Supplementary?

Ms. Mitzie Hunter: Again to the Premier: You have to be clear and open with the people of Ontario about what this all means. In fact—

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Order on the government side.

Ms. Mitzie Hunter:—promises will exacerbate the fiscal challenges that we face. In fact, we are at risk of losing the progress that we've made in this province.

Your government is here to make sure that all Ontarians have the health care, education, justice and social services that they depend on. I ask you again, Premier: Will your government continue to make investments in the services and supports that the people of Ontario rely on, or will you return to the austerity of the 1990s?

Hon. Peter Bethlenfalvy: Thank you again to the member for that question. When she speaks about the path that we've inherited from the previous Liberal government, what she has done is that she has indebted the province not only for this generation but for future generations, and that's what we're going to fix.

Mr. Speaker, I find it very rich to hear about making things clear and open, as she says the previous Liberal government did. That's why we had the commission of inquiry, which told us we don't have a \$6-billion deficit; we've got a \$15-billion deficit. That's why we did a line-by-line review that showed us that this province is falling behind every other province and is not protecting core services, let alone providing the funding for future services in health care and education, for bridges and tunnels. That's what the people expect of us, and that's what we will do.

PUBLIC SAFETY

Mr. Dave Smith: My question today is for the Minister of Community Safety and Correctional Services. People have continued to raise concerns with me over the province's ability to ensure the safety and well-being of the public. Currently, individuals are sitting in foreign prisons, waiting to return to this province after fighting for terrorist groups such as ISIS and Hamas. This is simply unacceptable.

Justin Trudeau's government has failed to act. We cannot stand by while convicted terrorists are waiting to return to Ontario. Ontarians who choose to participate in these barbaric acts of violence do not deserve to be welcomed back with open arms.

Minister, could you explain to the members of this Legislature what actions our government is taking to target those who choose to leave Ontario to commit these barbaric, heinous and indefensible crimes?

Hon. Sylvia Jones: I would be happy to do that, but first I want to thank my colleague from Peterborough-Kawartha for introducing a private member's bill that actually deals with this issue directly. The Terrorist Activities Sanctions Act will act where our federal government has let us down.

1110

I can assure you that a Premier Ford-led government will have no welcome mat, no welcome home parade for people who choose to fight our allies and to hurt our great men and women who are working in uniform with our own citizens and the citizens of our allies. We will not be part of the charade of saying, "You are welcome back and there are no sanctions."

We are taking definitive action on that, and I will speak to it in my supplementary.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Supplementary?

Mr. Dave Smith: I thank the minister for her response.

Justin Trudeau's public safety minister has attempted to express his lack of sympathy to those convicted terrorists who wish to return to Canada. We've heard only talk; we have seen absolutely no action from Justin Trudeau's government.

Terrorists who have committed heinous crimes against their country and their province deserve to be severely punished for their actions. We simply cannot wait for Justin Trudeau to take action. The federal government has

waited too long. Far too many Ontarians are concerned for their safety and the safety of their families.

To the minister: Could you please update the members of this Legislature on the steps our government for the people is taking to keep our communities safe from those who choose to leave Ontario and commit vicious and barbaric crimes?

Hon. Sylvia Jones: To my colleague, again, thank you so much. I think it's an amazing opportunity we will have this afternoon to talk further about the details with your private member's bill.

Just because the federal government hasn't done their job—I can assure you we will do ours. When these terrorists choose to come back to Ontario, they are not going to be welcomed and they are, most importantly, not going to be getting any benefits from the government of Ontario.

The people of Ontario deserve to know that their safety is paramount to us. We will do that, and we will not be giving benefits to people who choose to do terrorist activities.

LONG-TERM CARE

Ms. Peggy Sattler: My question is to the Minister of Health and Long-Term Care. A freedom-of-information request at London Health Sciences Centre revealed that since 2014, 6,190 alternative-level-of-care patients have waited more than 100,000 days in the hospital. That's the equivalent of almost 300 years.

These are often elderly and vulnerable people who could be discharged, but have nowhere to go. The result is so many patients being treated in the hallway that earlier this year, LHSC was forced to implement a hallway transfer protocol.

Speaker, Londoners deserve to know: What is the plan to address the shortage of beds not just in our hospitals, but in the community as well?

Hon. Christine Elliott: I can certainly agree with the member that the number of people who are alternate-level-of-care patients in our hospitals is not acceptable, but that is what we inherited after 15 years of the previous Liberal government, which, unfortunately, you propped up. That is not something that just happened overnight; that's been growing and growing, and nothing has been done about it.

But we are going to do something about it. That was one of our central campaign promises, that we are going to end hallway health care. We promised, and we're delivering on our promise, to create 15,000 long-term-care beds in the first five years and 30,000 in 10 years. We've already announced 6,000 beds that are already in the works and we're working on that each and every day.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Supplementary?

Ms. Peggy Sattler: The problem in London is getting worse: 621 alternative-level-of-care patients were at London Health Sciences Centre already by August this year.

So far, this government's commitment to new long-term-care beds has come without firm timelines and with little transparency. We've heard an announcement about

flu-surge funding, but none of the funding has been allocated to London.

After a decade of Liberal cuts, my community needs stable, permanent funding for hundreds of beds. We need beds in the hospital, we need beds in transitional care and we need beds in long-term care. Will this government commit today to sustainable, long-term funding to fix London's hallway health care crisis?

Hon. Christine Elliott: Everything that we have announced so far has been absolutely open and transparent and will continue to be. We've already announced 6,000 beds that are in production. They're actively working on that.

There are no firm timelines because it depends on production, what is actually being done in each individual project, but I can assure you that they will be in operation as soon as possible, because we know that there are already over 30,000 people, not just in the London area but across the entire province, who are waiting for long-term-care beds to be created. That is something that we are looking at each and every day in the Ministry of Health. We're not waiting six months or any long period of time to create those beds.

As soon as applications are ready, we take a look at whether there's a need in the area, where the other locations are and whether they're introducing innovation and what the project is that they're introducing. We are applying the correct objective criteria to each application and we are moving on it as soon as we can every day.

TAXATION

Mrs. Amy Fee: My question is for the Minister of the Environment, Conservation and Parks. This morning, the people in Ontario awoke to the lowest gas prices that we have seen in over a year. The people in my riding of Kitchener South–Hespeler were lined up this morning to fill up their tanks, knowing that every cent counts. This is proof that the people of Ontario need these kinds of savings.

It has been made clear, though, that the Trudeau Liberals plan to implement a carbon tax on the people of Ontario. Can the minister please tell members of this Legislature how the elimination of the cap-and-trade carbon tax is saving the people of Ontario and my riding money?

Hon. Rod Phillips: Mr. Speaker, through you to the member from Kitchener South–Hespeler: Thank you for her question. It's a very timely question. Ontarians did wake up to some of the lowest gas prices that they've seen in a very long time. On Bayly in Ajax it was \$1.11. I heard from a number of my colleagues that in their ridings the prices were lower as well.

Of course, this is in part due to the elimination of the previous Liberal government's cap-and-trade program that has saved families 4.3 cents a litre, 5.7 cents a litre for diesel. Mr. Speaker, this is going to save families \$264 a year. This is money back in Ontario families' pockets. It's just the beginning for a government that appreciates that families come first, communities come first. People need more money.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Supplementary.

Mrs. Amy Fee: Mr. Speaker, first I'd like to thank the member for the answer to that question and all the work he is doing for the people of Ontario.

The Trudeau government continues to suggest that a price on carbon is apparently the best solution to reduce emissions. They suggest that returning the funds back to the people of Ontario will in turn make this move less impactful; however, we've learned that this carbon pricing is also going to be subject to GST, a cost that would then not be returned to the people of Ontario.

Just yesterday, the federal Minister of Environment indicated that this was just the starting point and that even more targets will be looked at later. How much can we expect Ontarians to pay before it is enough? Can the Minister of the Environment, Conservation and Parks tell us what the Trudeau carbon tax will actually cost Ontarians?

Hon. Rod Phillips: Mr. Speaker, through you to the member: We can. For months now the federal government has been asked how much their carbon tax will cost and they've given no answer. Fortunately, because of the FAO's report, we know that \$648 is the price per family of this carbon tax in 2022. To put that in terms of the price of gasoline, that's another 35 cents a litre, so on today's price in Ajax, the families there would be paying \$1.50 a litre.

The member is quite correct, though. The federal minister said, "That's just the beginning; let's get this in place and then we'll raise the price"—perhaps as high as the NDP members have talked about, the highest carbon tax in the world, \$150 a tonne. That would mean gasoline in Ajax would be over \$2 a litre today. That's the price of an NDP solution. That will be the price of the federal government's solution.

Doug Ford and our government here will protect families—

Interjections.

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

Start the clock. Next question.

1120

LABOUR DISPUTE

Ms. Judith Monteith-Farrell: My question is for the Premier.

The nurses at Thunder Bay District Board of Health are still on strike. I asked the Minister of Health two weeks ago what your government was doing to resolve it, but the strike continues, leaving my community without these vital front-line workers.

I think of Kayla, a nurse who works in the Healthy Babies Healthy Children program. She works with families with children from prenatal to age six, to support their growth and development. She supports new parents, doing home visits and phone calls and check-ins. For many new parents, nurses like Kayla are the only support they have. Kayla is just asking for a fair collective agreement from her employer so they can get back to work improving the health of my community.

What is the government doing to resolve this strike immediately?

Hon. Doug Ford: Minister of Health.

Hon. Christine Elliott: Thank you very much for the question.

Of course, this is something that the ministry is not able to get directly involved in. I know this has been going on for some time. We hope that an agreement can be reached that's satisfactory to both parties as soon as possible. We are following it closely because, of course, patient care is our first and foremost consideration.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Supplementary?

Ms. Judith Monteith-Farrell: To the Premier: These public health nurses have been on strike for over a month. It is time for this government to do more than deflect the problem, because the work they do is so important.

One of the people on strike is a street nurse. Her name is Shelley. She goes out in the community to meet people where they live, in their homes or shelters or on the streets. She protects her community from infectious disease outbreaks like TB, HIV and STDs, and from blood-borne infections. The work she does also reduces hospital wait times. She can't do her work now, and that puts our community at risk.

What will this government do to encourage this employer to negotiate a fair collective agreement so nurses like Shelley can get back to work protecting our community?

Hon. Christine Elliott: We certainly appreciate the work that the nurses are doing across the province of Ontario. It is important and vital care they provide.

Safety of patients, of course, is first and foremost so we are following closely, but I'm sure that you would not expect us to interfere in those negotiations. That is something that is beyond the mandate of the ministry. We respect the conversations that are going on and the negotiations that are going on. We do hope that they will come to a resolution sooner rather than later so that the nurses can continue to provide the excellent quality care they provide in the community.

TOURISM

Mr. Michael Parsa: My question is for the Minister of Tourism, Culture and Sport. Minister, I was thrilled to learn that you travelled to Sault Ste. Marie this week to meet with tourism operators in northern Ontario regarding consultations for Ontario's brand new tourism strategy.

While northern Ontario already plays a critical role in opening Ontario for business, this government aims to bolster tourism in the region. This goal is a genuine effort to revitalize and support northern Ontario's economy.

Would the minister be able to update the House on his visit to Sault Ste. Marie and the importance of this initiative in the north?

Hon. Michael A. Tibollo: Thank you to the member for Aurora–Oak Ridges–Richmond Hill for this question.

Once again, I would like to acknowledge the terrific work of my predecessor, Minister Jones, in laying the foundation for a very successful summit. The previous minister had announced her province-wide tourism consultations at the Tourism Industry Association of Ontario

summit last month in Windsor. I was grateful to continue the work by visiting the Soo earlier this week.

While I was there, I had a chance to attend the Destination Northern Ontario AGM and the Algoma Kinniwabi Travel Association AGM. I also toured the Machine Shop and the Canadian Bushplane Heritage Centre. It was a very productive trip and a very interesting one, where I got a chance to hear from local tourism operators.

I look forward to, in supplementary, answering some more questions.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Supplementary?

Mr. Michael Parsa: Through you, Speaker, to the minister: Thank you very much for that great response, and thanks for the work that you have already begun.

I'm glad to hear that your trip in northern Ontario was productive and will undoubtedly have benefits to the community in the short and long term.

It's also encouraging to hear that our government is actively listening to the experts and front-line workers as to how we can strengthen tourism in Ontario's north. Minister, I'm sure I can speak for all members when I say this: I am glad that we are going to take steps to make the tourism sector more vibrant across this province. While the former Liberal government failed to recognize the importance of tourism in northern Ontario, this government fully acknowledges it.

Through you, Speaker, to the minister: Can the minister tell us just how important the tourism sector is to the north?

Hon. Michael A. Tibollo: Once again, thank you to my colleague for the question. Mr. Speaker, I can tell you that this government is committed to creating the environment for business to succeed in the province. Tourism accounts for 4% of the GDP of the province. That's more than agriculture, mining and forestry combined. It's an industry that supports over 390,000 jobs here in Ontario and generates \$34 billion in economic activity. I know northern Ontario welcomes 8.2 million visitors who spend \$1.5 billion annually.

One out of every four businesses in the north is tourism-related. The tourism industry is the largest employer of youth in the north, and with all the beautiful landscapes and vibrant outdoor activities, it is limitless in terms of potential. We believe in—

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

TENANT PROTECTION

Ms. Jessica Bell: My question is to the Acting Premier. In March, Kwame Amoah was illegally evicted from his home in my riding. His new landlord forcibly removed him, his four roommates and their belongings onto the street. Despite the police charging the landlord with assault and despite the Landlord and Tenant Board ruling that it was an illegal eviction, Kwame has been unable to return home. He is now living in a homeless shelter, and his mental health is suffering.

Acting Premier, what is your plan to stop illegal evictions and help renters keep their homes?

Hon. Christine Elliott: Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing.

Hon. Steve Clark: I want to thank the honourable member for the question. It's a very serious situation, and I know all members of the House and our municipal partners are very concerned with the level of housing and social housing opportunities we have in Ontario. I think we can all agree, Speaker, that in the greater Toronto and Hamilton areas we're in a crisis when it comes to the supply of housing.

I think it is very important to all the members of the House, no matter what political stripe, that we put a plan in place to deal with that serious supply problem. There are a number of varied crisis situations we have and I know that as the weather gets colder, some of those situations get even more critical. I think our government always looks at it with a lens of, how can we co-operate? How can we work with our 47 service managers, our two Indigenous program administrators, the private sector and the public sector? I'll say more in the supplementary, Speaker.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Supplementary.

Ms. Jessica Bell: My question is back to the Acting Premier. This isn't just about supply and community housing. Kwame's experience is part of a very scary trend. There has been a 100% increase in the number of applications to evict renters for reasons other than non-payment of rent. Once you are evicted, it is very difficult to find an affordable apartment in this city. The vacancy rate in Toronto is the lowest in 16 years and the average rent for a one-bedroom apartment is now the highest in Canada. The Landlord and Tenant Board is simply not doing enough to help people who are facing illegal eviction.

Acting Premier, what is this government going to do to stop these growing trends, which have good tenants facing homelessness?

Hon. Steve Clark: Again, thank you for the question. There needs to be a lot of work done in our system, Speaker. There's no doubt about it. The Landlord and Tenant Board, and some of the issues that the member was speaking about—there do need to be more resources and I'm working with the Attorney General on that issue.

In terms of housing supply, I appreciate her comments. There are many partners in this, Speaker. While I'm very pleased that the federal government has a renewed interest on the housing file, I think there are many things we can do. I think we can streamline the situation. I think we can work across sectors.

Ms. Catherine Fife: It's back-end-loaded. You've tied yourself to their plan.

1130

Hon. Steve Clark: Rather than heckle me from the opposition benches—I think this is a non-partisan issue. I think we can all work together. It doesn't matter whether it's the municipal government, whether it's the federal government, whether it is our private-sector partners, whether it's our program admins. We all need to work together to ensure that the system is transformed and that we create more supply. That's the bottom line, Speaker.

TAXATION

Mr. Deepak Anand: My question is to the Minister of the Environment, Conservation and Parks.

Minister, last week the Trudeau government announced their plan to stop co-operating with our government and not distribute the \$420 million owed to Ontario families from Ontario's Low Carbon Economy Fund, and instead gave it to organizations and programs of their choice. Their reasoning: citing our government's unwillingness to co-operate with the federal government and for keeping our promise to the people of Ontario to scrap the ineffective cap-and-trade carbon tax. It's unbelievable.

Can the minister speak to the work our government is doing to stand up for hard-working Ontario families?

Hon. Rod Phillips: Mr. Speaker, through you to the member for Mississauga–Malton: Thank you for that question. Our government was elected on a promise to get rid of the cap-and-trade program and to fight the Trudeau carbon tax. The federal Minister of Environment has talked about co-operation. The federal Minister of Environment has said that she wants to collaborate and work with us. But that, so far, has gotten her ripping money out of Ontario. That has also got them imposing a tax that they know that Ontarians don't want.

What else has the federal government's approach gotten them? A year ago, there was one province opposed to the federal government climate plan. Today, after the election in New Brunswick, there are now six—six governments across the country, six governments representing a majority of Canadians who understand that a carbon tax is bad for families and doesn't help the environment. We're taking steps—

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

Mr. Deepak Anand: Thank you, Minister. Thank you for your response, thank you for your leadership and thank you for standing up for the people of Ontario in combating this job-killing, ineffective carbon tax.

We have heard over and over again in this Legislature from the members—not only us but from all parties—that life is unaffordable for Ontarians. Yet yesterday, the sole Green MPP, the member from Guelph, called a press conference to advocate for a policy that would push the price of carbon so high that it would force people to surrender their cars.

Can the minister promise the people of Ontario that we will respect their mandate and not betray our promise to oppose a carbon tax, and highlight what our made-in-Ontario plan will include?

Hon. Rod Phillips: Mr. Speaker, through you to the member: Thank you for that question. Our government is going to bring forward a plan on the environment, a plan that supports families and a plan that's balanced in terms of the environment and also the economy.

He's quite right. The member of the Green Party did propose a plan yesterday, and he proposed a number of solutions. I thanked him, both personally and on Twitter, for many of the suggestions—many of the suggestions that are

added to the 5,000 suggestions that we've already received through our consultation, which, by the way, is still available until this Friday at the climate change website.

Despite the entreaties of the leader of the Green Party, we will not break our solemn vow to the people of Ontario. We will not bring back a job-killing, regressive carbon tax that punishes families.

ARTS AND CULTURAL FUNDING

Ms. Jill Andrew: My question is to the Minister of Tourism, Culture and Sport.

In August 2018, the government cut \$500,000 of programming funds promised to Sistema Toronto. Sistema Toronto provides "musical and intellectual opportunities to children in vulnerable communities." Sistema supports marginalized children in social, emotional and academic development through access to musical instruments and music education.

Minister, Kathleen Wynne and the Liberals shouldn't have used children as political pawns, but now this minister is in the position to do the right thing by these children.

On behalf of children, families and young artists, will this government reverse its callous decision and reinstate the funding promised to Sistema Toronto: yes or no?

Hon. Michael A. Tibollo: Thank you for that question. With a core focus on physical activity, Ontario's after-school programs provide no-cost or low-cost fun, safe and supervised activities to over 21,000 students in grades 1 to 12 during the school year at over 400 program sites in priority neighbourhoods across the province. Applications to expand the program are not being considered at this time.

We appreciate the work of the Sistema Toronto program and its accomplishments in providing after-school music education in priority neighbourhoods. The Sistema program does not meet the core physical activity programming requirement of Ontario's after-school programs funded by the Ministry of Tourism, Culture and Sport. The Ontario government is currently supporting Sistema Toronto through a three-year Ontario Trillium Foundation grant.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Supplementary.

Ms. Jill Andrew: Thank you for the non-response, Minister. Glad to see that the arts don't mean anything to the government.

Anyway, Sistema delivers positive results for the families living—

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): I apologize to the member. The government side will come to order.

I'll give the member extra time.

Ms. Jill Andrew: It delivers positive results for the families living in communities struggling with some of the highest child poverty rates in Toronto. Kids participating in Sistema Toronto's programs are more likely to achieve higher test scores, putting them on a path to better results in school.

Arts education programs and reducing barriers to participating in the arts build healthy and vital communities, particularly when we encourage the artistic talents of our

young kids. So I ask, what other funding cuts to the arts and initiatives that support arts education programs can we expect from this government?

Hon. Michael A. Tibollo: Just to be clear, our ministry has approved support to over 120 organizations to deliver no-cost or low-cost, fun, safe activities to more than 21,000 students. These programs will be delivered at over 400 sites in high-priority neighbourhoods across Ontario.

Just to be clear, a few hours before the election was called, the previous Liberal minister signed a letter promising Sistema half a million dollars. The Liberal minister knew no paperwork had been submitted and no money was budgeted. The Liberals didn't even bother to tell Sistema they didn't meet the qualifications their own government set for after-school programs. Sistema deserves an apology from the previous Liberal government.

Our government was—

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

NATURAL GAS

Mr. Will Bouma: To our Minister of Infrastructure: Access to affordable energy is vital to the future prosperity of our province. Families depend on natural gas as a more affordable source of energy to heat their homes, power their tools and keep their businesses open. Speaker, natural gas is bountiful in Ontario, yet many Ontarians, especially in rural or remote parts of our province, do not have access to this commodity.

Can the minister outline our ambitious plan to leverage the private sector to deliver natural gas to tens of thousands of Ontarians?

Hon. Monte McNaughton: I want to thank the member from Brantford—Brant for his strong advocacy in calling on our government to expand natural gas across rural and northern communities.

Mr. Speaker, we made two commitments during the campaign. One was to open Ontario for business. The second was to lower energy bills for families, for businesses and for everyone across the province.

Our legislation that's working its way through the Legislature right now, Mr. Speaker, will enable the private sector to expand natural gas to 78 new communities in the province of Ontario. That means that nearly 35,000 new households in Ontario will be able to save up to \$2,500 per year in energy costs.

Mr. Speaker, I'm proud to say: Promise made, promise kept.

NOTICE OF DISSATISFACTION

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Pursuant to standing order 38(a), the member for University—Rosedale has given notice of her dissatisfaction with the answer to her question given by the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing concerning illegal evictions. This matter will be debated Tuesday at 6 p.m.

There being no deferred votes, this House stands recessed until 1 p.m.

The House recessed from 1140 to 1300.

INTRODUCTION OF VISITORS

Mr. Dave Smith: I would like to introduce an amazing woman from our province, someone who has had to deal with something that none of us in this Legislature should ever have to deal with: Ms. Maureen Basnicki. Her husband, Ken, was killed in the north tower on September 11, 2001.

Ms. Christine Hogarth: I would also like to welcome Maureen, who is from my riding. Welcome, Maureen.

I'd also like to welcome my legislative assistant and special adviser, Stephen Warner, to the Legislature today.

M^{me} France Gélinas: Ça me fait plaisir de voir que MM. Carol Jolin et Stewart Kiff sont avec nous cet après-midi. Bienvenue à Queen's Park.

Mr. Vincent Ke: I would like to welcome the grade 5 students from Elkhorn Public School in my riding of Don Valley North. They are visiting Queen's Park on a field trip.

In addition, I want to welcome students from Seneca College from Don Valley North as well. They are here to learn about parliamentary procedure and the legislative process. Welcome to Queen's Park, and I hope you enjoy your visit.

Hon. Raymond Sung Joon Cho: I am very happy to introduce—they are not here yet, but they will join us—the honourable Baek Seungjoo, member of Parliament and former Deputy Minister of National Defense, Republic of Korea; Cho Sunghoon, deputy director, the National Assembly of the Republic of Korea; Lim Kyueun, program officer, the National Assembly of the Republic of Korea; Chang Heeseung, interpreter, the National Assembly of the Republic of Korea; and Lee Jaeyong, deputy consul general from the Consulate General of the Republic of Korea in Toronto.

Ms. Doly Begum: I would like to welcome St. Dunstan Catholic School to the Legislative Assembly today.

Mr. Sheref Sabawy: I am delighted to welcome Ms. Jeannette Chau, one of my constituents. She is the manager of government liaison programs for Professional Engineers Ontario. Welcome to Queen's Park—oh, and Mr. Howard Brown as well.

MEMBERS' STATEMENTS

DOCTOR SHORTAGE

Mr. Ian Arthur: Last week I had the pleasure of welcoming the leader of the official opposition to my riding of Kingston and the Islands. We met families who are concerned about the hallway medicine crisis in the Kingston area.

These are everyday people who have done everything right. They work hard and they contribute in so many ways to our community. Fundamentally, they deserve good health care and access to timely primary care when they need it. But in Kingston and across Ontario, far too many do not have it when they need it. Too many people are waiting years to access primary care or get a family doctor.

In Kingston, the situation is so bad that our city council passed a resolution asking the Ontario government to address this issue. We have heard from community members who are waiting years to see a specialist or to get access to a family doctor, and others who drive for hours because they are too scared to give up their previous doctors in cities far from Kingston, as this would mean going on the wait-list, which is years long.

One person in Kingston and the Islands without a family doctor is one person too many, and for too long the reality of this lack of primary care was ignored in my riding. I plan to work with all local stakeholders to build a sustainable, long-term solution to the doctor shortage in Kingston and the Islands.

RESEARCH AND INNOVATION

Ms. Christine Hogarth: I would like to highlight some exciting news in my riding of Etobicoke–Lakeshore that demonstrates how Ontario is open for business.

I had the pleasure of attending the signing of an agreement between Bruce Power and Kinectrics, which is an international company in the electricity industry based out of Etobicoke–Lakeshore. These companies are collaborating in the production of medical isotopes, which further promotes Ontario's role as a world leader in this innovative field, which is at the forefront of medical research.

Bruce Power is currently a significant global supplier of cobalt-60, a medical isotope used to sterilize equipment in hospitals, to treat brain tumours and to assist in the fight against cancer. Global demand for these life-saving isotopes is growing, and Ontario has the infrastructure and the expertise to meet that demand. The collaboration between Kinectrics and Bruce Power will help build on Ontario's nuclear advantage. The work these innovative companies are doing will provide good-paying, local jobs in Etobicoke. It will also help to expand a reliable and long-term source of medical isotopes, providing worldwide access for years to come at a time when the world is facing a global shortage.

I'm proud to bring forward this announcement, which signals to the rest of the world that Etobicoke and Ontario are indeed open for business.

CROHN'S DISEASE

Mr. Wayne Gates: You shouldn't be allowed to use those three words during members' statements.

Crohn's awareness month: November is global Crohn's awareness month. While I realize that this is not the most exciting topic, especially given what the government is going to announce today, this is a very important topic.

Canada has one of the highest rates of Crohn's disease in the world, and it's growing fast. There are over 100,000 Ontarians living with Crohn's disease, about as many people as with type 1 diabetes and epilepsy. By 2030, almost 1% of the Canadian population will live with Crohn's disease. The consequences of Crohn's disease are serious, including premature death and bowel cancer, and many people live with anxiety and depression. Crohn's disease has serious implications to people's quality of life.

Mr. Speaker, Ontarians who live in rural and under-served areas like Niagara are less likely to be cared for by a gastroenterologist. Studies have shown time and time again that patients cared for by a gastroenterologist have better outcomes, including lower risks of surgery and hospitalization.

Many people across the province receiving public coverage for prescriptions—people on social assistance, single moms, single parents, lower-income families—are struggling to access newer medications. These newer medications improve their ability to participate with their family, their community and our workforce.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to take today to acknowledge Ontarians living with Crohn's disease and to pledge to make Crohn's a health priority in the province of Ontario.

SELF-EMPLOYMENT FOR PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES PROGRAM

Mr. Billy Pang: I recently attended a business showcase presented by the Self-Employment for Persons with Disabilities program, which was supported by both Job Skills Canada and the Ontario Trillium Foundation. I had the opportunity to visit booths which were filled with passionate and engaged entrepreneurs with interesting products, and I spoke to them about their ambitions.

The Self-Employment for Persons with Disabilities program trains individuals with disabilities on how to start their own business and helps them to become more financially self-reliant. Not only does this program benefit its participants with excellent business training and assistance, it also provides individuals with disabilities an opportunity to express their creativity in a way that contributes to our diverse community and economy.

Our government has supported this initiative through the Ontario Trillium Foundation and hopes to continue supporting similar projects, as they provide Ontarians with disabilities opportunities to participate in our economy in a unique and meaningful way.

1310

GOVERNMENT'S RECORD

Mr. Terence Kernaghan: I'm proud to rise today to be able to recognize Shine the Light, a campaign by the London Abused Women's Centre to stand in solidarity with abused women and help them understand that shame and blame belongs not to them but to perpetrators of abuse. This campaign now is in Windsor and reaches as far as Sweden and Australia.

This year, we remember Maddison Fraser, a two-time national boxing champion who planned on becoming a nurse. Maddison was lured into the sex trade, and she died in a car crash driven by someone who had purchased sex. Maddison's mother, Jennifer Holleman, has started the Maddison Fraser Society to help survivors of human trafficking.

We also recognize Shainee Chalk, who has courageously shared her story as a victim of revenge porn after an intimate partner shared her private pictures online, along with her name, social media handles and more. She is an amazing individual who didn't let a horrible person define her and now shows girls and women how to be strong and overcome. Well done to Shainee.

We have great community agencies in London that support abused women, and initiatives like these are more important than ever. Regressive Conservatives cut the expert committee on violence against women. Regressive Conservatives cut consent in health education, which empowers children against predators. Today, we expect to hear the regressive cut of the Ontario Child Advocate, who protects vulnerable children.

Let's put it all together. This government has cut committees to protect women but expanded alcohol sales, cut education to empower children but expanded pot sales, and soon, the cut of the Ontario Child Advocate, an independent authority to protect children.

Speaker, you might ask yourself, who benefits from this? This government needs to change their ridiculous highway signs and tell the truth: Ontario is open for predators.

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

Mr. Terence Kernaghan: I withdraw.

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Order. He withdrew.

ONTARIO SHORES CENTRE FOR MENTAL HEALTH SCIENCES

Mr. Lorne Coe: Ontario Shores Centre for Mental Health Sciences is celebrating its 100th anniversary. This milestone is an opportunity to recognize the past, celebrate recent achievements and share its vision for the future of mental health care.

Ontario Shores provides leadership to health care providers, community partners, policy-makers and social sectors to strengthen and advance the mental health care system. Ontario Shores embraces the opportunity to raise awareness of mental illness, educate health care practitioners and train the next generation of mental health specialists.

As advocates, Ontario Shores champions and supports the efforts of patients, professionals and policy-makers to ensure individuals with mental illness have the access to care and the opportunity to fully participate in society.

Congratulations to the board of directors and staff on their 100th anniversary.

Mr. Gilles Bisson: Point of order.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Point of order, the member for Timmins.

Mr. Gilles Bisson: I want to thank the member across the way for shouting out to my daughter Julie Bisson, who is a nurse practitioner at Ontario Shores and very proud to work there.

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

EMPLOYMENT STANDARDS

Mr. Faisal Hassan: I rise today to speak on the issue of unemployment and underemployment in my community of York South–Weston. As the October jobs numbers indicate, unemployment in York South–Weston is well above the national and provincial average. Youth unemployment is higher still and it continues to rise.

But it strikes me that these numbers don't tell the full story, because the Ford Conservative government's disrespect for workers and their rights means that even those who are employed will be less able to provide for their families. Freezing the minimum wage will mean less food in the fridge. Taking away paid sick days will mean parents unable to care for sick children. Forcing people to prove that they are sick or that they have lost a loved one will result in real pain for families when they are already struggling.

We need to understand that statistics are not just numbers; they represent real people. A job is not just a job. Rather, a job is the pride of being able to provide for oneself and one's family. It is the dignity of equal pay and benefits for equal work. It is the hope for a better future.

Taking pride in good work is good for business. Dignity is good for business. Hope is good for business. It is Bill 47 that is so bad for business in Ontario.

PALLIATIVE CARE

Mr. John Fraser: This Monday, Hospice Palliative Care Ontario will be here at Queen's Park. I know they've reached out to many members. There are many new members in this House. I hope that you've taken a meeting with them. If you haven't, I really encourage you to do that and also to be at their reception that evening.

I had the good fortune in the last government of spending four years working on the hospice and palliative care file. It's something that unites us all. We know that we have to do a better job of caring for people at the end of their lives. We have to come together as a community.

We do a really great job at the beginning of life. Schools are ready, the nurseries are ready, the community is all ready for when we come into this world. But when we leave, not so much. The end of life deserves the same kind of attention we give to the beginning of life.

Interruption.

Mr. John Fraser: I know in many of your communities, there are hospices and palliative care agencies that deliver services. I encourage you very much to meet with them and help them to ensure that they get the support they need.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Point of order, the member for Timmins.

Mr. Gilles Bisson: I would like to give a shout-out to our Sergeant-at-Arms for being very tactful. Thank you very much.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): She is indeed.

EVENTS IN SRI LANKA

Mr. Logan Kanapathi: I rise today to speak out of concern for a growing political crisis in my motherland of Sri Lanka.

Many of us, through one generation or more, are the sons and daughters of immigrants to Canada. In my own riding of Markham–Thornhill exists the most ethnically diverse community in Canada. Many of our ethnic residents are closely connected with their motherland. Many share the hardship and suffering of family, friends and loved ones through civil violence and government repression.

I fled Sri Lanka for fear of my life and arrived as a political refugee to Canada in 1983. My brother, a member of Parliament and a vocal critic of the government on human rights, was brutally stabbed. He was in a coma for 90 days, but survived. Later, he resigned his MP position and left Sri Lanka. Last year, my sister-in-law, a retired teacher, was murdered while sleeping.

Sri Lanka emerged from a long and violent civil war in 2009 with a new leadership in place. Many of us were hopeful that a new era had emerged in Sri Lanka, but recent developments may prove otherwise. Many fear this political crisis may result in history repeating itself.

For this reason, it becomes apparent that during this current unrest, members of civil society, including journalists, activists and human rights defenders in Sri Lanka, must be protected from threats of intimidation and violence so that they may fully exercise their rights. I hope that Sri Lanka can become a place where my family and ethnic minorities can live peacefully and enjoy similar rights and freedoms that we Canadians enjoy.

1320

PROTECTION FOR WORKERS

Mr. Amarjot Sandhu: I want to raise an important issue in Brampton: safe working environment, and dignity of workers.

Our Progressive Conservative government for the people has been a strong advocate to improving the quality of life of Ontarians by scrapping unjust taxes, thereby putting more money into people's pockets and promoting the creation of good-paying jobs while protecting workers.

Today I stand here to speak about the issues faced by owner-operators at CN Rail in Brampton. Almost 300 hard-working truck drivers have been protesting due to their working conditions, even lacking something as fundamental as access to a clean bathroom.

I cannot overstate how important truck drivers are to Brampton's economy and Ontario as a whole. These men

and women undergo long hours, working diligently to ensure the safe, timely transportation of goods and products around the province. Without truck drivers, our economy would grind to a halt, and it is important that we stand up for these vital workers.

I offer my full support to all hard-working truck drivers across the province, and I call on CN Rail in Brampton to listen to their concerns and take immediate action.

INTRODUCTION OF BILLS

RESTORING TRUST, TRANSPARENCY AND ACCOUNTABILITY ACT, 2018

LOI DE 2018 VISANT À RÉTABLIR LA CONFIANCE, LA TRANSPARENCE ET LA RESPONSABILITÉ

Mr. Fedeli moved first 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 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.

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

The division bells rang from 1323 to 1328.

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

Mr. Fedeli has moved that leave be given to introduce a bill entitled An Act to enact, amend and repeal various statutes, and that it now be read for the first time.

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

Ayes

| | | |
|------------------------|------------------------|-----------------------------|
| Anand, Deepak | Hillier, Randy | Phillips, Rod |
| Baber, Roman | Hogarth, Christine | Piccini, David |
| Babikian, Aris | Jones, Sylvia | Rasheed, Kaleed |
| Bailey, Robert | Kanapathi, Logan | Rickford, Greg |
| Bethlenfalvy, Peter | Karahalios, Belinda | Roberts, Jeremy |
| Bouma, Will | Ke, Vincent | Sabawy, Sheref |
| Calandra, Paul | Kramp, Daryl | Sandhu, Amarjot |
| Cho, Raymond Sung Joon | Kusendova, Natalia | Sarkaria, Prabmeet Singh |
| Cho, Stan | Lecco, Stephen | Scott, Laurie |
| Clark, Steve | MacLeod, Lisa | Simard, Amanda |
| Coe, Lorne | Martin, Robin | Skelly, Donna |
| Crawford, Stephen | Martow, Gila | Smith, Dave |
| Cuzzetto, Rudy | McDonell, Jim | Smith, Todd |
| Downey, Doug | McKenna, Jane | Surma, Kinga |
| Dunlop, Jill | McNaughton, Monte | Tangri, Nina |
| Elliott, Christine | Miller, Norman | Thanigasalam, Vijay |
| Fedeli, Victor | Mitas, Christina Maria | Thompson, Lisa M. |
| Fee, Amy | Nicholls, Rick | Tibollo, Michael A. |
| Ford, Doug | Oosterhoff, Sam | Triantafilopoulos, Effie J. |
| Fullerton, Merrilee | Pang, Billy | Wai, Daisy |
| Gill, Parm | Park, Lindsey | Walker, Bill |
| Hardeman, Ernie | Parsa, Michael | Yurek, Jeff |
| Harris, Mike | Pettapiece, Randy | |

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

Nays

| | | |
|-----------------------|--------------------------|----------------------------|
| Andrew, Jill | Gélinas, France | Rakocevic, Tom |
| Armstrong, Teresa J. | Gravelle, Michael | Sattler, Peggy |
| Arthur, Ian | Harden, Joel | Shaw, Sandy |
| Begum, Doly | Hassan, Faisal | Singh, Gurratan |
| Bell, Jessica | Hatfield, Percy | Singh, Sara |
| Berns-McGown, Rima | Karpoche, Bhutila | Stevens, Jennifer (Jennie) |
| Bisson, Gilles | Kernaghan, Terence | Tabuns, Peter |
| Burch, Jeff | Lalonde, Marie-France | Taylor, Monique |
| Coteau, Michael | Lindo, Laura Mae | Vanthof, John |
| Des Rosiers, Nathalie | Mamakwa, Sol | West, Jamie |
| Fraser, John | Mantha, Michael | Yarde, Kevin |
| French, Jennifer K. | Monteith-Farrell, Judith | |
| Gates, Wayne | Morrison, Suze | |

The Clerk of the Assembly (Mr. Todd Decker): The ayes are 68; the nays are 37.

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

First reading agreed to.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Would the Minister of Finance care to give a brief explanation of his bill?

Hon. Victor Fedeli: Thank you, Speaker. I'll make my statement during statements by ministries.

VISITOR

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Before I ask for statements from the ministry, I want to recognize the presence in the House of a former member. Mr. Tim Hudak is here. Welcome to Queen's Park.

STATEMENTS BY THE MINISTRY AND RESPONSES

ECONOMIC OUTLOOK AND FISCAL REVIEW

PERSPECTIVES ÉCONOMIQUES ET REVUE FINANCIÈRE

Hon. Victor Fedeli: Mr. Speaker, it is our honour to present the 2018 Ontario Economic Outlook and Fiscal Review or, more succinctly, today our government is proud to deliver the next steps in our Plan for the People.

Aujourd'hui, le gouvernement est fier de présenter les prochaines étapes de son Plan pour la population.

A few short months ago, our government received a crucial mandate from Ontario individuals, families and small business owners. Under the leadership of Premier Doug Ford, we promised to restore trust between government and the people of Ontario, and since we were elected on June 7, we have been hard at work delivering on those commitments.

We promised that we would put more money in the pockets of the people of Ontario, and today we are pleased to say, “Promise made, promise kept.”

The cap-and-trade carbon tax is officially gone, and we want to congratulate the Minister of the Environment, Conservation and Parks for his leadership on this file. The result: home heating bills are down. Gas prices are down four cents a litre. The average family is already saving \$260 per year in gasoline, natural gas and other costs.

In addition—and, Speaker, this is huge—\$308 million in Liberal tax hikes on individuals, families and businesses are being stopped dead in their tracks today. We will not be mirroring the federal government's attack on small business either, and I'm referring to passive income. This measure alone will save thousands of small businesses in Ontario up to \$40,000 a year.

Mr. Speaker, we promised we would clean up the mess at hydro. Once again, the verdict is clear: Promise made, promise kept. The era of hydro insiders pocketing millions, while family hydro bills rose significantly, has come to an end.

Under the leadership of the Minister of Energy, Northern Development and Mines, the Green Energy Act is being repealed. We've waited many long years to say that. I'm going to repeat it: The Green Energy Act is repealed. The days of highly subsidized wind and solar projects being forced on communities are over. Cancelling 758 unnecessary contracts provides \$790 million in savings to electricity ratepayers.

We promised we would make Ontario open for business.

Nous avons promis que l'Ontario serait ouvert aux affaires.

Once again, the answer is clear: Promise made, promise kept. Under the leadership of the Minister of Labour, we have introduced the Making Ontario Open for Business Act, which will repeal the job-killing parts of Bill 148. At the same time, we are maintaining the standards that protect vulnerable workers.

We are also fixing the skilled trades mess that left businesses unable to find skilled workers and young people unable to find jobs in the skilled trades. For this reason, we are shutting down the College of Trades.

Mr. Speaker, we promised we would put an end to hallway health care. On behalf of the Minister of Health and Long-Term Care, we are proud to once again report that progress is being made: Promise made, promise kept.

We are building 6,000 new long-term-care beds in communities all across Ontario. We have another 9,000 new beds in the pipeline, which we will be delivering to those communities that need them the most. And in advance of the upcoming flu season, we're investing \$90 million to create 1,100 beds in communities across Ontario.

We promised to restore trust, transparency and accountability in government. On behalf of our Premier and our entire government, we are pleased to once again confirm: Promise made, promise kept.

There is no greater example of this than our management of the government's books. We are approaching Ontario's finances like the majority of individuals and families approach their household targets. We must live

within our means, pay down our debts and make every dollar count. We firmly believe that a government that puts its fiscal house in order is truly a government working for the people.

A few weeks ago, our government released the report of the Independent Financial Commission of Inquiry and the results of the line-by-line review. Admittedly, the results were sobering. Our government inherited a \$15-billion deficit from the previous Liberal government—a staggering amount of money. Fifteen years of reckless spending and mismanagement by the previous Liberal government left our province extremely vulnerable to the next economic downturn, and that was irresponsible. It's this type of thinking that produces a crippling debt that, left unchecked, would devastate hospitals, schools and the social safety net.

1340

Worse still, the previous government went to great lengths to shield the magnitude of their problem. First, they tried to mask their structural deficit using one-time revenues. Second, they used off-book accounting to make the deficit appear lower than it actually was. Finally, when those didn't work, they made a conscious decision to run billions of dollars in deficits with no credible plan back to balance.

Considering this record, I think all of us, the members of this House, owe both the Auditor General and the Independent Financial Commission of Inquiry a debt of gratitude for ensuring these abuses were brought to the public's attention. Likewise, we congratulate the members of the Select Committee on Financial Transparency for their work in ensuring that these kinds of abuses are never seen in this province again. To further improve legislative accountability, our government is proposing to undertake measures to expand the scope and mandate of both the Auditor General and the Ontario Ombudsman.

Mr. Speaker, accountability is important, but accountability on its own is not enough. We have to fix this financial mess. On that count, we are pleased to report that our government has taken immediate steps to mitigate the structural deficit inherited from the previous Liberal administration. Due to swift action taken by our government, we are pleased to report that \$3.2 billion in savings have already been generated. But even better, we have acted immediately and are delivering \$2.7 billion in tax relief for Ontario families, individuals and businesses. When you put those together, in mere weeks since the commission report, we have reduced our deficit by \$500 million, so the deficit now stands at \$14.5 billion. It's going the right way.

We have made progress, but there is still much work to be done. Our government must take a new direction. We will restore fiscal balance on a timetable that is reasonable, modest and pragmatic. We will put in place a meaningful debt reduction strategy. We will strengthen the fiscal transparency and accountability measures enshrined in our laws. We will ensure that every government agency is delivering services effectively and providing value for taxpayer money, and I thank the President of the Treasury Board for his leadership.

Whether it's something as straightforward as removing the telephone landlines and fax machines from our government offices or something as significant as focusing OHIP+ on the kids who actually need it, the opportunity to rethink government is immense. Make no mistake: After 15 years of Liberal negligence, the road back to balance will not be easy, but we are setting Ontario down a path that will restore fiscal health, preserve critical services and support hard-working individuals and families. It is our plan for the people, and it is truly a balanced approach to governing.

Mr. Speaker, our government's position is non-negotiable. We are committed to making life more affordable for individuals and families, and putting more money back into their pockets so they can get ahead. Nobody in Ontario deserves a tax break more than low-income workers.

Et personne d'autre en Ontario ne mérite davantage un allègement fiscal que les travailleurs à faible revenu.

That is why we are proud to stand here today and announce that our government is introducing a new Low-income Individuals and Families Tax Credit, or LIFT for short. It is one of the most generous tax cuts for low-income workers in a generation. Speaker, it will benefit 1.1 million workers. The vast majority of low-income workers who earn \$30,000 or less per year will pay no personal income tax in Ontario. That's zero. People can choose to use these savings to pay their bills, pay for groceries or pay for anything else, and we invite the opposition, if they believe likewise, to vote with us in favour of the bill that we just tabled.

For a growing number of people, the prospect of affordable accommodation is getting beyond their reach. Individuals and families are facing an affordability challenge, simply because housing supply has not kept up with housing demand. In response, our government has committed to develop and implement a Housing Supply Action Plan—thank you, minister of affairs—

Laughter.

Hon. Victor Fedeli: —of Municipal Affairs and Housing.

Interjections.

Hon. Victor Fedeli: Thank you to the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing for your housing supply and action plan—I'm sorry, Steve. This will address the barriers that prevent the development of ownership and rental housing. We will also reintroduce a rent control exemption that will apply to new rental units in order to increase housing supply across the province. To be clear, rent control will remain in place for existing tenants.

Mr. Speaker, in order—you're still chuckling. You've got to have a little levity on these days.

Mr. Speaker, in order to pay for the services we all cherish, we need a stronger balance sheet and a stronger economy. We must create an environment where anyone can start a business, grow a business, and create jobs right here in our province. Earlier, we touched on the proposed Making Ontario Open for Business Act. Now here are some of the next steps, and it starts with red tape.

You know, it is outrageous that Ontario is currently burdened with approximately 331 statutes and more than 380,000 regulatory requirements, while British Columbia somehow manages to get by with less than half of that. The Minister of Economic Development, Job Creation and Trade is currently heading an effort to cut red tape across the entire government. He is well on his way, we're all well on our way, and we will further reduce red tape for businesses by 25% by the year 2022.

Mr. Speaker, prosperity must reach every corner of our province, and that includes communities in rural and northern Ontario. We will work with private-sector partners to expand natural gas and broadband networks to even more rural and remote communities, and we will finally develop the Ring of Fire. No more platitudes, no more delays. Instead, our government will work directly with our First Nations partners in order to realize the long-awaited benefits.

1350

We're also moving forward with our resource revenue-sharing agreement to create a win-win situation for northern towns and Indigenous communities and mining, forestry and aggregates companies.

Mr. Speaker, our government has decided it will not stand in the way of any project that would transport oil from western Canada to Ontario or Canada's east coast. We are pleased to announce that Ontario will lead by example. In order to further national interests, we will unilaterally relinquish our veto over new pipeline construction within our borders. It's time we worked together as part of one great nation and get the pipelines built.

We currently have a federal government in Ottawa that is determined to impose a carbon tax on the people of Ontario no matter what. It does not matter how many concerns Prime Minister Trudeau hears from seniors, families and small businesses; he is determined to make the people of Ontario pay. Ontario is proud to join a growing coalition of Canadian provinces opposed to the federal carbon tax framework. That's one that includes Saskatchewan, Manitoba and New Brunswick. The Premier has made it very clear he intends to fight the carbon tax with every tool in his tool box, and that includes legal challenges.

We want to congratulate the Attorney General for her leadership in fighting the carbon tax in both Saskatchewan and here in Ontario. Today, we are proud to share the next steps and the next tools we will use in this fight. Our government is actively exploring a full suite of transparency measures that will ensure every single person in Ontario is informed of how much they are paying in federal carbon tax. Every time you pay a home heating bill, or every time you fill up your car, it is our intention to let the people know just how much money the federal government is taking out of your pockets.

In conclusion, the current state of Ontario's finances is of significant concern. The previous Liberal government's reckless spending and mismanagement left an unprecedented burden on the shoulders of all individuals and businesses in Ontario. The fiscal hole is deep. The road

ahead is not an easy one and will require difficult decisions. Everyone across the province will be required to make sacrifices, without exception. However, Speaker, this is also an opportunity to embrace reform and transform how government serves the people. Our path forward is clear, and that is why it is important to maintain our resolve to pursue fiscal discipline and ultimately restore our books to balance. We gladly tighten our own belts now, knowing it will provide this generation and future ones with the secure, prosperous future they deserve.

Nous vous rassurons que notre gouvernement n'oubliera jamais pour qui il se bat ici entre ces quatre murs.

We can now assure you that our government will never forget who we are fighting for within these four walls: It is and always will be for the people.

Applause.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Members, please take your seats. We allowed the government more than its allotted time; I'll allow the opposition additional time as well.

Responses?

Ms. Sandy Shaw: To the Minister of Finance, thank you for your speech today. I'd like to start by saying that I often say that a budget is essentially a theological document. If you show me your budget, I will show you what you value. Today we have seen in this budget what this government values. We have seen what they value in this House, and now we not only see what they value; this budget puts on display what it is that they do not value, more importantly.

We have talked in this House about hard-working Ontarians, people who are paying more and more and getting less. They're struggling with affordable housing, with hydro rates that are skyrocketing, with unfair auto insurance rates and much, much more. People want a government that will make their lives easier. People don't need slogans; they don't need rhetoric. They need a government that will actually work in their best interests.

What I see in this government is, there's a lot of talk about transparency and accountability. I do serve on the Select Committee on Financial Transparency, and I would like to say that, in fact, we've spent many weeks interviewing people, and really, we haven't learned anything new. If it is true that we want to get to the bottom of the hydro mess, if we really want to resolve this—my experience on this committee is that when we look to have people come to this committee, particularly around the hydro file and CEO Mayo Schmidt, this government blocks our interest in getting to the bottom of this. To me, that does not speak to the idea of transparency and accountability.

There's a lot of talk now that you are talking about an income tax break, or zero income tax, for low-income people, but you're talking about people who earn so little that they in fact don't need a tax break. We have so many—

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Order. Order.

I'm going to give the opposition member extra time. Please proceed.

Ms. Sandy Shaw: They own so little that they don't have to pay taxes, and this is a government that is trotting this out as something that's of benefit to them. At the same time, they have legislation that's taking away an increase in the minimum wage and that's taking away sick days from these people.

People will see through this. They will see that this is not a genuine effort to improve their lives.

I would also like to mention that we have seen this government's values when it comes to our Indigenous community. There was not a word spared for reconciliation and Indigenous in the throne speech, and nothing has changed. The very fact that this government will relinquish veto rights over pipeline construction without consulting First Nations should be troublesome for this House.

Housing: We had questions today about housing. The fact that you are cutting rent controls on our housing in the already squeezed affordable housing environment is something that is only going to make this crisis worse.

We have three vital legislative offices that have been cut: the independent expert oversight that protects our environment and our children. At a time when you've cut a carbon plan, and you have no environmental plan in place, now you're cutting the expert oversight on this. This is also something that's troubling for the people of Ontario.

Your budget shows \$1.4 billion in cuts to transit infrastructure when we have questions about how we need to keep people moving.

There is \$902 million in cuts to the most vulnerable of Ontarians: our children, our youth and our social services. These cuts are devastating, and will be devastating, to those members of our community who are already struggling.

The minister has said here that this road ahead to this vague notion of how we're going to get to this prudent move to balance—the road ahead will be difficult. But this budget has made it a rocky road for people in Ontario who are already struggling.

That is why I will be keeping my solemn vow to vote against this legislation. I made a vow to support everyday Ontarians. We are no longer in a position where we can ask people who are already stretched to the max to contribute more.

I think that this budget clearly demonstrates that the values of this government do not align with the values and what everyday Ontarians are looking for in a government.

1400

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Responses?

Mr. John Fraser: It's a pleasure to respond to the Minister of Finance.

I want to start by saying that the minister's numbers in the fall economic statement just don't add up. He's saying, on one hand, that there's a \$15-billion deficit and that he has found \$3.2 billion in savings—but \$500 million in the last month, so the deficit is \$14.5 billion. Those numbers don't add up. The reason those numbers don't add up is,

the finance minister and the Premier are creating a context for very deep cuts. That's what they're doing. They're creating a context for cuts to those things that our families depend on. The government has moved, in Bill 47, to strip away workers' rights and the minimum wage. On the other hand, they're saying, "We're going to give them some money"—less than what they're losing out on. So I'm not sure that the government should be touting this initiative as something that's going to be a benefit to low-income people, because it's not going to be.

As well, moving away from rent control is a ham-fisted way of going towards building more rental housing in this province. I don't know how raising people's rents is helping the people, but somehow, in the perverse alternate universe of this government, it is.

Speaker, the other thing that's really concerning is the issue of oversight and accountability. The government is moving to eliminate three legislative officers.

L'élimination du bureau du commissaire aux services en français est une attaque sur la communauté francophone de l'Ontario.

It is an attack on the francophone community. There is a reason that we have a French-language ombudsman. We have a linguistic minority in Ontario that for years has fought for the respect and the services they need, and this government is moving away from that.

It's moving away from the child advocate, someone who is there to protect the rights of children, especially those children who have no parents, those children who need a voice. The current commissioner, last week, did a great job at that. We need that person here in Ontario, and the government moving away from that is wrong.

I know that the Minister of Health was a strong advocate for creating a legislative position for the Patient Ombudsman; I don't see that here. It's something inside government that I believe we should have done and fought strongly for. I'm disappointed not to see that there.

So there's an issue around oversight and accountability that this government wants to move away from. They don't want those voices. They don't want those people asking questions. Consolidating them into a larger office is just wrong.

We're all here for basically the same reasons. People send us here and they say, "Take care of our hospitals and schools. Make sure they're there for me and my family and my kids when I need them. Take care of the environment, because I want to leave a safe place for my kids to grow up in, and their kids. Take care of those people who can't take care of themselves." I don't see anything here in this fall economic statement. I see lots of code words for "cuts" and "transformation." We're here to do that job. We're here to make sure those things that families depend on are here in Ontario for them when they need them. This government is failing in this regard.

All they've done since coming here is dismantle things. They're dismantlers. They took down sex ed. They took down basic income. They've taken down minimum wage. They've taken down a plan for the environment. That's incredible.

Taking down a plan for the environment, and now taking the EBR and moving it away from the commissioner, and perhaps getting rid of the commissioner, and giving up Ontario's rights to ensure clean water, because they're going to say any pipeline project can come into this province and we're not going to have a veto over it, we're not going to have a say—that is wrong.

Three years ago, the OEB did a study to ensure that our water was protected on that Energy East pipeline. It's an important document. This government should look at it and they should not be moving in that direction.

VISITOR

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Before I ask for the presentation of petitions, I know the member for Peterborough–Kawartha had a point of order.

Mr. Dave Smith: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. After the introductions had already started, my mother-in-law came. So I'd like to introduce my mother-in-law, Karen Marten. Thank you very much.

PETITIONS

EMPLOYMENT STANDARDS

Mr. Faisal Hassan: I have a petition entitled "Don't Take Away Our \$15 Minimum Wage and Fairer Labour Laws."

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

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

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

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

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

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

"Protect workers' employment status, pay and benefits when contracts are flipped or businesses are sold in the building services sector;

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

I support this, add my signature to it and give it to page Zoe.

ANIMAL PROTECTION

Ms. Christine Hogarth: 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 are 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’ll sign this petition and hand it to Ella.

SPORT MARTIAL ARTS

Mr. Joel Harden: I have a petition today entitled “Protecting Our Right to Safe Sports Martial Arts.”

“To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

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

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

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

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

1410

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

I’ll be signing this petition and passing it to page Isabel for the Clerks’ table.

INJURED WORKERS

Ms. Judith Monteith-Farrell: I have a petition here. It is “Workers’ Comp is a Right.”

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

I will be signing this petition and giving it to page Kejsi to bring to the Clerk.

EMPLOYMENT STANDARDS

Ms. Doly Begum: I have petition here entitled, “Don’t Take Away Our \$15 Minimum Wage and Fairer Labour Laws.”

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

I fully support this petition and will affix my signature to it and give it to page Rham.

INDIGENOUS AFFAIRS

Ms. Laura Mae Lindo: I have a petition entitled, “Stop the Cuts to Indigenous Reconciliation.”

“To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

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

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

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

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

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

“—reinstate the Ministry of Indigenous Relations and Reconciliation;

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

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

“—support Indigenous communities across the province....”

I fully support this petition, and will affix my name to it and give it to page Kejsi.

EMPLOYMENT STANDARDS

Ms. Jill Andrew: This is on behalf of Toronto–St. Paul’s.

“Petition to the Ontario Legislative Assembly:

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

I proudly support, affix my signature to this, and hand it to page Kidan.

PUBLIC SAFETY

Mr. Dave Smith: I have a petition entitled, “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 emphatically support this petition and sign my name to it, and will give it to page Emily.

1420

INJURED WORKERS

Mr. Kevin Yarde: This petition is to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

I completely endorse this petition. I will affix my name and give it to page Alex.

EMPLOYMENT STANDARDS

Mr. Jeff Burch: “Petition to the Ontario Legislative Assembly:

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

I’ve affixed my signature and am handing it to the page Shlok.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Jennifer K. French): The time for petitions has expired.

**PRIVATE MEMBERS'
PUBLIC BUSINESS**

**LONG-TERM CARE HOMES
AMENDMENT ACT
(PREFERENCE FOR VETERANS), 2018**

**LOI DE 2018 MODIFIANT LA LOI
SUR LES FOYERS DE SOINS
DE LONGUE DURÉE
(PRÉFÉRENCE ACCORDÉE
AUX ANCIENS COMBATTANTS)**

Mrs. Stevens moved second reading of the following bill:

Bill 51, An Act to amend the Long-Term Care Homes Act, 2007, to give preference to veterans for access to beds / Projet de loi 51, Loi modifiant la Loi de 2007 sur les foyers de soins de longue durée pour accorder la préférence aux anciens combattants qui veulent avoir accès à des lits.

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

Mrs. Jennifer (Jennie) Stevens: It's an honour to be here to speak to this much-needed bill this afternoon. There are currently 33,000 people on the wait-list for long-term care in this province. What prompted me to introduce this bill was learning of the fact that of these 33,000 on the wait-list, the largest group waiting are modern-day veterans. People will often state that veterans are the responsibility of the federal government, but it is our responsibility to make sure that all Ontarians have access to long-term care. Loopholes in the existing legislation prevent veterans from accessing the beds that they need.

There are two essential goals for this legislation. The first goal is to expand the definition of a veteran under the Long-Term Care Homes Act to ensure that priority access to long-term-care beds is given to all veterans. The second goal is to prevent veterans from having to leave their spouses, children and grandchildren behind to access limited veterans' priority access beds in Toronto, Ottawa or London. Veterans' priority access beds are designated long-term-care spaces, spaces for which veterans have priority for over non-veteran applicants.

These beds, however, are limited. Only some veterans qualify. Those that do qualify have to relocate to designated beds, often separating veterans from their families and support networks. The act excludes modern-day veterans from accessing these veterans' priority access beds.

In existing legislation, there are two classes of veterans under the Long-Term Care Homes Act. The first are known as traditional veterans. Traditional veterans are those who served in the First World War, Second World War and Korean War. As the act stands now, traditional veterans, as defined, are the only veterans eligible to apply for priority access beds. Only veterans who served before 1953 can access these beds. Madam Speaker, that means that modern-day veterans—this would be anyone who

served in the Gulf War, various peacekeeping missions around the world, and in the war in Afghanistan—are excluded from accessing the priority access beds.

Too many veterans are falling through the cracks. They are not receiving the care they deserve. Their service to this country cannot and should not ever be forgotten. These men and women put their lives on the line to fight for our freedom, for our democracy. They fought to restore peace in time of conflict. They have fought piracy on the seas around the world. They have served their country proudly, with honour. These are men and women that have conducted disaster relief at home and abroad.

Across Ontario, there are approximately 1,097 beds that traditional veterans are eligible to apply for. These beds are located at Sunnybrook hospital in Toronto, Parkwood in London, and the Perley and Rideau Veterans' Health Centre in Ottawa. Veterans are forced to choose from one of these three locations in urban centres. There are veterans in every corner of this province, Madam Speaker, from Niagara Falls and St. Catharines to North Bay and Windsor and our most northern towns. It is not morally just for us to force veterans away from their communities, families and emotional supports in order to go to distant locations simply to have their health needs met.

This bill, Madam Speaker, would elevate veterans to the top of the wait-list in every home in this province of Ontario. This will allow both traditional and modern-day veterans to remain in their communities. As the amount of traditional veterans is expected to decline in upcoming years, the number of modern-day veterans in need of care will rapidly increase. As of today, there are well over 600,000 modern-day veterans—more than six times the number of traditional veterans—the vast majority of whom live in Ontario.

The average age of modern-day veterans is 56. Rather than allowing this vital program to lapse, we in this House have an opportunity to stop all veterans from falling through the cracks by giving them the care they deserve. According to the Veterans Ombudsman's 2013-14 report, modern-day veterans are the long-term-care client group with the least access to long-term health care benefits.

This legislation in front of us today seeks to correct this. This legislation gives priority access to all veterans. This legislation, regardless of where or when they served, will look after all of our traditional and modern-day veterans.

1430

In fact, this is an issue that the Royal Canadian Legion advocated for at their 46th Dominion Convention. Yes, the Royal Canadian Legion passed a resolution on veteran contract beds. It reads as follows:

“Whereas the current criteria to access veteran contract beds only applies to veterans of World War II and Korea;

“Whereas veterans who joined the Canadian Forces post-Korea (August 1953 onward) are now approaching their 80s; and

“Whereas there is a possibility that the contract beds will be reduced if not filled;

“Therefore, be it resolved that the criteria for a contract bed in a veterans' facility be expanded to include any

veteran of the Canadian Forces and allied forces, of any era, based on health needs.”

Everyone in this House should share the concerns of the Royal Canadian Legion that contract beds may be reduced if they are not filled. In order to make sure these spaces are available for all of our veterans who need it, we need to fill the gaps in the legislation to guarantee that this much-needed program will be around for veterans of the past, veterans of the present and veterans of future conflicts.

This bill is something that is deeply personal to me. As I have mentioned in this House before, my son, Jonathan, is a modern-day veteran. Having served in Afghanistan and in anti-terror missions as part of the war on terror, I hope that Jonathan and his comrades will one day, if needed, have access to long-term-care beds.

If this gap in legislation is not filled, then veterans' priority access beds will lie vacant. As traditional veterans decline in number while modern-day veterans linger on wait-lists, in desperate need of long-term care—allowing this to continue is not a fulfillment of our duty to care for our veterans. This is not how we should be treating our modern-day veterans.

I sincerely hope that all of the members of this House will vote in favour of this bill so that no veteran, be they traditional or modern-day, has to fall through the cracks ever again.

Madam Speaker, we have a duty—a duty to care for those who have served. We have to do better. We have to give veterans the care and the home that they deserve, when and where needed. This bill will stop separating veterans from their spouses, their children, their grandchildren and their caregivers. This bill will stop allowing modern-day veterans to fall through the cracks.

During this past Remembrance Day, I had the pleasure of participating in a ceremony held by the Royal Canadian Legion, Branch 24, in downtown St. Catharines. Members of the Lincoln and Welland Regiment marched alongside cadets from land, air and sea. What struck me most was how young all of these individuals were. Many were just starting their military careers, and several were fresh out of high school. These are the same young faces that went to war over 100 years ago on the battlefields of Europe.

We know so much more about the impact of war on those who lived through it, whether they were nurses in the field or soldiers on the front lines. Hundreds of years ago, we knew little of the impact of conditions like post-traumatic stress disorder. Knowing what we know now today, we can—we must—give modern-day veterans the opportunity to obtain long-term-care beds in close proximity to health care professionals and families. It is these men and women whom we will be letting down if we allow the existing gaps in the act to continue.

We need to make sure that, long after we are all gone, these young folks will have the same opportunity that traditional veterans do to access long-term care. We owe it to the veterans of all conflicts, past, present and future, to give them the care they need. Let's do the right thing here today. Let's set aside our differences in this House. Let's create a better future for the veterans in Ontario by voting in favour of this bill.

I'd like to finish quickly with a letter of support this bill received previously when it was introduced by former member Cindy Forster.

“I am pleased to learn of the private member's legislation that you sponsored, aiming to provide greater access to long-term-care facilities for veterans in your province.

“At a time when members of our armed forces are deployed on so many dangerous missions around the world, we must live up to the obligations of the social covenant that binds us with them in their service. The covenant calls for a lifelong commitment. This legislation is addressing a significant gap in support to veterans who need long-term care.

“Indeed, your private member's legislation is a critical step in the right direction and an example that I hope your federal counterparts will follow so that the appropriate changes can be made federally to advance this mission.

“I wish you every success with this initiative.

“Sincerely,

“Lieutenant General the Honourable Roméo Dallaire.”

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

Mr. Stephen Lecce: I want to just note off the top, Madam Speaker, that I'll be splitting my time with the member from Ottawa West–Nepean.

I want to thank the member for bringing forth this legislation, and I want to thank her son, Jonathan, for his service to this country. It is remarkable to know that he served in Afghanistan. Our thoughts are with him and the servicewomen and servicemen who made a difference in the defence of our country.

Our government is committed to honouring the service and sacrifices made by our veterans. We also are committed to delivering and building over 30,000 long-term-care beds in this province. As we all know, there are over 32,000 people waiting for long-term-care beds in this province. We have committed, as a government, to build 30,000 new beds: 15,000 over the next four years, and 6,000 that have already have been committed to in the first 100 days of office. We are improving long-term care for all Ontarians who have waited too long to access care within their communities.

While there already are provisions for veterans in law, we feel it is important to show veterans the respect they deserve. Veterans have given so much to our country, and we owe them this much.

Our government recognizes that Canadian heroes span every conflict and every generation. During some of the darkest chapters in our globe's history, Canadians have put their lives on the line. They've always punched above their weight. From the trenches of France to the beaches of Normandy, to the plains of Italy and Afghanistan, on land, sea and in the air, our Canadian Forces have valiantly served in the pursuit of good over evil.

I was proud to attend Remembrance Day ceremonies this past Sunday. I met with hundreds of veterans. I mentioned that it was my intention to support this bill, to the president of my local Legion. She wanted me to communicate to you her gratitude for putting this forward,

because it is things like this, both material and symbolic, that show our veterans, who for too long have felt not listened to and not respected. She wanted me to communicate her gratitude to you for bringing this forward, and she supports this bill unequivocally.

Canadians continue to stand behind our women and men in uniform. This bill, we believe, is an extension of the broad support in the country for those who have served.

This is a non-partisan piece of legislation. We hope that all members will rise to show unanimous support to our veterans, because, as the member said, modern-day veterans have the least access to care, as the Ombudsperson has accurately noted.

For traditional and modern vets, our message is clear: We stand united and supportive of their service, and we will always honour their commitment to this country.

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

1440

Mr. Jeff Burch: It's an honour to stand today and speak to this much-needed bill that has been put forward by my friend and colleague from St. Catharines. This idea was first raised, as she mentioned, through a private member's bill by my predecessor, Cindy Forster, and it's fitting that a member from the Niagara region and the critic for Legions and veterans moves it forward today. I want to acknowledge the supporters from Niagara who poured a great deal of effort into this bill: Bob Saracino, Peter Komar, Mike Haines and all of the local Legion presidents at the time.

This bill's predecessor, Bill 87 of the 41st Parliament, passed second reading with all-party support and was referred to the Standing Committee on Finance and Economic Affairs. Unfortunately, this great legislation fell victim to the prorogued government and all progress was lost. I'm very thankful that the member from St. Catharines chose to resurrect this vitally important bill. I know the member from St. Catharines and her family well. They're like my own family. I know her son, Jonathan, who is in the Canadian navy. I know that her entire family is very proud of her for championing this legislation and speaking so earnestly to it.

There are currently 33,000 people on the wait-list for long-term care in this province, and I was surprised to learn that the largest group waiting are modern-day veterans. As the member from St. Catharines articulated, there appears to be a misconception that veterans are the exclusive responsibility of the federal government. It's this misconception that leads to many veterans not receiving the care they deserve. It is the responsibility of this government to ensure that all Ontarians have access to long-term care, and loopholes in the existing legislation prevent veterans from accessing the beds they need.

This legislation does two simple things, things that every member of this House should be able to get behind.

First, it expands the definition of a "veteran" under the Long-Term Care Homes Act to ensure that priority access to long-term-care beds is given to all veterans.

Secondly, it puts the onus on long-term-care facilities across the province to ensure that the veterans who fall within this expanded definition and who have been assessed to need long-term care are given priority access.

Existing legislation separates veterans into two distinct classes. This distinction leads to many problems for the contemporary veteran. Traditional veterans are those who served in World War I, World War II and the Korean War. These pre-1953 veterans are expected to significantly decline in numbers over the next few years and, with that, the funding for this program is expected to cease.

As our nation grows, respect for our veterans must grow with it. What about those who served in the Gulf War, Afghanistan and other conflicts? Too many of these modern-day veterans are falling through the cracks. There is clearly a need and a demand for this program. Across Ontario, there are 1,097 beds that traditional veterans may apply for. These beds are frequently operating at around 90% capacity. What existing legislation fails to acknowledge is the upcoming shift in numbers and need. While the number of traditional veterans decreases, the number of modern-day veterans is projected to increase significantly, as will their need for support within our health care system. It's not right to conclude that, as a result of their age or the war that they served in, these veterans should not have priority access to beds or that this program should cease. These individuals have served our country proudly and with honour. They are our sisters, brothers, sons and daughters.

The legislation put forward by my friend from St. Catharines prepares us for the future by giving priority access to all veterans regardless of where and when they served.

I agree with the member from St. Catharines. In order to make sure that these spaces are available for all veterans who need them, we need to guarantee that this much-needed program will be around for veterans of past, present and future conflicts.

What if this legislation does not pass? Well, Speaker, if this gap in the legislation is not filled, then veteran priority access beds will lie vacant as the number of traditional veterans declines while modern-day veterans linger on longer and longer wait-lists. This is not how we should be treating our modern-day veterans. I join my colleagues in asking all members of this House to vote in favour of this bill so that no veteran has to fall through the cracks ever again. When people have signed up to serve our country, they have put their lives at risk in service to all of us. They have knowingly chosen to risk their lives to protect our freedom, no matter where or when they served, be it land, air or sea.

It is not logical to assume that there is no one suffering from the effects of the current definition. Thousands of modern-day veterans are in long-term-care facilities across Ontario, yet because of the date of their service, they were not eligible for any of the contract beds at the province's three designated facilities. Even if the bed was available, there is absolutely no guarantee that it would be within reasonable physical proximity to their home community.

Speaker, let's make sure that, long after we are all gone, these young folks will have the same opportunity that traditional veterans do to access long-term care. Let us do the right thing and pass this bill to make sure veterans will never have to languish even one more day on a long-term-care wait-list.

We owe a tremendous debt to all of our veterans: those from past wars, those serving today and those who have not yet fought. Providing expansion of this program only means it will continue to serve our veterans with the care and respect we owe to them. As many have said in this House: Lest we forget; we have a duty to care.

Once again, thank you to my friend and colleague from St. Catharines for her passion in representing this bill. This is a long-standing injustice that needs to be fixed. Let's do the right thing today and create a better future for veterans by voting in favour of this important piece of legislation.

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

Mr. Jeremy Roberts: I'm pleased to rise today in support of the bill put forward by the member for St. Catharines, which I believe is something that is sorely needed and is a wonderful way for all of us here in this chamber to celebrate the service of our veterans.

You know, Madam Speaker, I was incredibly fortunate two years ago to have the chance to visit Vimy Ridge and to see the monument there. I drove there by myself. When I arrived, the park had already closed, but you could still walk up to the monument. There was no one else there. It was just me. It was lightly raining. I walked up to this monument and I stood there and just had this profound sense of awe at the sacrifice that these men and women had made at that crucial moment for our country, looking down the hill at Vimy Ridge and imagining some of the horrors that must have occurred there so many years ago.

I have to say that this year, when Remembrance Day rolled around, having the chance to go and lay a wreath at the local cenotaph meant a great deal to me. It meant a great deal to me because it was so much larger than just the thrust and parry of politics here. It was a chance for all of us here in this chamber to represent our constituents in thanking those who came before us.

This is something that's non-partisan. The member for Ottawa Centre and I had the chance to lay a wreath together at the cenotaph in Westboro. Again, that was a wonderful moment, to share that with a member from the opposition and celebrate the contributions that those veterans had made before.

My riding, Madam Speaker, has the largest seniors' population in all of Ontario—the second-largest seniors' population next to Victoria, which seems to keep stealing some of our seniors; something about the nice weather—and so long-term care is a critical issue for us to be tackling in our region. That's why this bill is hugely important. All of those seniors, those veterans who are on those wait-lists who need long-term care—this is the very least that we can do for them, to stand up and say, "We are going to make sure that you have a place in long-term care." And so I'm proud to be standing alongside my colleagues in

supporting this fantastic piece of legislation. I'd like to thank the member once again for putting this forward, and I look forward to voting for it later this afternoon.

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

Mr. Dave Smith: I too am going to support this bill. One of the big reasons is that currently our definition of a veteran is someone who fought in World War I, World War II or the Korean War.

The last World War I veteran passed away a number of years ago. There are 235,700 veterans currently; 215,500 of them do not qualify as veterans under that current definition. That means that only 8.5% of veterans today would actually qualify, and that's amiss. This is one of those areas where it's not a partisan issue. This is something that needs to be corrected, and I commend the member for bringing this forward.

1450

In my riding alone, there are 1,473 veterans with active cases, and 932 of them do not qualify under the current definition of a veteran, and that's amiss. Our Legion has stepped forward and they're in support of changing this definition.

We know that it needs to be updated. This is something that's very important to us. Our veterans have stepped forward and risked their lives. They've put their country ahead of themselves. It's only right and fair that we do what we can do to make sure we're looking after those who have done what they can do to look after us.

We know that there's a significant shortfall right now in Ontario of long-term-care beds. We need to have another 30,000 long-term-care beds built in this province. If we don't change the legislation, if we don't make the adjustment that has been suggested in this private member's bill, we'll be putting out all of those long-term-care beds but will not be giving the access to them that our veterans deserve. I'm not suggesting that someone is less important, or that someone shouldn't be taken into consideration. What I am suggesting, though, is that our veterans have given so much to us and have asked for so very little that we need to make sure we're doing what we can do to look after them. It's their retirement. It's their golden years. They have given so much to us. It's only fair for us, then, to say thank you and to give back to them what they deserve.

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

Mr. Gilles Bisson: I want to congratulate my colleague for having brought this initiative forward. As we know, it's one that has lived in this House a number of times, and it's certainly good to see it back.

Here's the thing that I find interesting with this whole debate. Some of us here were the children of veterans who served in the Second World War, or at least in the Korean War, or possibly we have friends and brothers and sisters who served in UN actions or in Afghanistan. My dad used to always say that it's funny how in 1938, leading up to the war in 1939, you didn't have any money in this province in order to be able to help anybody to do anything—

the federal and provincial governments were doing scant little when it came to supporting people in this province, when it came to being able to deal with the issues then, which was pretty extreme poverty, given what was going on with the Depression—but they found billions of dollars, miraculously, to fight a war. Money just came out of nowhere, and all of a sudden we were spending billions of dollars that we didn't have—rightfully so—arming up and giving our troops the tools they needed to go out and do the job that they had to do. I don't argue for a second that we shouldn't have done that, but it's interesting how we were able to come up with the money to give our troops the tools they needed in order to go out and fight those battles. Our men and women donned the uniforms—in some cases, they didn't don uniforms and served other ways—and went across and did what had to be done. They put their lives in jeopardy. Many of them died. Many of them were injured. Many of them were psychologically affected or physically impaired after the war. They came back, and we couldn't find the money to help them when they got back here.

To this day, soldiers who serve in the Canadian Armed Forces, all branches, come back, in some cases, with physical wounds, and other times with psychiatric wounds, and we forget about them. We can find money to send them there to fight, but we can't find the money in order to support them here once they come back? Shame on us—and I don't mean just Conservatives. I just say, shame on us. If we want them to do what we ask them to do, they need to know that we're there all the way through.

What I find, as a person who has served—I served in the Canadian Armed Forces for a couple of years—as maybe others here have, is that I was extremely lucky. The only thing I ever put at the end of my FNC2 was a BFE. And if you don't know what that is, you'd have to be in the Armed Forces to know: blank flash eliminator. I never put a real bullet in my gun other than for target practice. I was extremely lucky. I never had to face the horrors of what people saw in Afghanistan, what people saw in Cyprus, what people saw in Egypt, what people saw in Rwanda, and what people saw in Korea and in the First and Second World Wars.

But certainly to God, as legislators, we cannot just pass this bill today, but make sure that we have at least the decency of providing our vets who do serve, who do go when they're called, with a long-term-care bed and the services required when needed. And that's the rub. We're going to all vote for this bill by voice. I can see it coming, I can feel the warmth of this debate already, but I want to see the colour of the money. “Where's the beef,” as the lady said in the commercial.

We have to, very early on after having passed this legislation, allow this bill to be called in committee so that the bill can be heard by the public, and so that vets and others can speak to it, because it may need some amendment; and then have that bill come back to this House for third reading and pass it before Christmastime so that the vets in our communities are able to get the kind of support that they want. That's going to be hard, because there is a crisis in long-term-care beds.

The government can stand up all it wants and say they're doing something; the only thing they've announced today was the Liberal plan of 6,000 beds. That's essentially what we heard today. The previous Liberal government, going into the last election, said, “We promise 6,000 beds.” This government is now adopting the Liberal long-term-care plan for long-term-care beds in the same way they've adopted the plan for hydro when it comes to reduction of hydro costs. You're now going to assume the \$35-billion deficit that the government created by giving people a reduction on their hydro rate and you're just going to call it your own. You're Liberals in a hurry, is exactly what you guys are.

So at least on one thing, let's try to do the right thing. We will all agree in this House that supporting vets is not about throwing insults on poppies; supporting vets is about making sure that we give vets the type of support that they need when they're in the frail situation of having to be in a long-term-care home.

I, as a New Democrat and as a former Armed Forces soldier, want to make sure that members of this assembly do the right thing in not only voting for this bill, but in making sure that this bill gets passed and that there is an appropriation of dollars in order to make sure that we can support our vets in their time of need, not just in times when we need them in front of the bullets.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Jennifer K. French): A reminder to all members to direct their remarks to and through the Chair.

Further debate?

Ms. Effie J. Triantafilopoulos: Speaker, I'm pleased to join the debate on Bill 51, introduced by the member from St. Catharines, which would ensure that veterans be offered preference for admission to long-term-care homes.

We are only a few days on from Remembrance Day, when all members of this House took time away to remember the brave members of our Armed Forces who served our country in uniform and those who gave their lives so that we could be free.

One of the poems that is often quoted is from Robert Laurence Binyon. It contains the line, “They shall grow not old, as we that are left grow old.” It reminds us that those who gave their lives in the service of our freedom never got the chance to grow old and we must remember them as we grow old. But we must also honour our veterans who served our country in war and in peace as they grow old.

As the Premier said recently when he announced our plan to eliminate property taxes on Legions and to consult about setting up a hotline for our military families, our government wants to do all we can to make life a bit easier for military family members, so we should certainly do no less for our veterans. We must ensure that they have the care they need, including access to good long-term-care homes.

I am proud that we are taking action to build new long-term-care spaces for veterans and everyone else in Ontario. I've spoken in this House previously about the importance of the dignity and comfort that a good long-

term-care home can offer an individual. It is vital that our veterans, of all people—men and women who served us in uniform—have their dignity and comfort assured.

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I commend the honourable member for introducing this bill, and I will be giving my heartfelt support to it. Our veterans were there for us when we needed our country protected, so let us be there for them when they need our help. Let us never forget the sacred debt that we owe them.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Jennifer K. French): I return to the member from St. Catharines for her two-minute reply.

Mrs. Jennifer (Jennie) Stevens: I'd like to thank everyone for their kind words: the members from King–Vaughan, Niagara Centre, Ottawa West–Nepean, Peterborough–Kawartha, Timmins, Oakville and West Burlington: Thank you for the support and the kind words towards this bill.

We in this House have the opportunity to make sure that our veterans never have to worry about whether or not they will have a home in their old age, a home that allows them to be close to their families, a home close to their support systems. By closing this loophole in the Long-Term Care Homes Act, all of us in this House will ensure that dedicated priority beds for veterans exist right across this province of Ontario.

We owe it to our veterans of the past wars. We owe it to our veterans who serve today. We owe it to the veterans of wars that have not been fought. We owe it to them to provide them the care they need. We have a duty to care in this province, and right now, we are not fulfilling our duty.

It doesn't matter if they're a cook, a mail clerk, a gunner or an officer. When people have signed up to serve our country, they have put their lives at risk to serve us all. They have stood in harm's way, risking their lives for our freedom, no matter where or when they served.

Be it land, air or sea, let's do the right thing and pass this bill, to make sure our veterans will never have to languish one more day on a wait-list.

BROADBAND SERVICE

Mr. John Vanthof: I move that, in the opinion of this House, the government of Ontario should create a 10-year, \$1-billion fund for bringing broadband service to rural and northern Ontario to better support the economic growth of the province.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Jennifer K. French): Mr. Vanthof has moved private member's notice of motion number 24. Pursuant to standing order 98, the member has 12 minutes for his presentation.

Mr. John Vanthof: First of all, I would like to challenge anyone in this House to tell me that having access to usable broadband isn't essential to their lives, essential to their business lives, essential to their children's lives and essential to Ontarians' lives. I believe that not one person in this House or working in this precinct would say that. So I think we could all agree that it's an essential service.

On the farm, many farmers now milk—I'm a dairy farmer—and work with robots. You need access to broadband to make that thing work. To get it repaired, you need access to broadband.

Many people in Ontario probably think—the people in the major centres—that broadband is available to everyone, that affordable broadband is available to everyone. That is not the case, sadly and tragically.

Actually, it's holding the whole province back. If you think about it from an economic standpoint, in rural Ontario, we have space; we have a great quality of life; we have housing. In Timiskaming–Cochrane, we have jobs, good jobs. When families come, they look for services. They look for essential services like broadband—usable broadband, affordable broadband.

I personally get—a “kick” is the wrong word. When the government says, “We're going to make things more efficient; we're going paperless”—great—or, “You can access government services online,” you know what that does for people who don't have broadband? Nothing. Absolutely nothing. Zero.

Mr. Gilles Bisson: It cuts us out.

Mr. John Vanthof: It cuts us out. It makes us second-class Ontarians.

We're not the only province with this problem; other provinces have it as well. That's why our neighbour to the east has committed a \$1-billion program to actually fix this issue, because fixing it will make a huge economic difference to the province.

I'm going to tell you a story about what actually happens when you don't have broadband or cellular coverage. A beautiful town in my riding, St. Charles—it's a beautiful little town; we would all love to live there. They don't have cell service—not very good cell service. A house burned down in St. Charles; luckily, no one was killed. They called 911, but do you know what, Speaker? It was raining. You know what happens when you have an outdated land-line system and it rains? The phone doesn't work. So no one came because the phone didn't work and they don't have cell service. Obviously, they don't have broadband either, okay? We're addressing that problem. It was around Christmas.

A couple of days later, I was in another beautiful town, which I'm going to focus on. River Valley is one of the most beautiful little places in Ontario. Next year when we all go to the IPM in West Nipissing—River Valley is in West Nipissing. I'd be happy to take you there. They have a beautiful folk festival there. It's a beautiful place.

The school has a fundraiser, and I try to go when I can—before Christmas. I was a bit too early for the dinner so I thought I'd stop off at the general store, as we all do, to talk to people, to find out what people are thinking. I stopped at the general store. The lady behind the counter and I are making conversation. I said, “I just drove up to River Valley and I see you don't have cell service.” She said, “No, sir, we have cell service. If you go three miles back on the road you'll get one bar, and if you walk up the railroad track there's a hill over there, and on a good day, you can get it there too.”

“Okay. So what about your land lines? Do you have land-line service?” “Oh, yes, sir, we have good land-line service.” I said, “Really? I was just in St. Charles”—and St. Charles is not directly connected, but it’s very close. I said, “I was just in St. Charles, and they were talking about that the phone lines don’t work when it rains.” She looked at me and she said—and she wasn’t being sarcastic or funny—“Sir, everyone knows the phones don’t work when it rains.” When these people see a Fido commercial, or Bell, or whatever they call it, for superfast Internet, you might as well be talking about Star Wars. That shouldn’t be.

I talked about a school fundraiser. There is a nice school in River Valley. The school board focuses on kids who need extra attention. It’s a great school. The community supports it. But can you imagine a school that doesn’t have access to Internet? They have the smart boards. So we’ve been fighting this for a while.

When I attended the Remembrance Week ceremony in Field, next to River Valley, the person responsible for information services for the school board said, “One of the biggest issues in our area is lack of usable Internet.” I said, “You know what? You’re going to be happy, because I’m going to bring that to the attention of the Legislature of Ontario.”

I would like to read a little letter from Monsieur Gagné regarding the Internet service at their school: “We just received confirmation from Vianet that ADSL service packages are no longer available in River Valley until Bell provides some upgrades to their aging ... facility.

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“I haven’t received any direct updates from Bell regarding this, but in their case, no news is probably not so good news.

“I know that Bell and others are applying for funding ... but it could take a while before any improvements or new solutions are in place.

“Meanwhile our school is without any service. In fact we are utilizing your service to permit the secretary to manage student records and receive and send emails on a limited basis....

“Thank you.

“Daniel Gagné

“Directeur du service informatique

“Conseil scolaire catholique Franco-Nord.”

This is Ontario. We’re not even talking about Sol Mamakwa territory; this is within a day’s drive here and back. These are places where people could benefit this province financially, where they would be happy to live to create jobs and home businesses.

I’m old enough to remember—I’m really dating myself here, Speaker—when the Internet was created. I remember it. I remember the dial tone: Bzz-zzz-zzt.

Hon. Monte McNaughton: You probably created the Internet.

Mr. John Vanthof: I would like to take credit.

But I distinctly recall that for those of us in the country and those of us who were a bit out of town, the Internet was going to be the great equalizer, because no longer did

you have to live in a major centre to contribute to the economy. With the information age, you didn’t have to be in Toronto to work for a major corporation, to have a home-based business. You could be in River Valley. River Valley is pretty close to paradise, Speaker, and you could be there. It was the great equalizer.

Here we are years later, and I think everyone here acknowledges that broadband Internet and cell service are necessities of our modern society. To function in our modern society, you need them. The reason they don’t have them in River Valley and the reason they don’t have them in some other places in this province is quite simple: Bell is not going to replace their land lines, because they know that land lines are old, and quite frankly, they want to make money. They’re not going to provide these services in places where it’s not economically viable to do so for the company, but those services would be economically viable for the province, because they create all kinds of other economic activity.

That’s where the public needs to get involved: when the greater good—and in this case, the financial good—to the province far, far exceeds the investment. That’s why we need to actually put a plan in place and actually spend the money.

I know this government is not in the mood to spend money or to fund projects, but we hear steadily that they want to be open for business. Well, you know what? Those signs on the border don’t do any good for people in Timiskaming–Cochrane or anywhere else who have no Internet service, because they’re not open for business, and they never will be until they have access to an essential service, which is broadband Internet. If this government is serious about talking about “open for business,” they need more than corrugated plastic signs saying, “Open for Business.” They actually have to look. They actually have to look at where they can invest in Ontarians and invest in infrastructure that will enrich people’s lives and enrich the province.

The Internet is like roads used to be. Without roads, places didn’t get developed. They’re essential services. The first people who lived on those roads, could they afford those roads? No. The public stepped in and made that infrastructure. In areas where the private sector can’t do it by themselves, the province has to step in.

Broadband Internet is an essential service. We know it, and we need to fund it for all Ontarians.

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

Hon. Monte McNaughton: I am pleased to rise to discuss the motion put forward today from my friend the member from Timiskaming–Cochrane. I am thankful that he brought this forward today. This is important to many of us in this House and is important to the province of Ontario as a whole.

I’m pleased to speak about our government’s commitment to expand broadband access across the province, especially in rural, northern, remote and First Nations communities in Ontario. Broadband service is now an integral part of everyone’s daily lives, just like heat or clean water.

Speaker, I know that this member is going to speak very shortly on this motion, but I personally want to thank my parliamentary assistant, the MPP for King–Vaughan, for his leadership and passion on this file within the Ministry of Infrastructure. I know that in the coming months, we're going to have a lot more to say on this issue.

We need to be able to access high-speed connections for services such as education and health care, but especially for business. The member from Timiskaming–Cochrane highlighted this from his own experience as a dairy farmer.

Access can be spotty, depending on where you live or work. It is not readily available in every corner of our province. I hear this frequently when I'm in my very own riding of Lambton–Kent–Middlesex, in rural southwestern Ontario.

We are listening to people right across the province. We have heard first-hand about the gaps in service, from lost cellular connections to super-slow downloads. In fact, at the annual meeting of the Association of Municipalities of Ontario in August, many municipal leaders told me that improving broadband access is a key priority for their community and their residents.

MPPs, many of them in this House, have written to me personally on behalf of their constituents who can't get access to high-speed Internet. There are so many stories. Students can't do their assignments at home. They ask their parents to drive them to a local public library or, in some cases, to a fast-food outlet so that they can connect to free WiFi.

Without good broadband access, businesses can't set up shop or expand their operations. Farmers can't take advantage of the latest technology that could bring more innovation to agriculture, from precision planting of crops to the tracking of livestock.

Businesses are key to our provincial economy, and as a government, we want to ensure that Ontario is truly open for business. My ministry is currently working on developing a broadband plan to improve access and expand coverage, especially to unserved and underserved communities. We will be partnering with the private sector to deliver billions and billions of dollars' worth of investment over the next 10 years, right here in Ontario.

The majority of broadband and cellular infrastructure in Ontario is owned and operated by telecommunications service providers, many of which are private sector companies. Ontario is engaging with the telecommunications sector to better understand how we can support innovation and investment in the sector, especially in unserved or underserved areas. This work could include cutting red tape and reducing barriers for the sector, to encourage them to expand their networks. We will be working with the sector and local communities, as well as the federal government, to leverage other funding sources and encourage providers to expand their networks.

This will make life better for students and seniors, for families and businesses, which ultimately helps everyone in the province of Ontario.

Once again, I thank the member from Timiskaming–Cochrane for bringing forward his motion to raise awareness in the Legislature of this important issue.

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

Mr. Sol Mamakwa: *Remarks in Oji-Cree.*

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Thank you for allowing me to speak, Madam Speaker. My comments are in support of my colleague MPP Vanthof's private member's motion calling for investment in rural and northern broadband infrastructure. As you know, my fellow colleagues, I have the most northerly riding in northwestern Ontario. Not only that, I have a lot of fly-in communities that I represent in my riding. He is proposing that the government of Ontario create a 10-year, \$1-billion fund for bringing broadband service to rural and northern Ontario, to better support the economic growth of the province. As I mentioned, it includes my communities. I have 27 fly-in communities in my riding in the Far North. Also, within the riding of Kiiwetinoong, access to broadband is not widely available.

There's a particular community I was at just last Friday: Whitedog, or Wabaseemoong in our language. It's a community of about 2,000 or 2,500 people. I got to visit the police service that services that community, and one of the things they said is that they are trying to upgrade their infrastructure, or their radio system, in that community. When they make a phone call, they can only have 20 lines open at once. If it's beyond those 20 lines, you'll get that fast busy signal. That's just an example of—

Interjections.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Jennifer K. French): Stop the clock, please.

The side conversations and phone calls are a bit distracting. I would return to the member and ask that all members please sit quietly so I can hear him.

Mr. Sol Mamakwa: Thank you, Madam Speaker.

We know that access to broadband connectivity plays a key role in ensuring we have equal access to learning opportunities for students, certainly, in my riding, and also rural and remote communities. It's also very necessary for businesses, small and large, to survive in rural and remote settings in Ontario. Just like non-Indigenous communities, First Nations families and businesses need support from the provincial government.

I have brought this up a number of times in the House: that the majority of the communities I represent are remote, fly-in communities. The only access is an airport. Access to a high-quality broadband infrastructure is a very key ingredient to ensure that our communities benefit and also have future success in the work that we do. It would give them better supports to essential services such as:

—telehealth;

—tele-education for high school, post-secondary and other skills training initiatives;

—simple access to government and other business services, whatever online services are available, whether it's federally or provincially;

—monitoring of community infrastructure. With the technology that we have now, sometimes we can actually monitor the quality of the water. For example, a water treatment plant—you can monitor those online from outside, to ensure that we have that.

—access to economic opportunities within the Internet.

An example is also policing. When you actually go into the communities—say, if you go to Fort Severn, if you go to Eabametoong, if you go to Pikangikum—everybody has access to 911. There is no 911 in my community. You have a radio phone that you dial into to access police services. That's just an example of having the infrastructure to be able to do that. If done properly and made available widely, it would give them an opportunity to have that competitive edge and access to equitable services.

Not only that, but as you may know, communities in my riding have some of the highest suicide rates across Canada. Access to mental health services, whether it's Telehealth or Telemental Health, would be very helpful.

Again, this House and this government speak regularly about promoting life and also creating change within our communities for people in Ontario. But how can we ensure that we make this happen if we don't supply our communities in the Far North with the resources that we need? Access to high-speed Internet and infrastructure for broadband would have a very profound impact on the lives of the youth in our remote First Nations communities and even rural northern First Nations, and also municipalities that don't have access to this, where recreational and other resources are not available.

I spoke about distance education. I spoke about the online work that could happen and open opportunities for First Nations youth in our communities in the Far North.

Again, I'll be voting in support of this motion. I encourage the passage of motion number 24 so that all citizens in Ontario have access to the same opportunities for social and economic growth and development. Meegwetch.

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

Mr. Stephen Lecce: Thank you to the member for introducing this motion. Our government understands how critical broadband access is to the economy, and we're committed to improving broadband and cellular services to rural and remote communities of this province.

Broadband refers to an always-available high-speed Internet connection at a significantly higher speed than dial-up services. It can include fibre optic, satellite and wireless.

Market forces and private sector investment are largely meeting consumer demands in densely populated urban centres, but these demands, as the member rightly noted, cannot be met in all rural and remote communities with low population density. We understand the frustration of those families and the businesses who live and work in these underserved or even unserved communities. We have heard the message loud and clear from constituents, from parliamentarians, from business leaders and from mayors, wardens, and reeves.

The majority of broadband and cellular infrastructure in Ontario is owned and operated by telecommunications

service providers, many of them private sector companies. Ontario is engaging with the telecommunications sector to better understand how we can support innovation and investment in the sector. This work could include cutting red tape and reducing barriers for the sector to encourage them to expand their networks. We'll be working with the sector, local communities and the federal government to leverage other funding sources and to encourage providers to expand their networks.

The Ministry of Infrastructure is currently working on developing—and the Minister of Infrastructure, under his leadership, someone who cares deeply about unlocking the economic potential of this province. I am proud to serve with the minister every single day as he helps move the yardstick forward to ensure that our communities, our small businesses and our innovators have the tools to succeed.

We know that in the development of a broadband plan, we will improve access and expand coverage, especially to underserved communities in this province. We know key infrastructure investments can drive economic growth, especially for small business, for manufacturing and for the digital economy.

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Infrastructure is everywhere. It is the hospitals that care for our parents. It's the fields our children play in. It's the bridges that connect our communities. Infrastructure is also broadband. It is the high-speed connection that brings our towns up to speed. It connects them to work, school, public services like health care, and to their families.

With high-speed services, rural businesses can expand their market reach both locally and globally and, by extension, create the value-added jobs we seek in this province. It means people can build their lives and their businesses in the rural areas where they have deep roots. Farmers can leverage GPS and high-speed broadband to gain advantages from precision agriculture, from where to plant crops and better ways to monitor livestock.

I have dairy farmers in my riding—to the member. I proudly have dairy farmers in the village of Schomberg. They tell me often that in King township, if you can believe it—I'm not up north, sir; I'm in King, in the heart of York region—we still do not have effective, reliable broadband in York region, which is incredible in 2018.

The CRTC—the federal government—has made access to broadband now a requirement, just like having a phone. It is now a mandate. I will submit to the member that the federal government has been modest in the resources they've allocated to that aspirational goal, but nonetheless your motion, supported by our government, hopefully will move the yardstick forward.

It means businesses can build their lives and their businesses in the rural areas where they have those deep roots, as I mentioned, Madam Speaker. As I've noted, the digital economy can then reach beyond the tech incubators in our biggest cities. It actually could go into our smallest towns, into the villages and hamlets of this province, so that tech jobs can benefit every single corner of our province, even in remote and rural communities. It means

that every person in Ontario can be connected to their communities, their family and their friends and be an active participant in the growing economy.

Ensuring better broadband access across the province will make life better for families and for business, and more competitive for industry. We are aware that we cannot fund every infrastructure project in every community—and I think all members accept that—or be in the business of delivering services ourselves. Instead, we believe in leveraging private sector participation into better broadband connections.

By getting our fiscal house in order and cutting red tape for business, as was announced by the Minister of Finance and supported by the Treasury Board president—that we are taking decisive action to grow our economy and reduce the barriers that inhibit growth and job creation—we will pave the way for greater private sector investment in infrastructure and, really, at a savings to the taxpayers of this province. Bringing rural remote areas up to speed benefits the whole province. It will strengthen the economy, create new jobs, and expand opportunities for businesses small and large. It will show, Madam Speaker, that Ontario is open for business. It will make life easier for Ontario's families in every region of this province, and it is for that reason, Madam Speaker, that I stand in support of this motion.

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

Mr. Michael Mantha: It's always a joy and a privilege to take my place on behalf of the good people of Algoma-Manitoulin and, of course, speak to the private member's bill that my colleague from Timiskaming-Cochrane has brought forward. The fact that we're giving you guys an idea, we're giving you guys a suggestion, we're providing something that you guys need to do—and it's a good idea, because the member from Timiskaming-Cochrane has done his homework.

This is something that we actually went across this province and we talked to a lot of people about. This actually resonates with people. When you look at the CRTC, which declared broadband Internet service as an essential service back in 2016, this is an absolute need that we need in all of our communities and all of our businesses in order for us to grow. If we're talking about—and again, the member from Timiskaming-Cochrane mentioned it earlier, that never mind the slogans and the signs and the bumper stickers; let's actually take some actions that will make this province grow.

I want to tell you a little bit about some of the frustration that some of our community members are feeling in my area. It's funny. Jayson Stewart, who is a teacher over at Espanola High School and a resident of Massey, just sent me this message this afternoon. He says:

"Massey and area neighbours"—and our MPP: "If you are with [a certain service provider which is very costly because it's a satellite signal that is there] for Internet service, please know that they are not servicing our area well. If you need a service visit, their closest technician is 610 kilometres away in Kemptville and"—guess what?—"they only cover mileage up to 50 kilometres away.

"We need to put even more pressure on municipal, provincial and federal governments to make affordable and accessible high-speed Internet available to all Ontarians and not only those in the big centres.

"If you do need to book a service" appointment, "ensure that you move up to as high a manager as you" possibly can. They "give greater discounts to cover the costs and frustration" that will continue to mount for those residents. That's up in Massey.

Let me talk to you about Dubreuilville in the short time that I have. Dubreuilville, a beautiful forestry community, has now been transitioned into a mining mecca. There are plenty of mines that are opening up in that area. You will remember, just a couple of weeks ago, I was talking about the new Harte Sugar Zone gold mine that opened up over in White River. Well, guess what? We need Internet up there as well.

Melanie Pilon, who has been hired to specifically work on economic development opportunities for the community of Dubreuilville, has been frustrated. I've been speaking with her, along with my staff, and talking to the community of Dubreuilville, because here's the thing: The well-known service provider—which sounds like "well"—who is there and providing the service to the community is no longer accepting customers. Why? They became aware, because numerous complaints were put to them, that the service that people were being charged for and that they were expecting with their broadband service is not being met. Why? Because the technology has not been improved. It's not because they can't do it, it's just that they're refusing to do it.

So those that are moving out of town or relocating from one house to another, or their business is changing from la rue Des Pins to la rue Des Érables, they're being denied because they're being disconnected from one. They're saying, "I'm only moving from one location to another. Why can't I bring my Internet?" "There's a problem in the community in order to provide proper broadband, so we're not going to give you that service."

A house burnt down and they were just reconnecting for their service, and a service provider denied them access and didn't provide the Internet service. The kids cannot do their homework in the school because they don't have proper broadband. The services—oh, jeez. Oh, I could go on forever.

Telemedicine is one of the things that we need in northern Ontario, where people come in and get visual aid and examinations from doctors through telecommunications, but it's unreliable because we don't have proper broadband Internet.

I do want to give a shout-out to the Eastern Ontario Wardens' Caucus, who have met on numerous occasions with our caucus over at AMO and who have really tackled this problem to address the issues of broadband Internet in eastern Ontario. One of those ideas—a great idea that, again, this government can look at and actually pull it in, develop it and apply it to the rest of province as far as developing our broadband needs.

Listen, there are ideas that are out there, but the one from the member from Timiskaming-Cochrane here is a

good step forward, is an investment that we need to do in order to provide the services and get this province going in the right direction again.

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

M^{lle} Amanda Simard: I'm pleased to rise today in this place to speak about this important issue and our government's work to improve broadband access in our province.

Notre gouvernement est engagé à améliorer les conditions de vie des familles et des entreprises, en particulier dans les communautés rurales et éloignées. Cela comprend élargir l'accès aux services Internet à haut débit où à large bande.

We know that high-speed Internet service is not equal, that some of our residents are being shut out of the booming digital economy. They can't connect easily to friends and family in their communities. They can't easily access vital public services such as education and health care. They can't set up new businesses or expand their existing businesses. Broadband access is becoming almost as important as heat or clean water. It's a vital service that people depend on.

Cet accès aide les entreprises locales à être compétitives et permet aux gens de bâtir leur carrière et d'élever leurs familles dans leurs propres communautés. Cette connectivité est essentielle dans les régions rurales pour permettre aux familles de rester en contact, de connecter les entreprises au monde entier et de préparer les communautés rurales à l'investissement. Ceci leur permet de démarrer des entreprises, de créer des emplois et de faire croître l'économie.

This is just one of the ways we can help Ontario get moving.

Nous comprenons la frustration des familles et des entreprises qui vivent et travaillent dans ces communautés mal desservies. Ce n'est pas unique à l'Ontario. Le Conseil de la radiodiffusion et des télécommunications canadiennes, le CRTC, a déclaré que le service Internet à haute vitesse devrait être un service de base offert à tous les Canadiens, ce qui inclut ceux qui vivent dans les zones rurales et éloignées.

Notre gouvernement pour les gens a déjà annoncé son intention de remplacer le réseau de radio de sécurité publique, en ruine, de la province, réseau sur lequel quelques 38 000 intervenants de première ligne et d'urgence de l'Ontario s'appuient pour communiquer rapidement en situation de crise.

We know key infrastructure investments can drive economic growth, job creation and opportunities.

1540

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Jennifer K. French): I return to the member from Timiskaming–Cochrane for his response.

Mr. John Vanthof: I'd like to thank the Minister of Infrastructure; the member for Kiiwetinoong—I think we all owe the member for Kiiwetinoong gratitude, for he brings a very unique perspective, a perspective that none of the rest of us actually have really experienced; the member from King–Vaughan—we often disagree, but I

think we agree on this one; the member for Algoma–Manitoulin; and merci aussi to the member from Glengarry–Prescott–Russell.

I've listened very closely to everyone. We agree there's a problem. There has been a problem for a while. We haven't made the next step.

To my colleague from Brampton Centre, who gave me a nice little—we are experiencing a digital divide in this province, and unless we address that, that is going to get worse, and the whole economy is going to suffer. We see it now: We have problems in the GTA because people are moving away from rural Ontario. Why? Because they don't have the services that modern families need, and this is one of them.

Yes, we can work with the private sector providers. But in some places, the private sector providers are never going to provide the service unless there is public funding to help them provide that service, and to make sure that that service is available to everyone.

We've identified that there is a problem. We know it's costing us billions of dollars of lost capacity. You have the power to do something. You have the power to do something more than talk about it. You can actually start the process and start this investment, to ensure that all people in this province have access to broadband Internet, to grow our economy.

TERRORIST ACTIVITIES SANCTIONS ACT, 2018

LOI DE 2018 PUNISSANT DE SANCTIONS LES ACTIVITÉS TERRORISTES

Mr. Dave Smith moved second reading of the following bill:

Bill 46, An Act to amend various Acts to impose sanctions for persons convicted of terrorist activities / Projet de loi 46, Loi modifiant diverses lois pour imposer des sanctions aux personnes déclarées coupables d'activités terroristes.

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

Mr. Dave Smith: I'm going to start with a statement that was said to me almost 30 years ago now. It's one that has stuck with me ever since and has almost become a philosophy that I choose to live my life by: Everything that you can see, smell, taste or touch has been bought and sold at some point and can be replaced with money. The only thing that you truly have of value that can never be replaced with money is your word. Your word is your covenant. Always make sure that your word has value. It's a simple thing to do. Just honour your word.

As elected officials, as public servants, as the people entrusted with ensuring that we're looking after the interests of those who have put their faith in us, we must always honour our word and do everything in our power to protect the very people who have placed their faith in us.

We observed Remembrance Day just a few short days ago. We gave our word, our covenant, to those brave individuals who were willing to choose to put themselves in harm's way so that we could enjoy the life that we live here in Ontario. We gave our word that their sacrifice would never be forgotten. We gave our word that their sacrifice would never be taken for granted.

In our country's 151-year history, Canadians have always answered the call. Canadians have always stepped forward and made sacrifices, to make sure that the evil that exists in this world does not have an opportunity to grow.

Today, that sacrifice is being made overseas. The difference today, though, is we're fighting against a completely different enemy with a completely different view of the world.

Our enemy today is not a country or a state. This enemy is not trying to conquer our land and take possession of it. Instead, the enemy is one of terror. Their goal is fear. Their desire is to change our way of life, not to destroy our armies or to disarm our soldiers. Their goal is to change everything we do, and their method is terror.

On September 11, 2001, that battle was brought to North America. Using civilian aircraft, fear, terror and grief were thrust upon us and changed our way of life. The world changed that day. Canada stood shoulder to shoulder with the United States and we did what we could to help. The town of Gander, Newfoundland, opened its hearts to those who could not fly home. Canada answered the call.

I've met with one woman who has faced this terror in a way that none of us could ever imagine: Mrs. Maureen Basnicki. Mrs. Basnicki is a resident of Ontario. Her husband, Ken, a Canadian, was working in the north tower on September 11. Maureen has shared her story with me and the struggle that her family has gone through. Ken Basnicki was murdered by terrorists.

The terrorist organization that carried out that attack is one of the organizations that we are still fighting today. That organization has given birth to other terrorist organizations, groups that our Canadian soldiers are also answering the call for, that our Canadian soldiers are currently fighting against. These groups are very well organized, and they're recruiting people from all over the world to come and join them in their own terror philosophy. I truly do not understand it, but there are individuals who lived in our great province, who enjoyed all of the privileges of life here in Ontario, who have chosen to join those terrorists and have actively engaged in heinous, barbaric acts to inflict fear and terror and to destroy everything that we hold dear.

Some of those Canadian individuals who chose to turn their backs on Canada, individuals with warped and demented minds, have been captured. They are now looking to return to Canada, the very country that they not only turned their backs on but actively campaigned against, actively engaged in behaviours against and actively engaged in activities against—our country, our soldiers, our people and our way of life.

One such individual bragged about decapitating Christians and then used their heads as soccer balls. He

posted videos of himself and his colleagues engaging in this barbaric act. This is not the type of person that I want in my province, in my city or in my community, but the federal government of Canada has reached out to individuals like this and is actively working to bring them back to Canada. Prime Minister Trudeau is on record as saying that these individuals can be powerful voices in our country. This is not the voice I want in my country.

1550

I do not have the ability to prevent these individuals from returning to Canada. That power resides with the federal government. Madam Speaker, I gave my word to the people of this province that I would do everything in my power to protect them, to think of their best interests, to honour the trust that they have bestowed upon me. I may not be able to prevent these individuals from returning to our country, but I will not allow them to enjoy any of the privileges that others in Ontario enjoy. I will not give them the opportunity to be a powerful voice in my country. Mr. Trudeau is wrong. Mr. Trudeau's policy is wrong. I cannot stop him, but I can stop them.

Driving a vehicle in our province is a privilege. A vehicle can be used as a weapon, and in my Ontario, a terrorist must never be permitted to put lives at risk by driving.

Hunting and fishing are privileges, but there is risk. A terrorist must never be permitted these privileges in Ontario.

OHIP is taken away from our retirees if they spend too much time enjoying their retirement outside of Canada. A terrorist must never enjoy the privileges that we're so willing to take away from our seniors, seniors who have contributed to our society for years in a positive way.

In Ontario, we provide assistance for those who want a better education but can't afford it. This is a privilege that we extend to people who want to contribute to our society positively. Terrorists should never have that privilege.

We provide assistance to our most vulnerable in the form of assisted housing. This is a privilege extended to those who need our help. A terrorist should never be in a position where they're influencing our vulnerable by having that privilege. A terrorist should never be given that privilege.

Ontario Works is there to help those who have fallen on hard times. The Ontario Disability Support Program is there to help our vulnerable who, through no fault of their own, cannot support themselves. Someone who has intentionally committed barbaric acts should never have that privilege of being supported by the people in this province.

Madam Speaker, I cannot stop them from coming to Ontario, but I do not have to welcome them with open arms, like Mr. Trudeau seems to want to do. I want it known: They are not welcome here. They will not enjoy the standard of life that they actively tried to destroy. They will not enjoy any of the privileges that they tried to take away. They are not welcome to come here and spread their hatred, their lies and their fear.

C.S. Lewis once said, "I can't go back and rewrite the beginning, but I can start now and change the ending."

Madam Speaker, I give you my word: Today in Ontario, we can start that new ending. We do not have to welcome terrorists. Terrorism has no place in my province.

Interjections.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Jennifer K. French): Order.

Further debate?

Mr. Gilles Bisson: Madam Speaker, through you: Everyone in this House can agree that terrorism and heinous acts of violence committed by those who seek to sow discord in our society are wrong. The NDP strongly denounces terrorism and the senseless acts of violence committed or abetted by convicted terrorists.

All Ontarians really want the same thing when it comes to the security of our loved ones: We want our children to be safe wherever they go, we want to know our families, friends and neighbours will return home safely at the end of the day, and we want Canada, Ontario and our own neighbours to be an example of peace, the kind of peace the rest of the world looks to Canada for as a model.

As someone who served, I know the sacrifice that our armed forces make. They literally put their lives on the line, and I can only imagine the shock and the hurt that these brave men and women feel when they learn that the enemy troops they risked their lives to defeat hold Canadian citizenship. It is a huge betrayal.

But this bill simply is not an effective tool to protect our troops and stop terrorism. It will not make our communities safer, as it won't apply to people committing atrocities at home. Why aren't we doing anything to stop people like the van attacker who killed all those people in Toronto earlier this year?

First off, it seems pretty much a certainty that even if this bill is passed, it will be immediately overturned by the courts. The Charter of Rights says you cannot deny a Canadian citizen who has done their jail time the right of citizenship, regardless of what the heinous act is that they have perpetrated. If we're serious about fighting terrorism and protecting our troops, we should be trying to pass laws that actually last once the headlines go away.

Secondly, this bill only singles out individuals convicted under the Criminal Code, but what about individuals who are not caught or prosecuted? Jihadi Jack, the British-born fighter with Canadian citizenship who was in the news when this bill was tabled, has never been arrested or convicted under section 33 of the Criminal Code, so even if he was repatriated none of these provisions of this bill would apply to him.

If we're really interested in combatting this sort of extremism and terrorism recruitment, we should be giving police the tools they need to identify and arrest extremists. We should also be partnering with community groups to combat radicalization at the source. That takes investment and it takes thought.

Third, and really practically, by denying someone health care, the government could be putting us all at risk by refusing to treat and contain infectious diseases. We're talking about individuals returning from places ravaged by potentially life-threatening communicable diseases who

will be confined to a jail cell in close quarters, not just with other inmates but correctional staff and health care professionals who leave those jails at the end of their shift and return home to their communities. Without treatment, these individuals could spread infectious disease, like tuberculosis or some of the Middle East respiratory syndromes, to our homes and communities and put us all in danger.

Beyond the serious, potentially life-threatening public health ramifications this bill could create, the bill seeks to apply sanctions for the Criminal Code violations. Given that the Criminal Code is a federal responsibility, this is a matter best left out of provincial jurisdiction—not a matter of provincial jurisdiction.

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

Mr. Kaled Rasheed: Every day, Ontarians get up to go to work, take their kids to school and ensure that they are creating a better future for themselves and their families. These citizens choose to participate in their civic duties by paying their taxes and exercising their right to vote for a government that works for them. In return, Ontarians are expecting that their government deliver and grant basic services and privileges in which they are entitled to.

Committing an act of terrorism or an act of violence harming individuals and other groups of people is not only an affront to our safety and security but goes against everything we stand for as a society. As Canadians, we have a moral obligation to respect and live in peace with one another. These types of acts of violence against people should be defined for what they are: terrorism.

1600

It saddens me to see that some people choose to reject our values. They deserve no empathy or privileges that this province can provide. Having an Ontario driver's licence, for instance, is a privilege and not a right. That is why I am speaking for this bill. I want to advocate on behalf of all Ontarians. Our society must be able to live in safety and security while upholding our values and privileges, instead of rewarding those who have been convicted for unforgivable acts of terror.

Madam Speaker, I want to emphasize to Ontarians and Canadians that this bill does not—and, I repeat, does not—attack any race, gender, sexual orientation, culture or faith, because violence and terrorism have no race, gender, sexual orientation, culture or religion.

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

Mr. Sheref Sabawy: I'm rising today to support Bill 46.

I was one of 70 Canadians who were listed on a hit list of al Qaeda in November 2010. My photo, my home address, my work and cellphone numbers were all published on their websites and social media outlets. I had experienced at first hand the impact on my family, my personal career and even my friends, too. I want our families to be safe from terror. What I had hoped for is to

protect Canada and Canadians by not allowing in convicted terrorists to start with, but Justin Trudeau doesn't think so.

Speaker, I have seen it. I have seen the terrorist attacks and their pain, devastation, fear and post-traumatic mental effects on families. Losing loved ones destroys families. They never heal. Canadians who escaped from their home countries because of terrorism and fear for their lives do not feel comfortable with convicted terrorists living that close to them. The only thing that the provincial government can do is to make every effort to make it difficult for convicted terrorists to live here. Our tax money should not be used to assist convicted terrorists.

I am proud to support this bill that sends a clear message to terrorists: You are not welcome in our Ontario. I thank the member from Peterborough–Kawartha for doing what our federal government failed to do, which is to protect Ontarians and their tax dollars from terrorists.

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

Ms. Andrea Khanjin: I am proud to rise in the Legislature today to support this important piece of legislation from the member for Peterborough–Kawartha. I have heard from my constituents in Barrie–Innisfil who are concerned about radical ISIS terrorists who are returning after committing atrocious crimes overseas and are now freely walking our streets.

I was proud to be a part of Stephen Harper's government, which made it illegal to travel overseas to engage in terrorist acts. Unfortunately, Justin Trudeau's Liberal government in Ottawa refuses to bring these terrorists to justice and to keep Canadians safe. Instead of keeping these monsters off of our streets, he's letting them in. Our government is acting because Justin Trudeau's Liberal government won't.

Bill 46 will ensure that any individual who has engaged in terrorist activity overseas will not receive benefits from Ontario taxpayers. By disallowing access to driver licences and health cards and to the privileges enjoyed by so many law-abiding Ontarians, we are sending a clear message. Our message to terrorists everywhere is clear: You're not welcome in Ontario.

This is an opportunity for all members to make it clear that anyone who commits or is complicit in violence, genocide or an act of terror, regardless of where these unlawful acts took place or were committed, is not welcome in Ontario, and that they will not get a free pass if they return.

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

Mr. Stephen Lecce: I want to, first off, thank the member from Peterborough–Kawartha for his incredible leadership on bringing forth this piece of legislation. At a time when CSIS has confirmed that there are around 60 terrorists who have returned to Canada from fighting abroad—fighting against our values, our allies and our women and men in uniform—the federal Liberals and our Prime Minister have shown a preference for reintegration over prosecution.

It is Conservatives in this Parliament and in this country who believe in supporting military families, not the terrorists who target them. We stand with law-abiding Canadians who expect these violent criminals to be brought to justice. Our Progressive Conservative government, led by Premier Doug Ford, is making the security of Canadians a top priority, not the comfort of terrorists. While Ontario has no ability to prevent these individuals from coming to the province, we believe these restrictions will make it unfavourable.

Madam Speaker, I remember October 22, 2014, when I worked for the former Prime Minister. I remember walking to Langevin Block, as it was then known, and a soldier named Nathan Cirillo was shot and killed while he literally stood on guard for thee at the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier. It is for people like him, it is for incredible women like Maureen Basnicki—I have had the pleasure of knowing her son for many years, as a graduate of Western—that we are acting. Maureen, whom I have gotten to know over the past year, said, "Our province, unlike the current federal government, is sending a message that we are putting law-abiding Canadians ahead of convicted criminals"—and so we should.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Jennifer K. French): Further debate? I recognize the Minister of Infrastructure.

Hon. Monte McNaughton: Thank you, Madam Speaker, for the privilege of speaking to this worthwhile bill. I want to say how proud I am of the member from Peterborough–Kawartha for tabling a bill to address this issue.

I was shocked to read media reports about former Canadians who think they should be allowed back into Canada after leaving to fight for terrorist groups like ISIS. This is dead wrong. If you walk down the main street of any town in Ontario, that's exactly what people will tell you. We should not roll out the red carpet for returning terrorists. It's common sense. People who choose to leave Canada to fight for terror groups abroad should not have the right to expect subsidized government services upon their return.

Under this proposed legislation, a person convicted of what amounts to terrorism is not eligible for a driver's licence, health insurance benefits, subsidized housing, student assistance or social assistance—and why should they be? These are privileges we're talking about, not rights. While we don't have the ability in Ontario to say who can and cannot live in our province, we do have the power to draw a line in the sand. We can stand up and say, "What you've done is wrong. You've transgressed our most sacred values. You don't deserve these privileges."

We should be clear. People in this province work hard for their money. That money should be spent improving health care, building critical infrastructure, and keeping our communities happy, healthy and safe. This is common sense.

Like many people in this House, I'm a parent. My wonderful wife and I are doing our best to instill the best characteristics we can in our daughter: love, kindness, empathy, resilience and more. We teach our daughter

about consequences. Our home is a loving one, but our daughter knows that if she breaks a rule, there will be consequences.

Why, then, do returning terrorist fighters expect that there won't be? This proposed legislation deals with that, and I'm proud and honoured and happy to rise today to speak in favour of it.

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

Mr. Randy Hillier: I want to thank the member for Peterborough–Kawartha for introducing this important bill.

It should not be forgotten by anyone in our country and especially by every member in this House that we had Canadian citizens leaving our shores to fight against our very values and our deepest-held principles in a foreign land. Let's emphasize that point: These people left our country and travelled overseas to attack each and every principle and value that we hold dear and for which this House was created to embody, protect and promote. In the name of ISIS and terror, these people committed acts of barbarism, torture, rape and atrocities, and they are returning. Until we are assured otherwise, they must not only be viewed as a threat and a profound danger to our society, but they must also be denied the privileges that our society extends. This bill targets those who attacked our very essence and our foundational values, but let's not forget that there were Canadians who travelled overseas to fight and die against ISIS.

1610

My own son Dillon was the first Canadian to engage in combat alongside Kurdish Peshmerga forces against ISIS. Fortunately, he returned home safe. Others did not. John Robert Gallagher, a 32-year-old from Chatham, Ontario, was killed in action in November 2015. Nazzareno Tassone from Niagara Falls was killed in action on January 3, 2016. In all, over 40 Canadians joined—

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Jennifer K. French): Thank you. I return to the member for Peterborough–Kawartha for his two minutes.

Mr. Dave Smith: I'd like to thank the members from Timmins, Mississauga East–Cooksville, Mississauga–Erin Mills, Barrie–Innisfil, King–Vaughan, Lambton–Kent–Middlesex and Lanark–Frontenac–Kingston for their comments.

To the member from Timmins: I'd ask you to take a moment before you vote and actually review the bill again. We will be removing privileges, not rights. There is no charter challenge. If we could do more, I would make us do more. We're limited with our jurisdiction, and I am doing everything I can to prevent terrorism in our province.

You made a comment that when someone came out of jail, there shouldn't be any more penalty for them. However, in this province right now, if you're convicted of drunk driving, when you leave jail, you lose your driver's licence. If they're convicted of terrorism, they should not drive—end of story.

I was further disappointed two weeks ago when the Liberal member from Ottawa–Vanier introduced a private

member's bill that would allow someone convicted of an indictable offence to serve on a jury. Terrorism is an indictable offence. Terrorists should not have any input on our judicial system. That is absolutely wrong. The federal Liberals are wrong. The provincial Liberals are wrong.

I ask all members to support this bill. It's something that we need to pass to make sure that the people in this province are safe.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Jennifer K. French): The time provided for private members' public business has expired.

LONG-TERM CARE HOMES
AMENDMENT ACT
(PREFERENCE FOR VETERANS), 2018
LOI DE 2018 MODIFIANT LA LOI
SUR LES FOYERS DE SOINS
DE LONGUE DURÉE
(PRÉFÉRENCE ACCORDÉE
AUX ANCIENS COMBATTANTS)

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Jennifer K. French): We will deal first with ballot item number 31, standing in the name of Mrs. Stevens.

Mrs. Stevens has moved second reading of Bill 51, An Act to amend the Long-Term Care Homes Act, 2007, to give preference to veterans for access to beds. Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? Carried.

Second reading agreed to.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Jennifer K. French): Pursuant to standing order 98(j), the bill is referred to which committee?

Mrs. Jennifer (Jennie) Stevens: The Standing Committee on Social Policy, please.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Jennifer K. French): Is the majority in favour of the bill being referred to the committee on social policy? Agreed.

BROADBAND SERVICE

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Jennifer K. French): Mr. Vanthof has moved private member's notice of motion number 24. Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? Carried.

Motion agreed to.

TERRORIST ACTIVITIES
SANCTIONS ACT, 2018

LOI DE 2018 PUNISSANT DE SANCTIONS
LES ACTIVITÉS TERRORISTES

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Jennifer K. French): Mr. Smith from Peterborough–Kawartha has moved second reading of Bill 46, An Act to amend various Acts to impose sanctions for persons convicted of terrorist activities. 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 five-minute bell.

The division bells rang from 1615 to 1620.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Jennifer K. French): All members will please take their seats.

Mr. Smith, Peterborough–Kawartha, has moved second reading of Bill 46, An Act to amend various Acts to impose sanctions for persons convicted of terrorist activities.

All those in favour, please rise and remain standing until recognized by the Clerk.

Ayes

| | | |
|------------------------|------------------------|-----------------------------|
| Anand, Deepak | Hillier, Randy | Pang, Billy |
| Baber, Roman | Hogarth, Christine | Parsa, Michael |
| Babikian, Aris | Jones, Sylvia | Phillips, Rod |
| Bailey, Robert | Kanapathi, Logan | Piccini, David |
| Bethlenfalvy, Peter | Karahalios, Belinda | Rasheed, Kaleed |
| Bouma, Will | Ke, Vincent | Roberts, Jeremy |
| Calandra, Paul | Khanjin, Andrea | Sabawy, Sheref |
| Cho, Raymond Sung Joon | Kramp, Daryl | Sandhu, Amarjot |
| Cho, Stan | Kusendova, Natalia | Scott, Laurie |
| Coe, Lorne | Lecce, Stephen | Simard, Amanda |
| Crawford, Stephen | MacLeod, Lisa | Skelly, Donna |
| Cuzzetto, Rudy | Martin, Robin | Smith, Dave |
| Downey, Doug | Martow, Gila | Surma, Kinga |
| Dunlop, Jill | McDonell, Jim | Tangri, Nina |
| Fee, Amy | McKenna, Jane | Thanigasalam, Vijay |
| Fullerton, Merrilee | McNaughton, Monte | Thompson, Lisa M. |
| Ghamari, Goldie | Miller, Norman | Tibollo, Michael A. |
| Gill, Parm | Mitas, Christina Maria | Triantafilopoulos, Effie J. |
| Hardeman, Ernie | Nicholls, Rick | Wai, Daisy |
| Harris, Mike | Oosterhoff, Sam | Walker, Bill |

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Jennifer K. French): All those opposed, please rise and remain standing until recognized by the Clerk.

Nays

| | | |
|--------------------|--------------------------|---------------|
| Andrew, Jill | Hassan, Faisal | Singh, Sara |
| Begum, Doly | Monteith-Farrell, Judith | Stiles, Marit |
| Bell, Jessica | Morrison, Suze | Tabuns, Peter |
| Berns-McGown, Rima | Sattler, Peggy | Vanthof, John |
| Bisson, Gilles | Singh, Gurratan | West, Jamie |

The Clerk of the Assembly (Mr. Todd Decker): The ayes are 60; the nays are 15.

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

Second reading agreed to.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Jennifer K. French): Pursuant to standing order 98(j), the bill is referred to which committee?

Mr. Dave Smith: Social justice, please.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Jennifer K. French): Is the majority in favour of the bill being referred—

Interjections.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Jennifer K. French): Will the member please clarify: social policy or justice policy?

Mr. Dave Smith: Justice policy.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Jennifer K. French): Is the majority in favour of the bill being referred to justice policy? Agreed.

Orders of the day. I recognize the minister.

Hon. Bill Walker: Thank you very much, Madam Speaker. I move adjournment of the House.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Jennifer K. French): The minister has moved adjournment of the House. Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? I declare the motion carried.

This House stands adjourned until Monday, November 19, at 10:30.

The House adjourned at 1625.

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 Responsible for Francophone Affairs / Ministre déléguée aux Affaires francophones |
| Natyshak, Taras (NDP) | Essex | |

| Member and Party / Député(e) et parti | Constituency / Circonscription | Other responsibilities / Autres responsabilités |
|---|---|--|
| Nicholls, Rick (PC) | Chatham-Kent—Leamington | Chair of the Committee of the Whole House / Président du comité plénier de l'Assemblée Deputy Speaker / Vice-président |
| Oosterhoff, Sam (PC) | Niagara West / Niagara-Ouest | |
| Pang, Billy (PC) | Markham—Unionville | |
| Park, Lindsey (PC) | Durham | |
| Parsa, Michael (PC) | Aurora—Oak Ridges—Richmond Hill | |
| Pettapiece, Randy (PC) | Perth—Wellington | |
| Phillips, Hon. / L'hon. Rod (PC) | Ajax | Minister of the Environment, Conservation and Parks / Ministre de l'Environnement, de la Protection de la nature et des Parcs |
| Piccini, David (PC) | Northumberland—Peterborough South / Northumberland—Peterborough-Sud | |
| Rakocevic, Tom (NDP) | Humber River—Black Creek | |
| Rasheed, Kaleed (PC) | Mississauga East—Cooksville / Mississauga-Est—Cooksville | |
| Rickford, Hon. / L'hon. Greg (PC) | Kenora—Rainy River | Minister of Energy, Northern Development and Mines / Ministre de l'Énergie, du Développement du Nord et des Mines Minister of Indigenous Affairs / Ministre des Affaires autochtones |
| Roberts, Jeremy (PC) | Ottawa West—Nepean / Ottawa-Ouest—Nepean | |
| Romano, Ross (PC) | Sault Ste. Marie | |
| Sabawy, Sheref (PC) | Mississauga—Erin Mills | |
| Sandhu, Amarjot (PC) | Brampton West / Brampton-Ouest | |
| Sarkaria, Prabmeet Singh (PC) | Brampton South / Brampton-Sud | |
| Sattler, Peggy (NDP) | London West / London-Ouest | |
| Schreiner, Mike (GRN) | Guelph | |
| Scott, Hon. / L'hon. Laurie (PC) | Haliburton—Kawartha Lakes—Brock | Minister of Labour / Ministre du Travail |
| Shaw, Sandy (NDP) | Hamilton West—Ancaster—Dundas / Hamilton-Ouest—Ancaster—Dundas | |
| Simard, Amanda (PC) | Glengarry—Prescott—Russell | |
| Singh, Gurratan (NDP) | Brampton East / Brampton-Est | |
| Singh, Sara (NDP) | Brampton Centre / Brampton-Centre | Deputy Leader, Official Opposition / Chef adjointe de l'opposition officielle |
| Skelly, Donna (PC) | Flamborough—Glanbrook | |
| Smith, Dave (PC) | Peterborough—Kawartha | |
| Smith, Hon. / L'hon. Todd (PC) | Bay of Quinte / Baie de Quinte | Minister of 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, Lorne Coe
Chris Glover, Christine Hogarth
Logan Kanapathi, Daryl Kramp
Natalia Kusendova, Amarjot Sandhu
Mike Schreiner, Dave Smith
Jennifer (Jennie) Stevens
Committee Clerk / Greffière: Sylwia Przewdziecki

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

Chair / Président: John Vanthof
Vice-Chair / Vice-président: Taras Natyshak
Roman Baber, Rudy Cuzzetto
Amy Fee, Vincent Ke
Andrea Khanjin, Marie-France Lalonde
Taras Natyshak, Rick Nicholls
Jeremy Roberts, Marit Stiles
John Vanthof
Committee Clerk / Greffière: Jocelyn McCauley

**Standing Committee on Justice Policy / Comité permanent de
la justice**

Chair / Président: Parm Gill
Vice-Chair / Vice-président: Aris Babikian
Roman Baber, Aris Babikian
Nathalie Des Rosiers, Jill Dunlop
Parm Gill, Lindsey Park
Ross Romano, Prabmeet Singh Sarkaria
Sara Singh, Monique Taylor
Kevin Yarde
Committee Clerk / Greffière: Jocelyn McCauley

**Standing Committee on the Legislative Assembly / Comité
permanent de l'Assemblée législative**

Chair / Présidente: Jane McKenna
Vice-Chair / Vice-président: Vijay Thanigasalam
Robert Bailey, Rima Berns-McGown
Michael Coteau, Mike Harris
Faisal Hassan, Jane McKenna
Christina Maria Mitas, Sam Oosterhoff
Amanda Simard, Gurratan Singh
Vijay Thanigasalam
Committee Clerk / Greffière: Valerie Quioc Lim

**Standing Committee on Public Accounts / Comité permanent
des comptes publics**

Chair / Présidente: Catherine Fife
Vice-Chair / Vice-présidente: Peggy Sattler
Catherine Fife, Goldie Ghamari
Jim McDonnell, Norman Miller
Suze Morrison, Michael Parsa
Peggy Sattler, Kinga Surma
Daisy Wai
Committee Clerk / Greffier: Christopher Tyrell

**Standing Committee on Regulations and Private Bills / Comité
permanent des règlements et des projets de loi d'intérêt privé**

Chair / Président: Randy Hillier
Vice-Chair / Vice-président: Kaleed Rasheed
Toby Barrett, Will Bouma
Mike Harris, Randy Hillier
Mitzi 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