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Lundi
26 novembre 2018

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Clerk: Todd Decker

Président : L'honorable Ted Arnott
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LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF ONTARIO

Monday 26 November 2018

ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE DE L'ONTARIO

Lundi 26 novembre 2018

The House met at 1030.

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

INTRODUCTION OF VISITORS

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): We have with us in the Speaker's gallery today Mr. Kaihan Ahadi, consul-general of Afghanistan in Toronto. He's accompanied by his wife, Lida Hidayatullah Ahadi. Please join me in warmly welcoming our guests to the Ontario Legislature today.

Mr. Gilles Bisson: We have a number of people who are in today from the Ontario women's Catholic organization, and I would just like to welcome them to Queen's Park.

Ms. Jane McKenna: There are two people I want to introduce. First of all, a very dear friend of mine, Barry Strader, is here today. I want to welcome him.

Also, I want to welcome the Canadian Nuclear Association. Everyone is welcome tonight to the legislative dining room for their reception from 5 to 7. I see them up there.

Mr. Jamie West: I'd like to welcome Karen McDonald from Sudbury. She's part of the Catholic Women's League. Welcome to Queen's Park.

M^{me} Nathalie Des Rosiers: J'aimerais accueillir Bonita Chan from the Canadian nuclear labs, and from Chalk River, Sandra Dykxhoorn and Terry Armstrong, with whom I had the pleasure of meeting this morning. Welcome to Queen's Park.

Mr. Stephen Crawford: I'd like to introduce Jill Wilson, John Barrett, Dale Austin, Jennifer Rowe and Steve Coupland from the Canadian Nuclear Association.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): The Minister of Government and Consumer Services.

Hon. Bill Walker: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. At the risk of stealing your thunder, I'd like to introduce my first seatmate in this Legislature, Rod Jackson, the former MPP for Barrie, and some classmates of his from the paralegal program: Brian Sulima, Daniella Romeo, Anna-Marie Hunt and Eric Deauregard.

A secondary introduction: I'd like to introduce Andrew Thiele, Judy Bartley and Yousef Yacoob from the Canadian Nuclear Association.

Ms. Judith Monteith-Farrell: I'm pleased to welcome members of the executive of the Ontario Provincial Council of the Catholic Women's League of Canada who are in this House today: Colleen Perry, Pauline Krupa from Thunder Bay, Colleen Martin from my riding, and Karen McDonald.

Hon. Ernie Hardeman: I'd like to welcome some of the members of the Ontario Greenhouse Alliance here at Queen's Park today. With us today is George Gilvesy, chair

of the Ontario Greenhouse Vegetable Growers; Jan VanderHout, president of the Ontario Greenhouse Alliance; Jan Van Zanten, chair of Flowers Canada (Ontario); as well as two greenhouse growers, Samuel Van Geest and his son Bryan. Welcome to Queen's Park.

Mr. Taras Natyshak: I'd like to welcome friends from the Windsor-Essex County Association of Realtors: Tina Roy, Daniel Hofgartner, Krista Del Gatto, Lorraine Clark and Phil Dorner. Welcome to Queen's Park today.

Ms. Christine Hogarth: I am pleased to introduce the Registered Massage Therapists' Association of Ontario, who are here today for their lobby day. The RMTAO's office is located right in my riding of Etobicoke-Lakeshore. I just want to send a welcome to director Andrew Lewarne, as well as Bill Laidlaw, who helped organize today's lobby day. Their delegation is in the gallery today. Welcome, all, to Queen's Park. I look forward to meeting with you again.

Mr. John Vanthof: On behalf of the NDP caucus, I would also like to welcome the Ontario Greenhouse Alliance today. Thank you for breakfast and for brightening our lives with the wonderful poinsettias.

Mr. Vincent Ke: I would like to welcome grade 10 students from North Toronto Christian School from my riding of Don Valley North. They are in the gallery upstairs. They are visiting Queen's Park on their field trip. Welcome, and I hope you enjoy your visit.

Ms. Marit Stiles: I would like to welcome a group of seniors who are in the gallery today as part of a democratic engagement workshop organized by West Neighbourhood House, an outstanding social service organization in my riding of Davenport.

I would also like to welcome Alexandra Cote, a local realtor from my riding, who is here with the Toronto Real Estate Board.

Mr. Stan Cho: Mr. Speaker, good morning. In Willowdale, we're very fortunate to have a wonderfully vibrant Filipino community. One of my proudest moments in the last few years was being inducted, with my colleague and friend from York Centre Roman Baber, to the Order of the Knights of Rizal, the sole order of knighthood in the Philippines. Feel free to call me Sir Stan at any time, if you wish.

Welcome Sir Joe Damasco, Sir Mario Alpuerto, Sir Popoy Cana, Sir Courtney Doldron, Sir Johnny Quiambao, Sir Mauro "Jun" Calaguio, Lady Trinidad Calaguio, Lady Ligaya Cana, Lady Jan Doldron, Lady Rose Tijam, Sir Elmer Manzo and Lady Yolly Manzo. Welcome to the Legislature.

Mr. Mike Schreiner: I, too, would like to welcome a great friend of the University of Guelph to Queen's Park today, Bill Laidlaw, and also welcome the many greenhouse growers who are here today. Thank you for breakfast.

Mr. Rick Nicholls: I had a great meeting this morning with members from the Ontario Greenhouse Alliance: Kevin Safrance, Benji Mastronardi and Justine Taylor, all from the great riding of Chatham-Kent–Leamington.

Mr. Sam Oosterhoff: I, too, would like to welcome all the economic contributors from an important industry in my riding: the greenhouse industry. I look forward to meeting with you later this afternoon. Welcome to the Legislature.

Mr. Will Bouma: I would just like to welcome my good friend James Neven to the House today.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): I, too, would like to welcome the former member for Barrie, Rod Jackson, who is here. Once again, welcome to the Ontario Legislature. Rod sat in the 40th Parliament.

WEARING OF RIBBONS

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Point of order: the Minister of Children, Community and Social Services.

Hon. Lisa MacLeod: I think you will see we have unanimous consent to wear the white ribbon as a symbol of our continued pledge to never commit or condone, or remain silent about, violence against women and to begin marking the 16 Days of Activism Against Gender-Based Violence.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): The minister is seeking unanimous consent. Agreed? Agreed.

NOTICE OF POINT OF PRIVILEGE

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): I also wish to inform the House that I received written notice of a point of privilege from the member for Guelph. I wish to inform the House that I will be responding to that request for a point of privilege after question period has concluded.

It is now time for oral questions.

1040

ORAL QUESTIONS

AUTOMOTIVE INDUSTRY

Ms. Andrea Horwath: My first question is to the Premier. Last night, Oshawa was devastated by news of the possible closure of all of its General Motors operations. There are nearly 5,000 families in Oshawa whose livelihoods rely on these jobs and whose lives are now on the line.

Can the Premier provide an update on his conversations with GM?

Hon. Doug Ford: Today's announcement that GM is going to make is absolutely devastating. It's devastating not only for the people in Oshawa, the people who work at GM, but the surrounding areas that rely on GM workers. It's devastating for the supplier base. I think a lot of people are forgetting about the supplier base—that 6,600 people could be affected by this.

I just want to reassure each and every person who has been affected by this that our government will stand shoulder to shoulder with them. We will do whatever it takes to make sure they get back on their feet and they get proper training.

Again, we will make sure that we are there for these people, and we will turn it around. We're going to stay positive, even in a negative environment like this. I guarantee you and I promise you that they will be back on their feet.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Supplementary.

Ms. Andrea Horwath: I'm very disappointed, Speaker, by the Premier's response. Nearly 5,000 people—families, actually—5,000 families rely on GM to put food on the table. I think we can all agree that we can't just stand by and let GM walk away from a community that they've been a part of for over 100 years in the province of Ontario.

My question is: What steps is the government willing to take to ensure that Oshawa maintains operations as General Motors restructures?

Hon. Doug Ford: I had a conversation with the Prime Minister this morning, making sure that we're both on the same page, and I can assure you we're both on the same page. We may have our political differences, but when it comes to supporting the people of Durham and Ontario, we're on the same page.

We're asking for a series of changes to the employment insurance eligibility, similar to what has been done in the past for forestry and Alberta's oil patch. We want to:

- extend EI eligibility by five weeks, to the maximum of 50 weeks from 45, in the impacted EI regions, as was done in hard-hit areas before;

- extend the duration of work-sharing agreements an additional 38 weeks to 76 weeks;

- allow immediate reapplication for the expired agreements, as is currently being done for forestry, so if people are working part-time, they're still going to be eligible for EI; and

- reintroduce the Career Transition Assistance Initiative to retrain workers—

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

Ms. Andrea Horwath: Speaker, I'm pretty shocked to hear that not only is this government prepared to leave those workers dangling without a job and not fight for their jobs, but also the Premier is telling us that the federal government apparently is not prepared to fight for the jobs in Oshawa. People don't want an adjustment program; they want to keep their jobs. That's what they want.

I ask this government and this Premier: What support has the government offered to the mayor-elect and the people of Oshawa as they work to keep their good jobs in their community?

Hon. Doug Ford: I'll continue on, Mr. Speaker, through yourself. Part of the assistance that we require is to develop plan to increase EI durations for long-tenured workers—if someone has been working there for a number of years, they're impacted, especially in EI regions; EI is broken into regions—and to increase the federal transfer to Ontario for

skills training via the labour market development agreement and workforce development agreement.

What we're proposing, since—

Interjection.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Order.

Hon. Doug Ford: What we're proposing—

Interjection.

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

Hon. Doug Ford: Man, they don't want you to speak around here.

Again, as a first step, I'll be authorizing Employment Ontario to deploy its Rapid Re-employment and Training Service program. This will provide impacted local workers with targeted local training and job services, to help them regain employment as quickly as possible. We spoke—

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Next question: the Leader of the Opposition.

AUTOMOTIVE INDUSTRY

Ms. Andrea Horwath: My next question is for the Premier, but I have to tell you that, in 14 years of being in this House, I've never seen a government roll over so quickly and throw in the towel on good jobs in this province. The Premier has been critical—and we all know this—of government investment designed to create and retain jobs. We saw that all through the campaign. But right now, as nearly 5,000 people face the loss of good jobs, the government of Ontario should not be ruling options out.

Is the Premier prepared to work with GM, the community, the workers and others, using all tools at the government's disposal, to ensure that investment and jobs stay in Ontario?

Hon. Doug Ford: Mr. Speaker, it's easy to be an armchair quarterback, a Monday morning quarterback. Through you, Mr. Speaker: I talked to the president of GM last night. The first thing I said was, "What can we do? What do we have to do?" He said, "The ship has already left the dock." So what we're going to do now is continue doing what we've been doing to create good-paying jobs and to make sure a company is never in this position again.

After 15 years of terrible policies—don't think that their decision to change over to another location happened yesterday. It didn't happen in five months; it didn't happen in six months; it happened well over a year ago.

What we're going to do is make sure all three levels of government work together for the impacted families through this difficult transition. All three levels of government will work together and make sure that we do everything we can, from making sure they have proper training, to make sure we extend the EI benefits—

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

Ms. Andrea Horwath: Speaker, it's also much easier to call the game than to buck up and fight for good jobs. This government is calling the game.

The auto sector is a vital part of Ontario's economy, and government policy has been crucial to ensuring that that

industry has been successful in our province. However, in the past, this Premier has shunned the idea of an auto strategy. They have denounced the role of government investment in creating jobs.

The people of Oshawa need to hear that the Premier is ready to use every tool at their disposal to protect their jobs in Oshawa. Can the government give people that assurance?

Hon. Doug Ford: Through you, Mr. Speaker: You want to buck up and stand up for jobs? For 15 years, you destroyed this province—300,000 jobs were destroyed because you voted with the Liberals 97% of the time. You destroyed the energy sector. You destroyed manufacturing. You destroyed 300,000 families that are trying to put food on the table. That's what you destroyed.

We're turning this province around. We're lowering energy costs. We're lowering gas prices. We're creating an economy where companies will want to come to Ontario, for the first time in 15 years, as you destroyed this province hand in hand with your Liberal buddies. You raised taxes, raised energy costs and raised gas prices. You're for the carbon tax. You have personally destroyed this province. That's what you've done.

Interjections.

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

Interjections.

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

I would remind all members to make your comments through the Chair.

Start the clock. Final supplementary.

Ms. Andrea Horwath: Speaker, notwithstanding the way the Premier behaves, I think most Ontarians know that the NDP hasn't formed government in Ontario in some time. But we're looking forward to doing so, because the turnaround that this government is providing is turning us backwards and hurting families, the latest of which are 5,000 families in Oshawa.

1050

The people facing the threat of job loss today need to know that their government is going to fight like hell to keep their jobs. Apparently, they have now found out that the government doesn't give a darn and they are going to let those jobs walk out of the province. But what those people need is to hear a government that is going to reach out to GM, to GM workers and to municipal leaders to bring all of those people together and work to save jobs and investment in Ontario. That's the government's job: to work to save jobs and investment in Ontario, not to sit by and wave bye-bye to jobs as they leave.

Will the government be doing that, Speaker? Will they actually be fighting to keep jobs and investment in Oshawa in our province?

Hon. Doug Ford: Through you, Mr. Speaker: The Leader of the Opposition is demanding that we spend billions and billions of dollars to a company that doesn't want it. They're gone; they're done. They told me straight up that there's nothing we can do—absolutely nothing.

What the NDP believes in is in championing corporate welfare. That's how you create jobs, according to the

NDP. We have a different philosophy. We believe in creating an environment for companies to come here by making sure that they have low taxes, that we're lowering the corporate tax rate from 11.5% to 10.5%, and we're lowering the hydro bills down 12%. As everyone is driving around, I'm getting endless texts with gas prices. The lowest gas price now is 97.9 cents. That's true money in the pockets of the taxpayers.

FRENCH-LANGUAGE SERVICES SERVICES EN FRANÇAIS

Ms. Andrea Horwath: My next question is also for the Premier, but I've got to say that the reduction in corporate taxes obviously didn't save GM from leaving Oshawa, and the government refusing to fight for those jobs is quite shameful.

My question this time is about Franco-Ontarian families and, in fact, francophones across Ontario who felt abandoned and attacked by the Premier and his government when the fall economic statement cut not just a new French-language university but the French-language services watchdog as well.

On Friday, the Premier announced changes to his planned cuts and a new-found respect for Ontario's francophone community. Is that the government's way of acknowledging how reckless the cuts were that they announced in their financial statement?

Hon. Doug Ford: Mr. Speaker, I'm proud to hand this over to the new Minister of Francophone Affairs.

L'hon. Caroline Mulroney: Je suis très heureuse d'avoir la chance de parler aujourd'hui des nouvelles orientations stratégiques que nous avons annoncées vendredi. Notre gouvernement va proposer des modifications au projet de loi 57 pour assurer la communauté franco-ontarienne que le travail du commissaire va rester indépendant et qu'il va faire le travail et accomplir ses devoirs selon la Loi sur les services en français.

Aussi, aujourd'hui, j'ai été assermentée comme ministre des Affaires francophones en Ontario, ce qui va donner aux Franco-Ontariens une voix encore plus forte au conseil d'administration de ce gouvernement. Un point très important, monsieur le Président, c'est que le premier ministre a demandé d'embaucher un conseiller politique francophone, pour les Franco-Ontariens, pour lui donner des conseils quand il prend ses décisions politiques—tous les jours, pour lui donner ses conseils. Nous travaillons pour les Franco-Ontariens—

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

Ms. Andrea Horwath: It's unfortunate that the minister, regardless of what portfolio she held, wasn't fighting at the cabinet table in the first place.

The Premier's budget cuts are now a national issue, and the Premier's friend Andrew Scheer doesn't want to be seen with him anymore. By singling out the Franco-Ontarian community as a target for cuts, the Premier has sent a signal that this government does not respect the key

role that Franco-Ontarians play in our province's history and our future.

Will the Premier do the right thing and reverse completely these cuts, immediately?

L'hon. Caroline Mulroney: Notre gouvernement respecte les Franco-Ontariens. Notre gouvernement respecte tous les Ontariens, d'une manière différente que le gouvernement précédent qui a fait une annonce pour une université sans mettre le financement concret derrière cette université pour la bâtir.

Nous regardons les Franco-Ontariens dans les yeux et nous leur disons que nous sommes prêts à travailler sur cette université pour faire avancer ce projet. Quand nous aurons mis cette province sur la voie de la prospérité, sur une bonne voie fiscale, nous allons mettre du financement concret derrière cette université, d'une façon différente que le gouvernement précédent.

AUTOMOTIVE INDUSTRY

Ms. Lindsey Park: My question is for the Minister of Economic Development, Job Creation and Trade. Last night, people in my community of Durham were shocked by the news that General Motors would be closing its Oshawa assembly plant. We've made cars in Oshawa for more than 100 years. Thousands of my constituents either worked at GM themselves, still work there or have friends, family and relatives that work there. Speaker, I want to ask the minister to inform the House what steps our government is taking to help the people of Oshawa and Durham region at this difficult time.

Hon. Todd Smith: I want to thank the member from Durham for her advocacy on behalf of the residents in her community.

The Premier and I were informed yesterday when we spoke to Canadian General Motors leadership about the global restructuring of General Motors that was going to be taking place. It not only affects the Oshawa facility, of course, but affects a number of other facilities across North America and even around the world.

I took the opportunity this morning to inform my caucus colleagues from Durham region, and also had the opportunity to talk to the NDP member who is from Oshawa—Jennifer French—this morning and the member from London—Peggy Sattler—to update the NDP members on what was happening in this restructuring, globally.

I can tell you that there are jobs that are going to be saved here in Ontario. The CAMI facility is going to remain open. We also know that the engine plant in St. Catharines will remain open. The technology sector in Markham and Oshawa will remain open.

But when the leader of the official opposition was offered a briefing, she said no, for some reason.

Interjections.

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

Start the clock. Supplementary.

Ms. Lindsey Park: I'd like to thank the minister for his swift action on this file, and just as a note, I hope the

member from Oshawa and I can find a way to work together for the people of Oshawa. I know that the minister was up until the wee hours of the morning after the news was leaked, consulting with local officials, including myself, on how to best help our communities.

Speaker, the closure of the Oshawa assembly plant will have effects beyond just the city of Oshawa and just the jobs at the plant itself. It's a sad day that we got to this place in Ontario, where a US head office made a decision that it is no longer competitive to do business here. Can the minister tell the House what further steps he and our government are taking in order to help our auto sector and thousands of Ontario workers deal with this announcement?

Hon. Todd Smith: Thanks again. Our thoughts do go out to everyone in Oshawa and the Durham region. This facility was very, very important to the economic stability of Oshawa for 100 years.

We'll be meeting this afternoon—the Premier and I—with GM global to talk about their plans for the future. We are going to do everything we can, as the government of Ontario, to ensure that there is growth and expansion in those other facilities in Ontario. But again, this is a global restructuring that's impacting General Motors across North America and around the world. I think it speaks, though, to the economic mismanagement that we've seen at various levels of government over the last number of years. I can tell you that if you're looking to build a plant in Ontario, you want to have labour laws that work. You want to have low taxes. You want to have low electricity costs and you don't want to have a carbon tax—all things that the NDP are supportive of.

1100

We want to clear the ground. We want to make sure that we have a fertile soil for employment here in Ontario, creating good jobs.

SERVICES EN FRANÇAIS

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

La semaine passée, votre gouvernement a pris une série de décisions pour essayer d'apaiser la résistance franco-ontarienne à vos politiques insensibles. Malgré cela, le gouvernement n'a pas rétabli le Commissariat aux services en français et l'Université de l'Ontario français. En plus des coupures budgétaires aux organismes culturels comme la Nouvelle Scène Gilles Desjardins à Ottawa, les trois magasins éducatifs continuent d'être absents de vos décisions téméraires envers les Franco-Ontariens.

Ma question est : si vous êtes prêt à écouter les Franco-Ontariens, pourquoi ne rétablissez-vous pas le commissariat, l'université et les subventions culturelles?

Hon. Doug Ford: Minister of francophone affairs.

L'hon. Caroline Mulroney: Je remercie le député pour sa question.

Nous avons été très fiers de pouvoir annoncer vendredi dernier que nous allons faire—que le premier ministre a écouté les Franco-Ontariens. Nous allons proposer des modifications au projet de loi 57 pour créer le poste de

commissaire aux services en français sous les auspices du Bureau de l'ombudsman, afin de préserver l'indépendance dans la conduite des enquêtes et des recommandations visant à améliorer la prestation de services en français et à favoriser le respect de la Loi sur les services en français. Nous avons écouté les Franco-Ontariens et nous allons proposer des modifications qui vont répondre directement à ces inquiétudes.

En ce qui concerne l'Université de l'Ontario français, un projet si important pour la communauté franco-ontarienne, nous allons continuer à travailler à développer ce projet pour et par les francophones, mais quand on est prêts à le faire, on va consacrer des finances réelles, contrairement au gouvernement précédent—

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

M. Guy Bourgouin: Monsieur le Premier Ministre, mercredi la leader de l'opposition officielle va présenter une motion demandant au gouvernement de revenir en arrière avec l'annulation de l'Université de l'Ontario français et l'élimination du Commissariat aux services en français.

Je vous pose encore une fois la question : est-ce que le premier ministre va appuyer cette motion?

L'hon. Caroline Mulroney: Je demanderais au député de corriger encore une fois ses propos. Nous n'avons pas aboli le commissariat. Il a été intégré au sein du Bureau de l'ombudsman avec toutes les responsabilités. Tout le travail qu'il faisait avant, il va continuer de le faire de manière indépendante. Ce qui est très important pour la protection des droits linguistiques en Ontario, c'est cette surveillance indépendante du gouvernement et de tous les organismes gouvernementaux, qui va continuer.

Pour ce qui est de l'Université de l'Ontario français, je lui demanderais de peut-être poser la question aux députés indépendants du Parti libéral, parce que ce sont eux qui ont créé ce déficit de 15 milliards de dollars, qui nous ont légué une dette de 340 milliards de dollars. C'est inacceptable. Nous travaillons à remettre l'Ontario sur la bonne voie. Quand nous serons prêts à faire ça, nous serons prêts à mettre cette université si importante pour les Franco-Ontariens sur le bon pied.

CHILD PROTECTION

Ms. Donna Skelly: My question is to the honourable Minister of Children, Community and Social Services.

Last year, Ontario's 49 children's aid societies, including 11 Indigenous societies and three faith-based societies, served more than 100,000 families. Across our youth justice system, roughly 7,500 youth were diverted from charges or formal court proceedings through extrajudicial measures, yet we've seen a disproportionate number of youth in crisis in Ontario's Indigenous communities struggling with their mental health.

Minister, what is this government doing to improve outcomes in Ontario's child protection system?

Hon. Lisa MacLeod: Thank you to the member for the wonderful question. I think it's important that we continue

to talk about Ontario's most vulnerable in this Legislature during question period so that all eyes can be seen to be looking and doing more to protect children and youth.

Ontario's most vulnerable children deserve better, and we will be holding those responsible to a higher standard. We're committed to better outcomes for children in the protection system through the creation of three new round tables dedicated to sharing ideas of empowerment that will directly report to me. The new round tables will be made up of those with lived experience in the field of Indigenous child welfare, children in care and youth in custody. The establishment of these new advocacy tables will have direct access to decision-makers.

I'll also be requesting that Ontario's Ombudsman immediately review all pending investigations and reports by the previous child advocate to ensure no child falls behind the cracks.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Supplementary?

Ms. Donna Skelly: Back to the minister: We first announced, through the government's fall economic update, that Ontario's Ombudsman's office will be assuming responsibility for investigations related to Ontario's children. This added responsibility means the Ombudsman will have oversight of children's aid societies, youth justice facilities, child welfare and mental health services. The proposed changes will mean that the authority to investigate services provided to children and youth will continue at a higher standard.

Minister, with the added responsibilities, how will the government ensure a seamless transition to keep our children safe?

Hon. Lisa MacLeod: I appreciate the question, because it does seem that the New Democrats don't think the Ombudsman provides enough stringent investigative reporting.

Let me be perfectly clear: Under the new changes, there will be stronger and higher standards put in place for investigations through the Ombudsman's office than has ever been done before. That's why we're creating three advocacy tables that will be led by with those with lived experience, whether that is with children in custody, children in care or Indigenous-led children.

We are going to ensure that there's a children's unit within the Ombudsman's office. It will be turnkey. They will be removed from the previous advocate's office over to the Ombudsman's office.

As I've just said, the stronger investigative powers by the Ombudsman have ensured that I will be able to ask him to review all pending investigations so that we can ensure greater child protection in the province of Ontario than we've ever seen before.

I'm very proud of this government for taking such strong measures.

PRIVATIZATION OF PUBLIC ASSETS

Mr. Peter Tabuns: My question is for the Premier. Last week, we learned that OPG had sold its Hearn generating station property to a company controlled by Mario

Cortellucci. The price tag was a reported \$16 million. That's only about one quarter of the price per hectare that OPG received when it sold the Lakeview property earlier this year. It sure looks like a bad deal for the people of this province.

Will the Premier allow an independent appraisal to verify the value of this Toronto waterfront property?

Hon. Christine Elliott: To the Minister of Energy.

Hon. Greg Rickford: Ontario Power Generation operates at arm's length from the government of Ontario, and it's responsible for its own operational decisions. In this case, Studios of America has leased this land since 2002. The terms of their lease included the first right of offer to purchase the land if it ever became for sale. By divesting this land, OPG has shielded taxpayers from any long-term environmental liabilities associated with a former coal generating station. This decision is in the best interest of taxpayers.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Supplementary?

Mr. Peter Tabuns: Again to the Premier: Independent like hiring and firing Mr. Velshi—I'm sure totally independent.

This deal is raising a lot of concerns. The city was not consulted on the sale. More concerning is the fact that Mr. Cortellucci is a major donor and fundraiser for the PC party, and his family members made several contributions to the Premier's party leadership campaign after he won. He wanted to make sure the bet was sure.

The Premier seems no more interested in getting to the bottom of this than he is in finding out whether his chief of staff arranged to have an OPG executive fired. The people deserve better. Will the Premier allow an independent investigation of this sale?

1110

Hon. Greg Rickford: OPG are responsible for their own staffing decisions. They are a crown corporation that makes its own staffing decisions and operational decisions.

As I said earlier, Studios of America has leased this land since 2002. The terms of their lease agreement had the first right of offer to purchase the land if it ever became for sale. As I said earlier, by divesting this land, OPG has actually shielded taxpayers from any long-term environmental liabilities associated with a former coal generating station. This decision is in the best interest of taxpayers.

GOVERNMENT'S AGENDA

M^{me} Nathalie Des Rosiers: Ma question est pour la vice-première ministre, en rapport avec l'énoncé économique automnal.

In the fall economic statement, the government announced that it is seeking to review and possibly cancel support for businesses, possibly cancelling the program Invest Ontario, which has assisted businesses to invest in Ontario with all types of incentives and information.

After cancelling program support for electric vehicles and the green economy, does the Premier think that it is wise, in light of the Oshawa closure, to cancel programs designed to help business stay in Ontario?

Hon. Christine Elliott: Minister of Finance.

Hon. Victor Fedeli: We have made many provisions in the fall economic statement to help those most in need in our province of Ontario, but we have also made some provisions for the business community. I can tell you that while the Liberals did have tens upon tens of millions of dollars of new taxes that were going to both families and businesses starting in January, we have announced that we will not be proceeding with any of those individual or small business and corporate taxes that were scheduled to kick in on January 1. That's about \$308 million. If you're a senior on disability or among those who collect the medical tax credit, you would have suffered the most. You will not be receiving those Liberal taxes in January.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Supplementary?

M^{me} Nathalie Des Rosiers: The fall economic statement also excludes seniors who receive pensions, and presumably the Oshawa workers who will receive some assistance from the tax credit called LIFT. Does the Premier think that it is appropriate at this time to exclude seniors who receive pensions and workers who receive assistance from a program that's designed to lift people out of poverty?

Hon. Victor Fedeli: As I said in the earlier answer, individuals who claim tax credits, such as seniors, those with disabilities and those who claim Ontario's medical expense tax credit, would have suffered under the Liberal plan on January 1. About 150,000 filers with allowable Ontario medical expense would have paid \$320 more in personal income tax on average. With our decision, Speaker, these filers will pay \$35 million less. When we add that with the business programs that the government was about to tax, we see a massive tax relief for individuals, for seniors, for those on disability, for families and, yes, for businesses.

SERVICES EN FRANÇAIS

FRENCH-LANGUAGE SERVICES

Ms. Natalia Kusendova: Ma question est pour la ministre des Affaires francophones. Notre gouvernement pour la population prend des mesures concrètes pour les Franco-Ontariennes et les Franco-Ontariens. Notre gouvernement propose trois nouvelles orientations stratégiques qui comptent mettre en oeuvre pour la population de l'Ontario une reconnaissance des contributions importantes et continues des Franco-Ontariennes, Franco-Ontariens et francophones dans notre province depuis 400 ans.

Est-ce que la ministre nouvellement assermentée des Affaires francophones peut informer cette Chambre du travail que notre gouvernement fait pour la communauté francophone de l'Ontario?

L'hon. Caroline Mulroney: Je remercie ma collègue pour sa question. Notre gouvernement propose des modifications au projet de loi 57 afin de créer le poste du commissaire aux services en français sous les auspices du Bureau de l'ombudsman, afin de préserver l'indépendance

dans la conduite des enquêtes et des recommandations visant à améliorer la prestation de services en français et à favoriser le respect de la Loi sur les services en français. Je suis la ministre des Affaires francophones pour défendre les intérêts des Franco-Ontariens et des Franco-Ontariennes et la prestation des services en français.

Et, parlant de services aux francophones, j'ai eu la chance de parler à la ministre fédérale Mélanie Joly vendredi. Je lui ai fait part de ma déception au niveau du financement que le fédéral accorde aux francophones en Ontario. L'Ontario représente presque 53 % des francophones hors Québec au Canada mais ne reçoit que 2,78 \$ par francophone dans la dernière entente. Le Nouveau-Brunswick, par exemple, reçoit plus de 7 \$ par habitant et le Manitoba—

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

Supplementary?

M^{me} Natalia Kusendova: Je remercie la ministre pour sa réponse.

Mr. Speaker, I look forward to sharing the news of what our government is doing for francophones with residents in my riding as well as across Ontario. I know that our government inherited a devastating \$15-billion deficit and a \$346-billion debt from the previous Liberal administration and that Ontarians are rightly concerned about the financial health of our province.

While our government has done great work in finding \$3.2 billion in efficiencies so far, we know that we still have enormous work to do on the fiscal mess that we inherited from the previous government. Can the Minister of Francophone Affairs explain to this House the measures she is taking to help francophones in Ontario?

Hon. Caroline Mulroney: Mr. Speaker, I know that many francophones in our province have had concerns, and that's why I'm happy to share with this House that our government has proposed amendments to Bill 57 to create the position of French Language Services Commissioner under the auspices of the Office of the Ombudsman to maintain independence in conducting investigations and to make recommendations and encourage compliance with the French Language Services Act.

As the member has pointed out, though, our government inherited a \$15-billion deficit and \$347 billion in debt from the previous Liberal government. But that's not the only government that has shortchanged Franco-Ontarians. We've heard a lot of talk from the federal Liberals regarding Franco-Ontarians. The truth is, they refuse to do their part to fund Franco-Ontarians. The federal government provides the province of Ontario only \$2.78 per francophone to support francophone programming, whereas in New Brunswick they support francophones with \$7.31 per francophone, and in Manitoba it's \$35.71 per francophone. The federal government has invested only \$7 million in French language services in Ontario while our province—

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

Interjections.

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

ACCESS TO INFORMATION

Mr. Taras Natyshak: My question is to the Acting Premier. According to a CBC report, the Premier has been meeting with well-connected insiders and lobbyists in secret since taking office. We only know about this because the CBC performed a freedom-of-information request to uncover the Premier's schedule. Before this new era of Conservative darkness, the Premiers of all partisan stripes used to make their schedules public so that all Ontarians could see who is bending the ear of the Premier. Why is this Premier keeping his meetings with Conservative Party lobbyists and insiders completely secret from the people of Ontario?

Hon. Christine Elliott: To the House leader.

Hon. Todd Smith: Thanks to the member opposite for the question. I can tell you that since our government took office on June 7 and then the Premier and cabinet were sworn in on June 29, I've never seen a busier Premier than what we have seen here in Ontario over the last number of months. This Premier works day in and day out. He has met with tens of dozens of hundreds of thousands of people since he has been elected. I can tell you that what his interests are—they're in the best interests of the people of Ontario.

That's why we've been continuing to work as hard as we have since we were sworn in to cabinet to make sure that we're delivering for the people of Ontario. That's why you've already started to see gasoline prices going down and seen the carbon tax eliminated in Ontario.

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We've taken steps to get rid of the leadership and CEO at Hydro One and ensure that we're making a difference and that life is more affordable for the people of Ontario.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Supplementary?

Mr. Taras Natyshak: Speaker, frankly, I expected a higher level of spin than that from the minister. He's better than that, Speaker. We know he is.

So much for open and transparent government. The Conservatives can't even manage to publicize the Premier's schedule, which is common practice across the country. What the Premier's FOIed schedule does make very clear is that he's always able to find time to meet with his well-connected friends. That's who has the Premier's ear, not everyday Ontarians.

Is the Premier keeping these meetings secret because Ontarians won't want to hear what is being discussed by this government in the backrooms of the Premier's office?

Hon. Todd Smith: Speaker, what I can tell you the Premier is focused on is ensuring that we're delivering for the people of Ontario, who elected us with a massive majority government on June 7. They rejected the policies of the NDP, the third party of Ontario, and they do not believe in what they stand for.

What we're trying to do here is to make Ontario open for business, and the Premier has been meeting with tens of hundreds of people over the last four or five months to ensure that we're doing just that. Every step that we've

taken, whether it's lowering electricity prices, lowering taxes or lowering the cost of living in Ontario, the members of the NDP have voted against each and every time. They just don't get it over there. The people can't take any more of these wild Liberal policies, and that's why the people elected Premier Ford: because he is going to deliver for the people of Ontario.

INDIGENOUS ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Mr. Norman Miller: My question is for the Minister of Energy, Northern Development and Mines and Indigenous Affairs. I know our government is committed to supporting businesses all over Ontario. Investment in business development opportunities is especially important in the north because it helps small businesses expand and create opportunities to grow local economies. These kinds of investments are helping our government send a clear message that northern Ontario is open for business.

I'm proud that our government for the people is standing up for small businesses across the province. We are taking real action to support strong and vibrant communities. Can the minister please tell us about how we are helping northern Ontario to thrive?

Hon. Greg Rickford: I want to thank the member from Parry Sound–Muskoka for his commitment and his great sense of teamwork in helping our northern Ontario MPPs understand our region's full potential, creating jobs and making sure that northern Ontario is as much open for business as any other part of the province.

We're making investments in science and technology in our major universities and colleges in northern Ontario, expanding capacity and course offerings for colleges and universities that focus on Indigenous students. We're making sure that smaller towns and cities have the full opportunity to attract investment into businesses in their communities, investing in existing businesses that pair Indigenous communities and the private sector. All of this is coming up in Bill 57 and in the fall economic statement.

The NDP have sent a strong signal that they don't support these investments, and I can tell you, people—

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

Mr. Norman Miller: It's great to hear that our government is making meaningful investments in northern Ontario. I know that our government is committed to making the right decisions that help us bring economic prosperity to all the people in Ontario. This is a promise that our government for the people takes very seriously. This includes Ontario's Indigenous peoples. Together we can create economic opportunities with community leaders who deliver economic prosperity for Indigenous peoples across Ontario.

Can the minister please tell the members of this House about an important investment our government made at Nipissing First Nation?

Hon. Greg Rickford: To the Minister of Finance.

Hon. Victor Fedeli: We were very pleased to announce that Nipissing First Nation received \$1 million on Friday

to construct a 10,000-square-foot office building along Highway 17. Chief McLeod told me the project is creating 10 full-time jobs and will drive local economic growth. Half of the building will house the Kinoomaadziwin Education Body's head office. The second half will host a small business incubator, providing office space to local entrepreneurs. This investment is strengthening the economy of the Nipissing First Nation, creating jobs and improving the quality of life for its residents.

Speaker, we are sending a strong signal that northern Ontario is open for business.

SOCIAL ASSISTANCE

Mrs. Lisa Gretzky: My question is to the Minister of Children, Community and Social Services. Last Thursday, this Conservative government introduced damaging changes to social assistance that will undoubtedly push those already at a disadvantage even deeper into poverty. By changing the definition of "disability" to match the federal definition—likely the Canada Pension Plan Disability definition, although the minister refuses to tell us if that's what it is—it will be even more difficult for Ontarians to receive Ontario disability. Many people with disabilities who are currently eligible for ODSP would not be eligible if they applied under the new criteria.

Will this Conservative government undo its decision to exclude more people under the new definition of disability?

Hon. Lisa MacLeod: It is my pleasure to talk with pride about the plan that we are putting forward in terms of social assistance in the province of Ontario. For those who can work, we are offering them a path out of poverty, and for those who cannot work, we will make sure that they receive better and more compassionate support.

But don't take my word for it. Take the Ontario Association of Social Workers, who said that "addressing the root causes of poverty require collaborative solutions. OASW supports the cross-ministry approach of the new program to ensure coordinated and wraparound services that address the physical, emotional and psychological burden of poverty."

Or we can talk about Community Living Ontario: "The overall move towards a simpler system with fewer rules and less government policing of people's lives is a welcome change from the current system built over successive decades, which has trapped people in the cycle of poverty without improved outcomes."

I am so delighted to stand here as part of a government that wants to lift people out of poverty, stabilize their lives and get them back on track. What we're doing is good news for the people of Ontario—

Interjections.

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

Start the clock. Supplementary.

Mrs. Lisa Gretzky: The minister did not actually answer the question yet again. She refused to answer if they're going to use the Canada Pension Plan Disability

definition. She's a little busy patting herself on the back, apparently.

Back to the minister: The reality is that these changes will hurt real people. I'd like to specifically talk about a man named Dan. Dan receives ODSP because he lives with a learning disability. He qualifies under the current rules. However, if he were to reapply under the CPPD threshold, he would not qualify, as he's able to work minimal hours. Being able to work and taking pride in the work he does is precisely what makes him ineligible under the federal rules that the minister wants to adopt. What the minister is doing, quite simply, is ripping away vital support for people with disabilities. Why, Speaker?

Hon. Lisa MacLeod: Speaker, what she is saying is simply untrue. We haven't put forward the definition. We're working with the Attorney General's lawyers on that.

But let me be perfectly clear. We have instituted a \$6,000 annual, flat-rate earnings exemption. We are consolidating ODSP supplements to simplify things. We are not going to continue to police people, but what we are going to do is lift people out of poverty to the extent that we've never seen in the province of Ontario before, and we're doing that because we're going to provide wrap-around supports for those on ODSP and Ontario Works.

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I'll leave her with one final quote from the Ontario Association of Food Banks: "The Ontario Association of Food Banks commends the government of Ontario for taking a proactive look at how to improve the income support programs that impact so many of Ontario's most vulnerable people." Why do they say that? Because the plan is good.

Interjections.

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

I'm going to caution all members once again on the use of intemperate language. I'm going to have to ask the Minister to withdraw the remark that was unparliamentary.

Hon. Lisa MacLeod: Withdrawn.

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

AGRICULTURE INDUSTRY

Mr. Ross Romano: Last week, I was very pleased to announce that the Sault Ste. Marie Innovation Centre is receiving \$88,521 in funding to advance opportunities in the agricultural sector. The innovation centre will use this funding to assist in conducting a northeast food and agriculture market study to analyze how we can bring greater economic growth in our community through the agricultural and agri-food sectors.

My question is for the Minister of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs. Can the minister please tell us how significant investments like this to the Sault Ste. Marie Innovation Centre in my riding can boost economic growth and bring better jobs to our communities?

Hon. Ernie Hardeman: I thank the member from Sault Ste. Marie for the question. I want to commend the Sault Ste. Marie Innovation Centre for taking the initiative in

strengthening its agriculture and agri-food sectors. The funding goes towards the Sault Ste. Marie Innovation Centre in what is one of over 80 approved rural economic development projects in my ministry from across the province that are helping create jobs and bring prosperity to rural and Indigenous communities.

Our government is proud to support projects that help create jobs and facilitate economic development in rural and Indigenous communities such as those in Sault Ste. Marie. Our government is committed to ensuring that rural Ontario is open for business. These investments are part of our government's commitment to remove barriers to economic development and to better position ourselves to attract investment and create jobs for Ontarians across the province.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Supplementary?

Mr. Ross Romano: Thank you to the minister for his answer and his commitment to expanding agricultural opportunities in rural and northern parts of the province. I look forward to continuing to work with our minister to bring more opportunities to those in rural communities and in my riding through great organizations like the Sault Ste. Marie Innovation Centre. Nearly one in eight jobs in Ontario is sustained by the agricultural and agri-food sector, which contributes to a healthy economy that benefits rural and urban communities throughout our province.

Back to the minister again: Can the minister please tell us what else our government is doing to support economic growth in our great province?

Hon. Ernie Hardeman: Thanks to the member again. Rural Ontario has been ignored far too long. A strong and vibrant agri-food and agriculture sector is a priority for this government. We're meeting with the farmers in the agri-food sector and we're working with them to address the challenges that they face. We're meeting with the members of the Ontario Greenhouse Alliance here today to work together and address their issues and the opportunities in the greenhouse industry.

We're expanding access to natural gas and broadband. We're committed to creating better jobs across the province. We are working with rural and northern communities to help ensure that Ontario is open for business.

Our government is strengthening rural communities across the province for Ontarians today and for generations to come.

SOCIAL ASSISTANCE

Ms. Rima Berns-McGown: My question is to the Minister of Children, Community and Social Services. Last Thursday, the Conservatives announced changes to Ontario's social assistance program with zero acknowledgement of the impact to Ontarians who cannot work because they're too sick. Under the Ford government, Ontarians facing health scares like cancer now have additional challenges while they fight for their very lives. Just last week this government voted down a motion that would provide take-home cancer drugs, while comparing cancer patients to spoiled children.

Can the minister confirm whether this government's new restrictions will mean that Ontarians who cannot work because of temporary illness will no longer qualify for social assistance?

Hon. Lisa MacLeod: I reject the premise of the question. We came forward with the most compassionate, life-stabilizing plan for social assistance in the province's history. That's why everyone, from the city of Hamilton to the Nipissing DSSAB, to the Ontario food banks association, to Community Living Toronto, and almost anybody in between has come out and said that this is a good plan for the people.

Let me read to you what Danno Saunt said: "Awesome job today, quite impressive, a whole breath of fresh air to programs that have gone stagnant, and from someone presently on ODSP...."

We are going to provide wraparound supports throughout this entire government, which is what is different in this program from any other program in the history of this province. That's why I'm working with the Minister of Training for skills development, why I'm working with the Minister of Health for mental health and addictions support, and why I'm working with the Minister of Housing so that we can provide better supportive housing. We are looking at the individual throughout entire ministries of this government, not just in silos.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Supplementary.

Ms. Rima Berns-McGown: Once again, the minister has not answered the question.

I have heard from many people who have told me they have no choice but to go on Ontario disability because they have cancer or are far too ill to work at the moment, and they are frightened. They tell me that chemotherapy is exhausting and has side effects like severe fatigue that make it hard to work. But this government seems to think that escaping poverty is a simple choice. People do not choose to be sick.

Can the minister please explain whether cancer patients and other sick Ontarians who are on Ontario disability because they cannot work will experience a loss in financial support—which, by the way, is not compassionate?

Hon. Lisa MacLeod: The members opposite can't take yes for an answer, ever.

Our plan is focused on the people. It will help those who can work to stabilize their lives, get back on track and get on a path out of poverty. For those who cannot work, we are providing greater wraparound supports, greater flexibility and allowing those who may be able to work to take home more of their pay. I'm very proud of this plan, as many other stakeholders across Ontario.

But I've got to say, Speaker: If the member opposite actually thought the previous plan was working—one million people on Ontario Works and ODSP, a \$10-billion program, and still one in seven people are living in poverty. That's why: "Welfare isn't working. Simply paying people to sit at home is not smart. It makes little sense simply transferring money to people so they can stay at home." Who said that? Bob Rae.

WINTER HIGHWAY MAINTENANCE

Mr. Toby Barrett: A question for the Minister of Transportation: I understand that the minister was in London last week to deliver an important announcement about this winter's commute.

Each year, as we know, we work with our safety partners like the OPP, CAA and others to remind drivers to travel safely as the weather starts to change. Our government is committed to ensuring that winter travel is as easy and as safe as possible. We strive to encourage safe and cautious driving by also highlighting our winter maintenance activities to help drivers be better prepared for the coming winter months.

Obviously, winter is on the way. Snow is already affecting parts of the province. Can the minister share some details with us about our government's winter maintenance plans?

Hon. Jeff Yurek: I would like to take the opportunity to thank the member from Haldimand–Norfolk for that question. I do have to say that when I was Minister of Natural Resources and Forestry he was an excellent parliamentary assistant. His guidance and his years of work in the Legislature are truly paying off for the people of this province.

Mr. Speaker, last week, it was my pleasure to attend the Emcon maintenance facility in London with many of my colleagues.

As the member mentioned, winter is on its way, and many parts of the province are already experiencing snowy conditions. This winter season, our government is making the winter commute easier for people of Ontario. This year, we're allowing drivers to track their plow and plan their route all in one stop: the Ontario 511 website, where you'll be able to find information you need for your trip.

Interjections.

Hon. Jeff Yurek: I'm hoping the members opposite are listening to this because I'm going to hear questions about winter maintenance. I'm hoping they'll take the time to listen to this answer.

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Given the treacherous driving conditions Ontarians experience this time of year, please remember to slow down, be patient and expect longer travel times. I look forward to expanding my answer in the supplemental.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Supplementary.

Mr. Toby Barrett: I do want to thank the minister for that shout-out, but I do want to reiterate that all drivers should give themselves more time during winter travel and plan ahead. We all have a duty to keep our roads and highways safe. Make sure you get a head start: Assemble a winter survival kit and get your vehicle maintenance check-up.

We should all find comfort in knowing that Ontario has some of the highest winter maintenance standards anywhere in North America and that keeping Ontario's highways as safe as possible during winter weather is a top priority. I'm asking the minister: Could you expand a bit more on your winter maintenance plan and what people can expect from the Ontario 511 website?

Hon. Jeff Yurek: Thank you again for that question. Our government for the people is improving the Ontario 511 website by allowing drivers to plan ahead: to see where along the route you might come across a snow plow or a salt truck and which part of the route that truck has already covered. Before the end of this year, the Ontario 511 website will also provide drivers with reported incidents, traffic jams and weather hazards.

Also, especially for our northern members who are going to be asking questions and making sure that the maintenance is happening: We are starting to implement new maintenance contract models that improve on highway maintenance services. I expect to have some report back from these members as we go forward, to make sure that we have made the necessary changes. The new contracts will include specifying the amount of winter equipment in the route, explicit patrolling requirements, the use of anti-icing liquids, and newer winter equipment that will be more visible.

Mr. Speaker, I'd like to tell the people of this province to remember that keeping our roads safe is all of our responsibility. We have to work together to keep our highways among the safest in North America.

AUTOMOBILE INSURANCE

Mr. Gurratan Singh: My question is to the Minister of Finance. Currently, there is a bill before the House that prioritizes insurance companies over drivers. The auto insurance bill, introduced by a member of the Conservative government, does not end postal code discrimination for anyone due to its glaring loopholes. What's worse is that the Conservative Party has stood steadfast against reforming auto insurance to make it more affordable for Ontarians. This leaves me wondering what this government's priorities really are.

Why is this government not prioritizing lowering auto insurance rates for everyday Ontarians?

Hon. Victor Fedeli: Well, Speaker, this once again gives me an opportunity to congratulate the member from Milton for his important work on this file.

The member from Milton's initiative is a great way to combat rate discrimination in our auto insurance system. We look forward—we really do look forward—to working with you on this important legislation because, unlike the member opposite, our member from Milton actually consulted with organizations and groups. He talked to all of the people who are involved and was able to develop a proper bill and he brought it to the floor of this Legislature. It is receiving wonderful support right across the system.

Again, I want to congratulate the member from Milton on his bill.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): That concludes the question period time for this morning.

VISITOR

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): I recognize the Minister of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs on a point of order.

Hon. Ernie Hardeman: On a point of order: Earlier, it wasn't my fault, but the mayor was not yet in the Legislature, so I thought I would introduce him now. His Worship Mayor Trevor Birtch from the city of Woodstock: Thank you very much for being here.

CORRECTION OF RECORD

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): The Minister of Finance, I understand, has a point of order.

Hon. Victor Fedeli: I have a point of order. I want to correct my record. In an earlier answer I may have said \$308 billion, and I meant to say \$308 million.

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

MEMBER'S PRIVILEGE

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): On November 26, 2018, the member for Guelph, Mr. Schreiner, provided written notice of his intention to raise a question of privilege with respect to Bill 57, An Act to enact, amend and repeal various statutes—the Restoring Trust, Transparency and Accountability Act. I am prepared to rule on this matter without hearing further from the member, as standing order 21(d) permits me to do.

I first want to address the matter of the timeliness of the member's question of privilege. It has been several days since Bill 57 received first reading on November 15, 2018. The House met on four sessional days over 10 calendar days following the first reading of Bill 57. This points to a lack of timeliness in submitting the notice. As noted in Beauchesne's Parliamentary Rules and Forms, 6th edition, page 29, "A question of privilege must be brought to the attention of the House at the first possible opportunity. Even a gap of a few days may invalidate the claim for precedence in the House."

While I appreciate that the member for Guelph has limited resources at his disposal, I want to stress to members that it's very important that they do not delay raising a question of privilege lest it be ruled out of order due to the passage of time.

The issue of timeliness aside, the member's question of privilege attempts to pre-empt the legislative processes of this House. The matter relates to the potential impact of the changes to the roles and status of certain officers of Parliament proposed in Bill 57. The member is asking the Speaker to determine if these proposed changes might amount to a form of obstruction, interference and intimidation of those officers by the government.

There is substantial precedent, and universal support, for the notion that the Speaker does not have the authority to engage in statutory interpretation. From a procedural perspective, Bill 57 is properly before the House at the present time, and it would be pre-emptive of the Speaker to determine whether there are any issues of the nature that the member raises when the House has not yet completed its consideration of, or has made a decision on, the bill. Ultimately, it's for the House to decide if the proposed

measures need to be amended in order to guarantee the independence of its parliamentary officers.

The member has therefore not established a prima facie case of privilege.

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

The House recessed from 1147 to 1300.

MEMBER'S APOLOGY

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): The member for Timmins on a point of order.

Mr. Gilles Bisson: On a quick point of order: One of the Conservative members after question period came over and said he didn't appreciate my heckle towards a question that was being done. If I insulted anybody, that was not my intent. I want to apologize, if that's the way it was taken.

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

INTRODUCTION OF VISITORS

Hon. Monte McNaughton: I'm honoured to have my daughter joining us today: Annie-Grace Bartz McNaughton is here in the Legislature today. Welcome to Queen's Park.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Welcome to the Ontario Legislature.

Introduction of guests. The member for Windsor-Tecumseh.

Mr. Percy Hatfield: Well, Speaker, perhaps it's more a point of order. The apple doesn't fall far from the tree. When I saw Annie-Grace and her dad walking outside the chamber, I said, "Boy, have you ever grown up." Monte stopped for a moment, and Annie-Grace said, "Daddy, no stopping, no talking. Come on, we've got to move."

It is a pleasure to see her here again this afternoon.

MEMBERS' STATEMENTS

FRENCH-LANGUAGE SERVICES

Mr. Jamie West: The French language is central to the identity and culture of Sudbury. Over a third of the population in my riding speak both official languages.

I would like to acknowledge the contribution of Laurentian University professor Gaétan Gervais, who passed away last week. Gaétan dedicated his life to the research of Franco-Ontarian communities across the province. In 1975, he created the Franco-Ontarian flag with student Michel Dupuis. The flag, which depicts a green-and-white trillium flower, was first raised at the University of Sudbury and has become an important symbol of the Franco-Ontarian identity.

The significance of the French language to Sudbury is part of why so many constituents were shocked by the

government's announcement to axe the French Language Services Commissioner and Ontario's French-language university. Gabrielle Lemieux worries about the impact of these cuts on the high-school students she teaches. This government's decision to crush their dream of a franco-phone university tells these students that their linguistic rights, education and heritage are unimportant.

I want my constituents to know that I will fight to protect the constitutional rights of francophones in Ontario.

My NDP colleagues and I ask the government to reconsider these harmful cuts to the institutions that protect and promote the French language in Ontario.

STEPHEN NEWMAN

Mr. Parm Gill: Mr. Speaker, many times, heroes in our communities go unrecognized. I was proud to learn about an individual from my great riding of Milton who was involved in an incident that could have been catastrophic, if it weren't for his actions.

On April 6, 2017, Stephen Newman was monitoring the airspace over southern Ontario for NAV Canada as one of the air traffic controllers, when a pilot flying from the US found himself in zero-visibility conditions. As Stephen put his skills and years' worth of training to work, he was able to walk the pilot through intense moments while remaining calm in order to make sure that the pilot was able to follow his instructions. He was able to guide the pilot in zero visibility and an incredibly intense situation, using instruments instead of visual cues to safely land the aircraft. Stephen recalled, "You could hear the stress in his voice."

For Stephen Newman's life-saving efforts, he won the Andy Pitas Aircraft Save Award. He was presented it at the ATCA conference in National Harbor, Maryland. It's an honour that is not very often awarded.

On behalf of all of my colleagues in this House, I want to thank and congratulate Milton's own Stephen Newman.

WINTER HIGHWAY MAINTENANCE

Mr. Michael Mantha: Here we go again. We're at the beginning of the winter months. Highways 17, 101, 144, 631, 519, 614, 129, 546—I can go on. We've got problems in northern Ontario, and we will not accept not having our roads open any longer. People are frustrated. They're getting to and from their communities—how? By going at 10 and 15 kilometres an hour down the road, and that's not slow enough.

I heard the minister get up this morning during question period and answer a question, telling people in northern Ontario, "You're just going to have to slow down. You're just going to have to drive according to the conditions that are there. We've made some improvements to 511." Hogwash.

We want plows on our roads. We want salt on our roads. We want sand on our roads. We need to get to our schools. We need to get to work. We need to get our

children to their activities. We need an economy in northern Ontario, and not having good roads is a problem.

When you're looking at service providers—where you turn around on a highway, when you see them turning here, you can see a stark difference between the two. Why are the standards different for these service providers?

We are not going to accept another winter any longer in northern Ontario—we deserve better. We deserve our fair share. We want our roads plowed.

BUSINESSES IN CARLETON

Ms. Goldie Ghamari: Mr. Speaker, this past Friday I had the pleasure of hosting the President of the Treasury Board, the member from Pickering-Uxbridge, as well as my colleague the member from Ottawa West-Nepean in my riding of Carleton for a tour of some of our local businesses.

First, I took the President of the Treasury Board to the Rideau Carleton Raceway, soon to be home of the new Hard Rock casino in Ottawa. We spoke about innovation and looked at all of the different opportunities that are available. For example, with the new expansion of the casino, which is scheduled to be completed in 2022, we're looking at almost 1,900 construction jobs. At the end of the day, when it's done, there are going to be upwards of 2,000 permanent, full-time employees once expansion is complete.

I also took the minister to Carleton Mushroom, which is one of the biggest farms/factories in the area. Carleton Mushroom hires over 120 people, and they're also looking at expanding. We had a fantastic conversation about innovation and technology in the agriculture sector.

I wanted to thank both the Rideau Carleton Raceway Hard Rock casino as well as Carleton Mushroom for hosting us and for giving the minister a tour of the facilities and showing what great jobs and opportunities we have in Carleton, which is proof that Ontario is really open for business.

SOCIAL ASSISTANCE

Miss Monique Taylor: I'm rising today to bring attention to the troubling changes to ODSP—changes that would exclude more people from the services they need to live with dignity and independence.

We still have no clarification on the new definition of disability and its cascading impacts, and my constituents are expressing their concerns. Take Joyce, for example. She's on the Canada Pension Plan disability benefit now. When she applied for CPP, her eligibility was based on her ODSP. Now Joyce is concerned that the changes to ODSP could impact her CPP eligibility. Joyce is just one example of many Ontarians who qualify for ODSP now but who would likely not qualify under the new rules.

The Ford government wants to exclude more and more people from essential services. It should be under no illusion—more of our most vulnerable people will be pushed deeper into poverty.

Further, much has been touted about the new income exemptions, but the new clawback rates are troubling advocates across the province. Under the new plan, people will be punished for modest incomes. According to ACORN, “People with disabilities who earn over \$6,000 from employment will only receive 25 cents for every dollar they earn.” That is just shameful.

Contrary to the Ford government’s narrative, ODSP and programs like it do not make people more dependent on government. These programs give people the ability to live with independence and dignity.

AUTOMOTIVE INDUSTRY

Mr. Lorne Coe: I stand today to speak about the loss of General Motors in Oshawa and to offer my support to the employees. As a long-time resident of Durham region and a strong supporter of its manufacturing and commercial base, the news last night was absolutely devastating.
1310

Our government will do all in its power to assist the GM workers and their families and those employed in supporting industries.

Our government is deploying Employment Ontario’s rapid re-employment services team, a team that will provide a coordinated community response.

Further, the Premier had a productive call with the Prime Minister this morning. We’ve called on the federal government to extend work-sharing agreements, extend EI eligibility by five weeks, and to increase the federal transfer to Ontario for skills training via the labour market and the workforce development agreements.

Oshawa and its people will survive. They’ve always been resilient. Although at this moment the pain of the shutdown clouds hopes for the future, I remain optimistic.

The Durham-based MPPs look forward to working with MPP French to assist the GM workers and their families and those employed in supporting industries.

SENIORS

Ms. Doly Begum: Over the weekend, I had the privilege of participating in a workshop on seniors’ rights in my riding with a local organization named Rights Plus. Around 40 residents from Scarborough, primarily from immigrant backgrounds, participated in the workshop to learn more about the rights and protections that Ontario offers to seniors and tenants.

It can be extremely difficult to integrate and learn your rights in a new country, with new rules and a new bureaucracy to navigate.

In the workshop, this group learned from experts about seniors’ rights under the Canadian charter as well as the Ontario Human Rights Code, and how they can act as important safety nets, such as the Ontario Guaranteed Annual Income System.

The group also shared their concerns about the lack of public transit options and affordable housing in Scarborough. One resident has been on the waiting list for Toronto

Community Housing for seven years, so long that he has now become a senior while waiting. He was recently told that there are still about 55,000 people ahead of him on that wait-list. And there is still a real concern that this government’s plan to remove rent control on new units will narrow housing options further and make life less affordable.

Mr. Speaker, my riding is vibrant and diverse. Many residents have moved to Scarborough from overseas for a better life. Seniors like those whom I met during the weekend contributed to the economy, worked hard and paid their taxes, and now all they want is a better life. As a compassionate society, we must strive to give them that.

I want to thank Rights Plus and similar organizations for their critical work.

MINIMUM WAGE

Mr. Billy Pang: I recently met with some of our stakeholders in Markham–Unionville—these stakeholders range from small business owners to representatives of large technology firms—to discuss Bill 47, the Making Ontario Open For Business Act, and how this bill would help their respective businesses.

A concern these stakeholders commonly raised about Bill 148 was the disastrous effect that raising the minimum wage by 26% in one year had on their business operations. This increase drastically shot up their expenses, particularly for those representing small businesses, which were disproportionately hurt by this decision. In addition, this increase limited the amount of new staff these companies could take in, and some stopped the hiring process altogether. Part-time workers were particularly affected by this decision, which impacts youth to a larger extent than most.

We are listening to businesses, we are consulting with stakeholders, and we are intending to deliver change to our province, which was mismanaged by the previous government.

Our government supports small businesses and has done so through the passage of Bill 47, because we believe that when small businesses are given more opportunities to prosper, we all benefit from their accomplishments.

SIMCOE CHRISTMAS PANORAMA RIVER OF LIGHTS

Mr. Toby Barrett: The upcoming holidays present so many events that bring us all together. In Haldimand–Norfolk, we’re blessed with Christmas bazaars and pageants and concerts.

A long-standing tradition in Norfolk is the Simcoe Christmas Panorama, the festival of lights. This year marks the 60th anniversary. Organizers are proud to offer a light show with a more modern, energy-efficient twist that even Santa would approve of.

From religious and traditional Christmas displays to fantasy, Wellington Park will be brightly lit for families to see well over 60 displays—the three little pigs, Humpty

Dumpty, Santa's workshop—all lit through LED technology.

Simcoe's Panorama draws visitors from near and far and puts a bit of jingle in the pockets of local business, restaurants and retailers. The spirit of Panorama carries on with the support of volunteers, local businesses, Boy Scouts, Girl Guides and area families.

I sincerely invite you all, if you haven't been there, to come enjoy a cup of chocolate, listen to carollers singing, and an unbelievable light show. It's held in Simcoe, and it runs from December 1 until January 6.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): That concludes our time for members' statements.

MOTIONS

HOUSE SITTINGS

Hon. Steve Clark: I move that, pursuant to standing order 6(c)(i), the House shall meet from 6:45 p.m. to 9:35 p.m. on Monday, November 26, 2018, for the purpose of considering government business.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): The motion says 9:30 as the concluding time.

Mr. Clark has moved that, pursuant to standing order 6(c)(i), the House shall meet from 6:45 p.m. to 9:30 p.m. on Monday, November 26, 2018, for the purpose of considering government business.

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 is a five-minute bell.

The division bells rang from 1317 to 1322.

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

Mr. Clark has moved that, pursuant to standing order 6(c)(i), the House shall meet from 6:45 p.m. to 9:30 p.m. on Monday, November 26, 2018, for the purpose of considering government business. All those in favour of the motion will please rise one at a time and be counted by the Clerk.

Ayes

Anand, Deepak	Hogarth, Christine	Piccini, David
Baber, Roman	Kanapathi, Logan	Rasheed, Kaleed
Bailey, Robert	Karahalios, Belinda	Rickford, Greg
Barrett, Toby	Khanjin, Andrea	Roberts, Jeremy
Bethlenfalvy, Peter	Kramp, Daryl	Sabawy, Sheref
Bouma, Will	Kusendova, Natalia	Sandhu, Amarjot
Calandra, Paul	Lecce, Stephen	Sarkaria, Prabmeet Singh
Cho, Raymond Sung Joon	Khanjini, Lisa	Skelly, Donna
Clark, Steve	Martin, Robin	Smith, Dave
Coe, Lorne	Martow, Gila	Smith, Todd
Crawford, Stephen	McDonnell, Jim	Surma, Kinga
Cuzzetto, Rudy	MacLeod, Jane	Tangri, Nina
Downey, Doug	McNaughton, Monte	Thanigasalam, Vijay
Dunlop, Jill	Miller, Norman	Thompson, Lisa M.
Elliott, Christine	Nicholls, Rick	Tibollo, Michael A.

Fedeli, Victor	Oosterhoff, Sam	Triantafilopoulos, Effie J.
Fee, Amy	Pang, Billy	Wai, Daisy
Ghamari, Goldie	Park, Lindsey	Walker, Bill
Gill, Parm	Parsa, Michael	Yakabuski, John
Hardeman, Ernie	Pettapiece, Randy	Yurek, Jeff
Harris, Mike	Phillips, Rod	

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	Hassan, Faisal	Shaw, Sandy
Arthur, Ian	Hatfield, Percy	Singh, Sara
Begum, Doly	Mamakwa, Sol	Stiles, Marit
Bell, Jessica	Mantha, Michael	Taylor, Monique
Berns-McGown, Rima	Monteith-Farrell, Judith	Vanthof, John
Bisson, Gilles	Morrison, Suze	West, Jamie
Gélinas, France	Schreiner, Mike	

The Clerk of the Assembly (Mr. Todd Decker): The ayes are 62; the nays are 20.

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

Motion agreed to.

HOUSE SITTINGS

Hon. Lisa M. Thompson: I move that the schedule of the House for Wednesday, November 28, 2018, as set out in standing order 8(a), be revised by substituting "1 p.m." and "1:05 p.m." for "3 p.m." and "3:05 p.m.," respectively.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Ms. Thompson has moved that the schedule of the House for Wednesday, November 28, 2018, as set out in standing—

Hon. Bill Walker: Dispense.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Dispense?

M^{me} France Gélinas: No, no, no; keep going.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): As set out in standing order 8(a), be revised by substituting "1 p.m." and "1:05 p.m." for "3 p.m." and "3:05 p.m.," respectively.

Are there any members who wish to comment? The member for Timmins.

Mr. Gilles Bisson: Because I have the opportunity to participate in the debate, I will. I won't take too much time, but the government doesn't have a lot on the order paper and they've already ordered the House to sit tonight. I see on the order paper that there are motions to sit further this week. For the government to try to gain time on an opposition day on Wednesday I think is a little bit of overkill. With what's on the order paper, which is pretty thin, quite frankly, the government has enough time to get its agenda through the House over the next three weeks. I think this is just a question of the government trying to do something that quite frankly is more of a thumping of chests than it is actually making anything happen here in a real way.

I just say to the government across the way, if this is how you plan on running the House for the next four years, I don't think it's going to serve you well.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Are there any further comments by members before we vote?

Once again, Ms. Thompson has moved that the schedule of the House for Wednesday, November 28, 2018, as set out in standing order 8(a), be revised by substituting “1 p.m.” and “1:05 p.m.” for “3 p.m.” and “3:05 p.m.,” respectively.

Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? I heard some noes.

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

All those opposed will please say “nay.”

In my opinion, the ayes have it.

Mr. Gilles Bisson: On division.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): On division. Carried.

Motion agreed to.

PETITIONS

SOINS DE LONGUE DURÉE

M. Michael Mantha: Voici une pétition adressée à l'Assemblée législative de l'Ontario:

« Temps pour les soins :

« À l'Assemblée législative de l'Ontario :

« Attendu que des soins de qualité pour les 78 000 résidents des maisons de SLD est une priorité pour les familles de l'Ontario; et

« Attendu que le gouvernement provincial ne fournit pas un financement adéquat pour assurer un niveau de soins et de personnel dans les foyers de SLD afin de répondre à l'augmentation de l'acuité des résidents et du nombre croissant de résidents ayant des comportements complexes; et

« Attendu que plusieurs enquêtes du coroner de l'Ontario sur les décès dans les maisons de SLD ont recommandé une augmentation des soins pour les résidents et des niveaux du personnel. Les études des normes minimales de soins recommandent 4,1 heures de soins directs par jour;

« Nous, soussignés, pétitionnons l'Assemblée législative de l'Ontario de :

« Modifier la Loi sur les foyers de SLD (2007) pour un minimum de quatre heures par résident par jour, ajusté pour le niveau d'acuité et la répartition des cas. »

1330

Je suis complètement d'accord avec cette pétition. J'y mets ma signature et je la présente au page Aditya pour l'apporter à la table des greffiers.

FISH AND WILDLIFE MANAGEMENT

Mr. Will Bouma: “To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

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

“Whereas this ban has adversely affected the ability of the Ministry of Natural Resources and Forestry (MNR),

hunters and trappers to properly manage animal populations and Ontario's ecosystem;

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

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

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

I'm happy to sign this petition and will give it page Georgia.

INDEPENDENT OFFICERS OF THE LEGISLATURE

Mr. Mike Schreiner: I have a petition to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario.

“Whereas the Child Advocate, Environmental Commissioner, and the French Language Services Commissioner are independent officers of the Legislature who provide indispensable services to the people of Ontario;

“Whereas these independent officers are essential to provide oversight, hold government accountable and offer protections for the people of this province;

“Whereas each of these officers' work has led to reforms that have been of great benefit to people;

“Whereas budgetary and investigative independence is essential for these positions to be effective and accountable to the public;

“Therefore we, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to reinstate the Child Advocate, Environmental Commissioner and the French Language Services Commissioner as stand-alone independent offices with all their prior duties intact.”

I wholeheartedly support this petition, will sign it and ask Ella to bring it to the table.

CURRICULUM

Ms. Suze Morrison: I'd like to present a petition entitled “Stop the Cuts to Indigenous Reconciliation.” It reads:

“To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

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

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

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

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

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

“—reinstate the Ministry of Indigenous Relations and Reconciliation;

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

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

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

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

AUTOMOBILE INSURANCE

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

“To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

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

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

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

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

I support this petition, affix my name to it and give it to page Hannah.

NORTHERN HEALTH SERVICES

Mr. Jamie West: I have a petition entitled “Save the Breast Screening and Assessment Service.” I want to thank Judy Hywarren from the riding of Sudbury for collecting these.

“To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

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

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

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

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

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

“Provide adequate funding to Health Sciences North to ensure northerners have equitable access to life-saving

programs such as the Breast Screening and Assessment Service.”

I’ll affix my signature and will give it to page Kejsi.

NORTHERN HEALTH SERVICES

M^{me} France Gélinas: I would like to thank Mrs. Betty Cousineau from Lively in my riding for sending me this petition. It reads as follows:

“Save the Breast Screening and Assessment Service.

“To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

INDIGENOUS AFFAIRS

Mr. Percy Hatfield: “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 (TRC);

“—reinstate the Ministry of Indigenous Relations and Reconciliation;

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

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

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

I fully agree with this. I'm going to sign it and give it to Shlok to bring up to the desk.

SERVICES DE SANTÉ DANS LE NORD

M. Michael Mantha: Voici une pétition intitulée « Sauvez le Service pour le dépistage et le diagnostic du cancer du sein. »

« À l'Assemblée législative de l'Ontario :

« Attendu que le premier ministre, Doug Ford, a promis qu'il n'y aurait pas de pertes d'emplois d'infirmiers et d'infirmières; et

« Attendu qu'à Sudbury, nous avons déjà perdu 70 infirmiers et infirmières, et que Horizon Santé-Nord ferme une partie du Service pour le dépistage du cancer du sein; et

« Attendu que les coupures au Service pour le dépistage et le diagnostic du cancer du sein de Sudbury entraîneront des délais plus longs, ce qui est très stressant pour les femmes atteintes du cancer du sein; et

« Considérant que les compressions au Service pour le dépistage et le diagnostic du cancer du sein de Sudbury est un pas en arrière;

« Nous, soussignés, demandons à l'Assemblée législative de l'Ontario :

« D'accorder le financement à Horizon Santé-Nord afin d'assurer aux femmes du Nord un accès équitable à des programmes essentiels tels que le Service pour le dépistage et le diagnostic du cancer du sein. »

Je suis complètement d'accord avec cette pétition, et je la présente à la page Hannah pour l'emporter à la table des greffiers.

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EMERGENCY SERVICES

M^{me} France Gélinas: I would like to thank Danny and Louise Besserer from Onaping in my riding for this petition.

“911 Emergency Response....”

“Whereas, when we face an emergency we all know to dial 911 for help; and

“Whereas access to emergency services through 911 is not available in all regions of Ontario but most Ontarians believe that it is; and

“Whereas many Ontarians have discovered that 911 was not available while they faced an emergency; and

“Whereas all Ontarians expect and deserve access to 911 service throughout our province;”

They petition the Legislative Assembly as follows:

“To provide 911 emergency response everywhere in Ontario by land line or cellphone.”

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

INJURED WORKERS

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

GASOLINE PRICES

Mr. Michael Mantha: This petition is to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario.

“Whereas northern Ontario motorists continue to be subject to wild fluctuations in the price of gasoline; and

“Whereas the province could eliminate opportunistic price gouging and deliver fair, stable and predictable fuel prices; and

“Whereas five provinces and many US states already have some sort of gas price regulation; and

“Whereas jurisdictions with gas price regulation have seen an end to wild price fluctuations, a shrinking of price discrepancies between urban and rural communities and lower annualized gas prices;

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

“Mandate the Ontario Energy Board to monitor the price of gasoline across Ontario in order to reduce price volatility and unfair regional price differences while encouraging competition.”

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

TRAFFIC CONTROL

M^{me} France Gélinas: I would like to thank Harley Julian from Wahnapiatae in my riding for this petition.

“Intersection of Highway 17 and Highway 537.

“To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“Whereas residents of Wahnapiatae are concerned about the safety of the intersection of Highway 17 and Highway 537 and would like greater traffic control measures in place to prevent further accidents and fatalities; and

“Whereas an accident that occurred on October 1, 2017, resulted in loss of life; and

“Whereas two different accidents occurred on October 13, 2017, that involved multiple vehicles and closed Highway 17 for seven hours, delaying traffic; and

“Whereas the Ministry of Transportation has jurisdiction over highways and is responsible for traffic safety in Ontario;”

They petition the Legislative Assembly as follows:

“That the Ministry of Transportation install traffic control measures such as a flashing light at the intersection of Highway 17 and Highway 537 to enhance traffic safety.”

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

ORDERS OF THE DAY

RESTORING TRUST, TRANSPARENCY AND ACCOUNTABILITY ACT, 2018 LOI DE 2018 VISANT À RÉTABLIR LA CONFIANCE, LA TRANSPARENCE ET LA RESPONSABILITÉ

Resuming the debate adjourned on November 22, 2018, on the motion for second reading of the following bill:

Bill 57, An Act to enact, amend and repeal various statutes / Projet de loi 57, Loi édictant, modifiant et abrogeant diverses lois.

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

Mr. Parm Gill: It is my honour, once again, to rise in this House today to speak to one of the most significant steps our Ontario PC government has taken to date. On November 15, our government for the people released the fall fiscal update on the current standing of our province, the 2018 Ontario Economic Outlook and Fiscal Review.

Madam Speaker, as my honourable colleague the Minister of Finance highlighted, the report not only lays out a road map for our government but also shows the people of Ontario a clear path that the PC government aims to follow in order to make Ontario debt-free, make living affordable for its citizens, and watch the province prosper. The fiscal report includes various different elements that need attention in Ontario, and I will address them in detail.

First and foremost, the report mentions the PC government’s promise to restore trust and accountability, as it is most important for citizens to have trust in their government as well as to know that they take responsibility for their actions.

When introducing this report, my colleague the Minister of Finance mentioned something that is so important to

understand: It will also help Ontarians gain perspective of what the PC government is trying to achieve by implementing our much-needed policies.

Madam Speaker, Minister Fedeli said that the approach that our government is taking towards reducing a huge debt that our province was handed by the previous Liberal government is similar to the ones that families in Ontario would use in their own homes. We are approaching Ontario’s finances like the majority of individuals and families approach their household budgets. It is important that we embody the practice that families implement when their budgets are tight and learn to live within our means, pay down the debt, and make every dollar count. It is the same approach that we may have come across growing up when our parents were trying to make ends meet as well. We may have had to cut down on the luxuries and focus on the necessities for the time being as the means of our families increased. This is precisely what the PC government is trying to do through the policies implemented to focus less on luxuries but to focus on the things that are needed by all Ontarians.

Along with that, cutting red tape around small businesses would help generate the profits needed to slowly eliminate our province’s debt.

I would like to remind the House that the previous Liberal government, which was supported by the NDP over 90% of the time, wasted billions of dollars on things like a gas plant scandal and eHealth, and even spent over \$200,000 on a duck—on a duck, Madam Speaker.

Our PC government will reinvent the way government operates and delivers services to the people to ensure value for money and outcomes in order to restore Ontarians’ trust, transparency, and accountability in our government and the province.

Speaker, in addition to that, to further improve legislative accountability, our government is proposing to undertake measures to expand the scope and mandate of the Auditor General and Ontario’s Ombudsman.

Since forming government, we took immediate steps to mitigate the structural deficit inherited from the previous Liberal government. Because of the actions taken immediately by our government, we have been able to generate \$3.2 billion in savings already. We have acted instantly and are delivering \$2.7 billion in tax relief for Ontario individuals, families and small businesses. In a matter of just weeks, we have reduced our deficit by \$500 million, so the Ontario provincial deficit now stands at \$14.5 billion. We have taken necessary steps to improve the state of Ontario and will continue to do so for years to come.

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The previous government’s 15 years of reckless spending and mismanagement have left our province extremely vulnerable to the next economic cycle. This is irresponsible. When a family knows that their means do not meet their ends, they start to budget their expenses in order for their means to be sufficient enough for the household. In this case, however, the previous Liberal government thought it fit to keep spending government funds without

considering the increasing debt hovering over Ontario's citizens. It is this type of thinking that produces a crippling debt that, if left unchecked, would result in major closures of our much-needed hospitals, schools and other important institutions.

Speaker, I'm sure my colleagues across the aisle will stand up today and fearmonger that our government has plans to slash services, cut front-line workers and leave the most vulnerable in Ontario helpless, but they couldn't be more wrong.

I understand that the NDP aren't able to come up with any other way of saving the taxpayers' money. That is why the people of Ontario elected a PC government on June 7.

I couldn't be more proud of our Minister of Finance, who has been a lifelong small business owner, and a Premier who has grown his family business to span multiple cities in two countries. That is experience you will not find across the aisle.

Speaker, there are better, more efficient ways to deliver services and invest in Ontario, and over the next four years our government will deliver on these promises. We have already made progress, but there is still much work to be done. Our government must take a new direction after 15 years of Liberal waste and mismanagement. We will restore fiscal balance on a timetable that is reasonable, modest and pragmatic.

The fall economic statement goes on to talk about the initiatives being taken to help the economy of Ontario grow and prosper. The PC government has made a promise to put more money back in the pockets of the people who matter most: the hard-working families of Ontario.

For starters, the cap-and-trade carbon tax has officially been scrapped, which has resulted in a decreased amount for heating bills that families in Ontario have to pay each and every month. The average family is already saving over \$260 per year in gasoline, natural gas and other costs.

Along with that, \$308 million in planned tax hikes from the previous Liberal government's 2018 budget on individuals, families and small businesses are being eliminated. Our government will not be mirroring the federal Liberal government's attack on small businesses. This measure taken by our PC government alone will save thousands of small businesses in Ontario up to \$40,000 per year.

Speaker, it is evident that small businesses add to the growth of our province in a way that is unique to individual communities within the province, and also help the economy of their individual communities, along with our province.

"Promise made, promise kept" is a phrase that we have often heard mentioned in this House, and it is one that we will see continue to be repeated as our PC government continues to deliver on the mandate that was given to us by Ontarians. We promised that we would make Ontario open for business, and that is precisely what our policies are achieving.

Speaker, we must create an environment where anyone can start a business, grow a business and create jobs right here in our province. This starts with cutting unnecessary

red tape. It is outrageous that Ontario is currently burdened with approximately 331 statutes and more than 380,000 regulatory requirements while other provinces, such as British Columbia, manage to get by with less than half of that—and I repeat: less than half of Ontario's.

These restrictions and the unneeded legalities surrounding small businesses are what scare start-ups from sprouting in Ontario. This is a shame, as Ontario has some of the brightest individuals with unique and future-forward ideas that we lose due to legislation in effect by the previous Liberal government. Our PC government aims to further reduce red tape for businesses by 25% by 2022 in order for existing businesses to grow and for new businesses to start.

Under the previous Liberal government, our province turned into a have-not province. The largest, most diverse province in the country was no longer the economic engine of our country. This is shameful. Premier Ford, along with every single member of the PC Party, has been clear that we will make Ontario open for business again.

Our government is committed to working directly with our First Nations partners, rural communities and northern Ontario in order to realize the long-awaited benefits. We will review the Far North Act and improve the safety and reliability of the Trans-Canada Highway to spur economic growth. Our government will work with private gas distributors to expand the natural gas network to over 70 communities and 30,000 households. As technology is the centre of prosperity, we will invest in broadband infrastructure to improve Internet connectivity so that these communities and businesses can fully participate in the digital economy. These measures build on our government's recent action to repeal the burdensome red tape imposed by the previous Liberal government through Bill 148.

We will also address the skilled trades labour shortage by modernizing our apprenticeship system and winding down the Ontario College of Trades, a source of unnecessary complexity for those working in the skilled trades industry.

These measures are significant and will help our province in a way that the previous government's policies failed to. These policies will help companies start their businesses up in Ontario with much more ease and better opportunities to succeed. We will be able to retain businesses that previously felt the need to venture out into other provinces or even south of the border.

We have a federal government in Ottawa that is determined to impose the carbon tax on the people of Ontario. This unnecessary tax does nothing to reduce emissions but does work to reduce the number of jobs in our province. Our Premier has been very clear: When it comes to the Trudeau carbon tax, our government will not allow this to be imposed on taxpayers in Ontario. We are also lucky to have an Attorney General who has shown great leadership in fighting the carbon tax. Premier Ford has led the fight against the carbon tax and has since been joined by many other provinces, including my former colleague and the leader of Alberta's official opposition, Jason Kenney.

Our government is actively exploring transparency measures that will ensure that every single person in Ontario is informed of how much they're paying in federal carbon tax every time they pay a home heating bill or even every time they fill up their car. It is our intention to let people know just how much money the federal government is taking out of their pockets. Our PC government respects taxpayers and is taking every measure possible to leave more money in the people's pocket.

1400

Furthering that mandate, the Green Energy Act is being repealed to end highly subsidized wind and solar projects that were forced into Ontario communities without proper consultation and the wishes of the citizens residing in those communities. We will be cancelling 758 unnecessary renewable energy contracts, providing \$790 million in savings to electricity ratepayers.

The fall economic report mentions our PC government's promise to respect the consumers and families of Ontario. As mentioned, 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 in their lives, help their children reach their goals and look forward to their retirements.

Families in Ontario deserve a tax break that will help them use their hard-earned income toward things that matter to them the most. Our PC government is introducing a new Low-income Individuals and Families Tax Credit called LIFT. It is one of the most generous tax cuts for low-income workers in a generation. It will benefit 1.1 million workers. The vast majority of low-income workers who earn \$30,000 or less a year will pay no Ontario personal income tax at all. This will let families use their hard-earned dollars where they see fit, like their children's education, their retirement funds, their homes or to start a small business of their own. I hope that members opposite can support this piece of legislation.

Another thing I hope members opposite can support is our Housing Supply Action Plan. It is no secret that the housing market in Ontario is making the goal of owning a house for individuals and families seem like a far-fetched dream. Individuals and families are facing an affordability challenge simply because housing supply has not kept pace with demand. Housing supply has not kept up with strong population growth in Ontario, driving up house prices and rents.

Our government has committed to develop and implement a Housing Supply Action Plan to address barriers that prevent the development of ownership and rental housing supply. We will also reintroduce a rent control exemption that will apply to new rental units in order to increase housing supply across the province. This will help young families be able to live in a home they can call their own. Our government owes it to this generation and future generations to pave a path that leads to success and growth, rather than the one left behind by the previous Liberal government, full of debt and non-enterprising policies.

Our PC government believes in respecting families, and one of the major concerns faced by families in our

province is hallway health care and mental health. Our government is making a historic investment of \$1.9 billion in mental health and addiction services, matching the federal government's commitment. Along with that, we are building 6,000 new long-term-care beds in communities across Ontario. We have another 9,000 new beds in the pipeline which we will be delivering to those communities that are in need the most. The winter season is upon us, and so, in advance of the upcoming flu season, we are currently investing \$90 million to create 1,100 beds in communities across Ontario.

Madam Speaker, it is time that we turn Ontario back into the economic engine that it once was in our country.

I want to thank you for the time and I want to thank all of my colleagues.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Lisa Gretzky): Questions and comments?

Ms. Suze Morrison: I'd like to respond to the member from Milton and thank him for his comments. Specifically, I'd like to speak to his comparison of household budgeting to the fiscal management of an entire province. Here we have a government, on one hand, that is telling all Ontarians that we need to be tightening our belts to be paying down this deficit that we find ourselves in. On the other hand, we have a government that in the same breath is handing out tax credits like they're candy.

We either have an income problem or we have a spending problem, but you can't solve this problem by slashing and burning services that people need—services like health care, education and housing—while simultaneously handing out tax credits. It seems to me that it's only the most vulnerable among us who are being asked by this government to do the belt-tightening, and that same request isn't being made of those of us who are most able to contribute.

I'd also like to speak specifically to some of the things that are in the bill that are being cut, that are going to affect Ontarians, that aren't going to put a single penny back into the provincial coffers, as you say, to help us pay down this deficit. That would be things like rent control. Cutting rent control doesn't put any money back into provincial coffers. All it does is embolden landlords to be able to raise their rents whenever they want on their tenants by however much they want. It's a piece that's in the economic statement that won't help us pay down the deficit as you say, which you seem to be trumpeting as this government's most important goal. This is going to have very serious consequences on ridings like mine in Toronto Centre, where we have a real estate market that is over-inflated by speculators and where we don't have enough housing supply. Axing rent control is going to do nothing to fix that.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Lisa Gretzky): Questions and comments?

Mr. Rick Nicholls: It's a privilege to rise in the House this afternoon. First of all, I want to commend our member from Milton for an excellent piece of debate that you shared with us this afternoon.

When we talk about our fall economic statement and we talk about putting Ontario's fiscal house in order, again

I need to remind this Legislature—but even to the people out watching this, perhaps, on TV—that the previous Liberal government left us with a deficit of over \$15 billion.

The previous member talked about tightening belts. Well, you know what? That's everyone tightening belts, because we cannot continue with a socialistic attitude in how we run this particular province, a great province. We need to restore trust, reliability, accountability to our finances, and we still need to make Ontario, again, more affordable for Ontario families and, of course, businesses as well.

We just heard recently of a large company leaving Ontario, and we suspect there may be more. That's why we're implementing red-tape measures to ensure that we'll make business more affordable, so that people can stay employed, because right now it's not looking healthy for this province. Again, we've only been in power now for roughly five months, but there were 15 years of Liberal government beforehand. They had lots of time to make changes, but they chose not to, as well.

We have to again realize that the government is also providing individuals, families and businesses with significant tax relief, keeping \$2.7 billion in their pockets. Lastly, again, we cancelled \$308 million in planned tax hikes on individuals, families and businesses.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Lisa Gretzky): Questions and comments?

Mr. Percy Hatfield: I'd like to comment on what I've heard this afternoon from my friend from Milton. If I heard him right, he was saying that the government, when they scrapped the Liberal cap-and-trade bill—that it was going to decrease home heating bills. Well, there are two sides to that coin, Speaker. The other side is that they had the GreenON campaign. The plan with cap-and-trade money was delivering to homeowners across this province, the people in this province, an opportunity to make their homes more energy-efficient, be it by improving the windows, the insulation, or whatever it was.

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But when the government said, "We're going to scrap the plan. We're going to kill the GreenOn program," they didn't give enough time for the manufacturers of the windows—I'd go in and get a contract with a supplier. The supplies would be ordered from the manufacturer. But there was such a demand for this—people really wanted to improve their quality of life and improve their energy efficiency—that the manufacturers couldn't keep up.

We knew it was coming. We asked them to extend the deadline. They said, "No. We can't do it, because we're for the people and we've got to scrap this cap-and-trade." Well, being for the people should mean that you extend the deadline so people will be looked after.

It's not only residential, Speaker; they also didn't look after the energy efficiency programs that were in the pipeline for schools, for colleges, for universities and for hospitals. They could have done a whole bunch more.

They're saying "open for business." They threw in the towel today on Oshawa. Instead of standing up and saying,

"We are going to work with this company to try to save the jobs or get a new product line in Oshawa," they're saying no. They're just saying, "We're not going to stand up. We're not going to try to get a new product line. Instead of that, we are going to work on retraining." That is not the answer the people of Ontario want to hear.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Lisa Gretzky): Questions and comments?

Mr. Will Bouma: I'd like to thank the member from Milton for his comments, and also the members for Toronto Centre, Chatham-Kent-Leamington and Windsor-Tecumseh.

The news today about GM: It just goes to show that the situation in Ontario is dire. We know that financially that's also the case. Drastic things have to be done. To take issue with the comments that were just made, that this government is rolling over—is not helpful. The very fact that this is a decision that has been planned by this company for over a year I think just goes to show that there was nothing that could be done. It's just managing what we do with those things.

When we think about our financial situation and we think that even though we've been able, as a government, to knock \$500 million off of our deficit, when I contemplate that we're still loaning every single dollar that we will be paying in interest this year with another \$2 billion besides—think about that. We have a \$14.5-billion structural deficit, and we have to pay \$12.5 billion in interest. That means that every dollar that we're paying in interest on our debt is money that we're loaning—and this when times are relatively good. We have to do that belt-tightening.

We have a real problem, as mentioned by the member from Toronto Centre. We have made life unaffordable for Ontarians, yet at the same time we have spent well beyond our means. This is why I'm so proud of what our government is attempting to do to take care of those who are hurt the most by the situation we are in, seeing that tax relief for 1.1 million Ontarians who are on the low end of the income scale and then at the same time getting our spending under control.

That's why I'm so excited about our fall economic statement. I'm looking forward to seeing its passage here.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Lisa Gretzky): Back to the member for Milton.

Mr. Parm Gill: Thank you, Madam Speaker. I want to thank my colleagues on both sides—the members from Toronto Centre, Chatham-Kent-Leamington, Windsor-Tecumseh and Brantford-Brant—for their comments.

We are all elected here. Ontarians put their trust and sent us here to make the best decisions that are not only in the best interests of the province today but also for future generations.

I can tell you that one of the things I keep hearing in my riding of Milton is that families, parents and small businesses are all concerned about the fact that we're currently approximately \$350 billion in debt. I know that my colleague from Brantford-Brant touched on that, the fact that in terms of just the interest alone, we are paying over

\$1 billion a month in interest. When you break that down, I think it works out to roughly \$1.4 million per hour.

Imagine what we could possibly do with money like that to help Ontarians. Whenever we talk about being responsible for the hard-earned taxpayer dollars paid by taxpayers, it's the governments of the day, such as the previous Liberal government, that are reckless, that have accumulated such an overwhelming huge debt that our future generations are burdened. Even a kid who's born today is born with approximately \$25,000 debt on their shoulders. This isn't how we should project our province. This isn't how we can make our province the economic engine of the country that it used to be. The province of Ontario, unfortunately, under the previous Liberal government policies, has become a have-not province, and unless we bring forward initiatives such as this, it will continue to go in that direction.

Thank you, Madam Speaker. I know I'm out of time. I appreciate the opportunity.

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

Interjections.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Lisa Gretzky): Order, please.

Member for University–Rosedale.

Ms. Jessica Bell: I've heard a lot of concerns today about how we have a huge debt and that this fall economic statement will help us reduce the debt. From my perspective, this fall economic statement hurts people, hurts affordability, hurts transit and it also hurts democracy. I'd like to speak to some schedules in the bill that do absolutely nothing to reduce the debt, and I urge you to vote against them.

The first schedule I'd like to speak about is schedule 36, the plan to end rent control on new builds. We all know we have a housing crisis. RBC just released a report saying that housing affordability has reached its worst level in 28 years, and Toronto is the epicentre of that crisis. People have given up on owning a home, Speaker, and renters are hanging on by their fingertips, terrified of being evicted. When I went door to door, I met many people who were very concerned about what they would do if their landlord evicted them. I met people who said, "I work around the corner, but I give up. I'm moving to Oshawa. I'm moving to somewhere more affordable because I know I'm not going to be to find a safe and affordable place to live in this city anymore."

Your plan, listed here in schedule 36, is to end rent control on new builds, apartments and homes. The argument you give is that this will increase supply and, therefore, reduce rental prices. That's an economic theory. There are many economic theories out there, but what is better than economic theory is reality. Good economists and good scientists look at what is happening in the real world to draw evidence-based conclusions.

We have tried this experiment before. The Harris government eliminated rent control on new builds 21 years ago. We now have a record condo boom. Downtown Toronto is a skyline of cranes, and it has been for years.

We have built 40,000 new rental units in Toronto in the last four years alone. But get this: Only 1,000 of them are affordable. And that's going by the city of Toronto's definition, which actually isn't very affordable because they just use market rent as a definition and not a more responsible definition, which is that a renter should not pay more than 30% of their income on rent. If you use that more responsible definition of "affordable," that number of 1,000 is likely a lot lower.

What this elimination of rent control on new builds does is that it helps big developers and landlords, like the Federation of Rental-Housing Providers of Ontario, who gave the PC Party \$150,000. Shaun Hildebrand, vice-president of the real estate research firm Urbanation, said that 2017 was the strongest year for rent growth that we've ever recorded and that we're in a golden age of landlord profits. But we are in the dark ages of housing affordability.

Any renter who lives in one of these new no-rent-control apartments could be subject to any kind of rent increase the landlord wants. Ask for basic repairs? Rent increase. Ask for the landlord to fix a pest problem because you don't like mice around your dishes? Rent increase. Have children or a pet and the landlord doesn't like it? Rent increase. This is not going to solve the housing crisis. I encourage you to look for better solutions and introduce them in this fall economic statement—like inclusionary zoning, so if we build new builds, a percentage of those apartments or homes is affordable; like fast-tracking missing middle development so we can build two- and three-bedroom townhouses and laneway housing; like investing in co-ops so people can live without the profit incentive hanging over their heads; like putting limits on vacancy decontrol, just like Montreal does. Montreal has a far more affordable housing situation than we do. We can also stop illegal evictions and renovations by fining landlords who break the law. These are better ways to make housing more affordable, not ending rent control on new builds, which is what's in this fall economic statement.

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Now I want to talk a little bit about transit, because the fall economic statement also deals with transit. This fall economic statement, in my view, has very bad things in store for transit riders and commuters.

There's no doubt about it: We've got huge transit problems in our region. A new study just came out by CMHC that shows commute times and commute costs are rising fast all across the region, from Caledon to Markham to Oshawa.

You and I both agree that everyone should be able to get around from A to B quickly and cheaply, so why are you cutting \$1.4 billion from the transportation budget in this fall economic statement? Why can you not confirm that all of the key projects—and some of them you promised during the election campaign and promised that they were going to be built, like the electrification of GO, like \$3 GO fares in the 416 so that people near Pearson airport and Weston and Scarborough and Etobicoke—

Lakeshore can travel quickly and cheaply. How about expanding GO service to Kitchener and Niagara Falls—what’s going to happen with that?—or moving forward on building the Hurontario LRT. It’s not even a controversial project. How about the Finch West LRT, or the Hamilton LRT, or the London BRT, or the Ottawa LRT? You’re not firmly committing to any of them.

There’s nothing in this fall economic statement, nothing at all, that moves forward on doing the single best thing we can do to improve transit in this region, and that is to invest in local, municipal transit agencies so that we can have immediate service improvements and more affordable fares. If you did that in this fall economic statement, it would mean there would be less people stuck at a bus stop in the rain this morning. It would mean there are less breakdowns and delays on the subway. It means that when Google says it’s going to take 40 minutes to get to work, it actually takes 40 minutes to get to work.

When I was working at TTCriders, I met many people who really struggled to get to work and to afford to pay for their fares. I met people like Maria. She’s a worker at Pearson airport. She would sleep in her friend’s car at Pearson airport—she was on \$14 an hour—because her shift at Pearson airport ended at 11 p.m., and then her next shift started at 5 a.m. because she was a baggage handler, and you need to start checking baggage very early to get the 5:30 or 6 a.m. flights out. She would sleep in her friend’s car because Brampton doesn’t provide late-night service to allow her to get home, sleep in her bed and get to work again.

I also met people like Sitharsana. Sitharsana has three Metropasses in her family of five. She has to choose courses that suit her schedule and not what she wants to do because she has to trade the Metropasses between all of her family so they can actually get to where they want to go. Her brother goes to high school. He gets the Metropass during the day, so she can only study courses at night, even if it’s not particularly what she wants to do, because that’s when the Metropass is available. Her family can’t afford to buy a Metropass for everyone so that they can travel freely around our city.

If this fall economic statement included funding to properly fund our transit agencies, then people like Sitharsana and Maria would have a better commute. But you don’t. It’s not in there.

I also want to talk a little bit about Metrolinx. I’m very concerned about the changes in this fall economic statement to provincial transit agency Metrolinx—also something that does nothing to address the debt. I’m not a fan of Metrolinx. The agency is generally secretive. It’s opaque. It makes a lot of planning decisions behind closed doors that are racked with political interference. We saw the then-Minister of Transportation, Steven Del Duca, who used transit planning for his own gain and told Metrolinx to move forward with Kirby, which is the station in his own riding, and Lawrence East, even though Metrolinx had recommended against it because their studies showed it would reduce ridership. But he went ahead with it anyway, and he paid the political price for that.

I also see Metrolinx doing extraordinarily little to help communities that are grappling with the pain of transit expansion—people in the Beaches and St. Lawrence and Davenport who are very upset with Metrolinx, because Metrolinx doesn’t seem interested in listening to their concerns and they don’t seem very interested in dealing with the pain of transit expansion, like increased pollution and increased noise. Meh. Not their problem.

Metrolinx also has a track record of hiding key information and plans from the media and the public. I saw this experience with the Union Pearson Express. The community wanted, and still wants, an electrified mass transit line with stops in their neighbourhoods because that’s what is fair. It’s one of the most heavily populated regions in Canada. But for years we pressured Metrolinx to release the information about its plan with the Union Pearson Express: How much was it going to cost to ride? Where are you going to put the stops? When are you going to electrify it? They kept all of that information behind closed doors. What we got instead was a three-stop, privatized transit system from Pearson to Union, and you had to pay \$27.50 to ride on it. We found out the price of riding the Union Pearson Express a few days before the train was about to open. That kind of secrecy is not acceptable.

What is so scary is that your plan, your government’s plan in this fall economic statement is to make it even more secretive and to make it even less transparent—because how it’s written means that one person, the Minister of Transportation, could override, amend, change, suspend or delete any decision that Metrolinx makes. There’s no requirement to do any public consultation whatsoever—no consultation with municipalities, no consultation with First Nations and no consultation with the public.

Let this be a warning to you: Transit projects are hard to build. They cause disruption to communities and commutes. They cost a lot of money. People are willing to stomach the changes if they know they will benefit eventually, so it’s important that we build the right transit project that help the most number of people. That requires evidence-based transit planning and buy-in. It means making meaningful public consultation a requirement. It means building transit projects for the benefit of everyone, not just for political gain. Maybe it means putting people on the Metrolinx board who have a background in transit planning. What it doesn’t mean is what you’re planning on doing, which is having one person make all the decisions for the entire GTHA and beyond.

I also want to talk a little bit about the changes in the fall economic statement to our elections process—also something that will have nothing to do with alleviating our debt. This fall economic statement wants to do away with the all-party appointment process of the chief elections officer. Now this government wants the right to hire, fire and suspend the Chief Electoral Officer themselves. That’s very scary.

This is what I fear: that the purpose of doing this is so that this government can manipulate our elections to suit their own goals. I fear this has something to do with the Globe and Mail’s report that the elections office is investigating the Progressive Conservative Party of Ontario and

candidates who allegedly used data stolen from the 407 highway to further party nomination campaigns in their own ridings—because why else would you do it?

This is not a good move. This is at a time, worldwide, where Western-style democracy is under threat and where citizens everywhere are losing faith in the electoral process, and we're seeing that with a decline in voter turnout. We see the bad impact of having politicians interfere with elections down south in the United States. We see Republicans gerrymandering ridings to win elections with far less than the popular vote in places from Texas to Ohio. We see Republicans change the voting registration process to unfairly strip thousands and thousands of voters off the electoral rolls for the ridiculous reason that they didn't vote in the last few elections. That's not right, but they did it because they could. What's happening in the US is a consequence—

Mr. Rick Nicholls: Point of order.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Lisa Gretzky): I recognize the member from Chatham-Kent-Leamington on a point of order.

Mr. Rick Nicholls: With all due respect to the member from Rosedale, talking about election campaigns and Republicans and Democrats has absolutely nothing to do with the fall economic statement, which is what we're talking about today. So I would ask that she gets back—

Interjections.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Lisa Gretzky): I thank the member for the point of order. I have been listening, and I believe the member is speaking to the bill.

Back to the member for University-Rosedale.

Ms. Jessica Bell: I'm happy to get back to your point, thank you. That's not right—you agree—but they did it because they could. What's happening in the US is a consequence of allowing elections to be influenced by politicians. That's exactly what you're doing here with this fall economic statement, by allowing the elections officer to be chosen by you. Don't allow it to happen here. Please vote against this clause.

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I also want to talk about schedule 13, which is of deep concern. This schedule eliminates the requirement that a person must verify that the money they give to a candidate is their own money. The whole purpose of this is to stop big business anonymously giving people \$1,000 each to pass on to a candidate. That's the purpose of it. It's to keep our campaign finance rules honest and to make sure we keep dark money out of elections, so we know who is getting what and from whom.

I heard Premier Ford say that they're doing this because it's an administrative headache. I've got something to tell you: It's not an administrative headache to tick a check box when you are donating online. It's just not. I fear that this change is being made because this government wants to give big business and developers permission to quietly give to politicians. I believe that is unethical, and that has nothing to do with your stated purpose to reduce Ontario's debt. Please vote against this schedule.

I also want to talk about schedule 3. This fall economic statement wants to remove the independent appointment process of the Auditor General. Now you want the authority to hire, fire and suspend the Auditor General. I just want to remind you about what the Auditor General's job is: The Auditor General watches over the administration of Ontario's finances to help the Legislature hold the government accountable. The auditor does this by carrying out detailed scrutiny of government spending and then producing annual and special reports that provide MPPs with the information they need to judge how well public resources are being used.

It's the Auditor General's job to keep us honest. It's the Auditor General who issued a report showing that Kathleen Wynne's Liberals presented a 2018 budget that's \$11.7 billion in deficit and not \$6.7 billion. That was a good report for you. I don't agree with all of the Auditor General's reports, but what I do agree with is that she is independent from the government, and that's important so that she can do her job to independently assess us. What good reason do you have to hire and fire your own Auditor General? What good reason do you have? I fear that you're doing this because you don't want your own books to be independently audited or your own work to be independently assessed.

You forget: You don't govern for yourselves. You govern for the people, and the Auditor General is there for the people of Ontario. It's a sign of responsible government to have proper checks and balances like an independently appointed Auditor General. It is a sign of a government that's doing secret backroom deals to want to remove the checks and balances like an independent Auditor General. I ask you: What are you trying to hide? I urge you to reject that schedule.

In conclusion, this fall economic statement is not going to help Ontarians; it's going to hurt them. It's going to make our commutes longer. It's going to make housing more expensive, especially for renters. It's going to hurt democracy and the checks and balances we need to have a responsible and honest government, and I know they're principles that you believe in.

I urge you to use the fall economic statement to make life better for people; to invest in important services like transit, not cut; to make housing more affordable, especially for renters; and to strengthen our democracy and make government more honest.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Lisa Gretzky): Questions and comments?

Mr. Stephen Crawford: Thank you to the member from University-Rosedale for your commentary. I certainly would differ with a lot of what was coming out of your speech relative to what the fall economic statement is.

I listen to Minister Fedeli, and I can tell you, I've been so impressed with his leadership.

This province used to be the engine of Canada. We used to be the number one province in Canada for economic growth and productivity. Unfortunately, under the past 15 years, we have fallen to 10th place. That's a fact. That's not even a debatable issue; it's a fact. We need to reclaim

that position now. We have already started. This has been a government for the people that has moved really quickly.

First thing we did is, obviously, in tackling the debt. We saved \$3.2 billion in program expenses without job cuts, without cuts to services and without tax hikes. I know that the NDP love taxes, but we are not putting in tax hikes. An example, of course, is the OHIP+ program, which was really a vote-getting measure that the Liberals brought in in their dying days to attract millennial voters, which evidently didn't work. What a complete waste of money. Imagine spending money on people when they don't even need the services. Most of the people were covered by private plans. Basically, all this did was put money back in the insurance companies' pockets.

What we are doing is making sure that people are covered well in Ontario with their health, but we're making sure that the companies pay where they can. That's a prime example of just common sense that we've brought to the province.

Secondly is making Ontario open for business and cutting red tape. We have more red tape in this province than any jurisdiction in the world. We've got a deputy minister who is focused strictly on getting rid of those 380,000 regulations we have in this province, which is far, far too many. In the next four years, we'll see 25% of them cut. I'll tell you, I'm excited to be part of a team that's going to get this done.

Applause.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Lisa Gretzky): Questions and comments?

Mr. Michael Mantha: My friend from Bruce–Grey–Owen Sound just told me that applause was for me. I've always had lots of heart for you, my friend.

We just found out that we're going to be sitting here late over the course of the week. Again, I want to give my complaint to this government, because that's my gym time you're taking away from me.

There's a saying that when you don't spend any time in the gym—there's no gain with no pain. I see this government and the changes that they're going in. There's going to be a lot of pain but not many people are going to be gaining here. The only individuals who are going to be gaining are the high-percenters who are going to be gaining here.

The member from University–Rosedale gave a great presentation on a lot of the issues that she sees from a lot of her constituents across her area. I want to put in maybe a little bit of a flavour in regard to people across Algoma–Manitoulin. Rent control eliminations: Yes, we're going to feel that pain.

A lot of her theme that she talked about is hurt. A lot of people are going to feel the hurt over the next four years from this government, particularly with this action that they're doing with Bill 57. We went through this, through the Harris government. The Ford government is going through the same thing.

She brought in great ideas in regard to inclusionary zoning. Why wouldn't we do that? Why wouldn't we look

at making parts of new condos that are going up affordable for individuals?

She talked a lot about transit. She talked about LRT, all-day GO Transit, subways, the whole thing. She made a great presentation.

I want to put in a presentation in regard to northern Ontario. We don't have those available to us. What we do have is roads, and what we do need is plows on those roads, because we need to get to and from our destination. I can't jump on a bus, a subway or any other. I have to jump in my car to get to the destination, and unfortunately, we don't get those plows.

There are other things that she brought up where we're going to feel the hurt. We're going to feel the hurt in democracy. We're going to feel the hurt in housing. We're going to feel the hurt in transit. We're definitely going to feel the hurt in accountability of this government.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Lisa Gretzky): Questions and comments?

Applause.

Mr. Randy Pettapiece: Thank you. I appreciate my caucus's support, Speaker. It's great to have.

I did listen with intensity to the member from University–Rosedale's speech. It's interesting. She did talk about affordable housing and transportation costs. But one thing that I will take issue with is that she did say that the consultation wasn't there. Well, it certainly was. That's very rich, coming from a party that, in past years, didn't consult with us at all when they were supporting the Liberal Party. I talk about the Green Energy Act; that was a sham. But the NDP kept supporting this government, something like 90% of the time, maybe more than that. So talk about consultation—there certainly wasn't, with their party.

People come up to me in my riding and they say, "Keep going. You're doing a great job." Since July, I think this government has proved that we want to move this province forward. Getting rid of Bill 148 is a perfect example. Putting apprenticeships back to 1-to-1—a lot of young folks in my riding say it's a great move, because they couldn't get into the apprenticeship system. This is how we want to move this province ahead.

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When our Premier said that we are for the people, these are two perfect examples of what we're doing for this province and how we're going to make it great again.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Lisa Gretzky): Questions and comments?

Mr. Gilles Bisson: I wish I had more time than two minutes because I wanted to comment on what I think was an excellent presentation by the member.

She pointed out something that I think is really important. If you look at schedule 12—and I would imagine it's the same in the other schedules that deal with officers of the House—we are entrenching what has been the practice here for years, which is that when we hire an officer of the House, a panel is selected with a person representing each of the recognized parties, and there has to be unanimity amongst the parties, the people on that panel, when it

comes to the decision of who gets hired. The reason for that is that these people answer to the assembly, and therefore it's not a government appointment, it's an assembly appointment, and all of the assembly has to be comfortable. So there has to be unanimity when it comes to the hiring.

The point that the member raised is a really good one. Under "Removal or suspension," 3.3, it no longer has to be unanimity of the parties; it's only a decision of the House. I think that's what she was driving at, and that's really dangerous, because what we're saying is that if the government decides that they got a bad report from the Ombudsman or the Chief Electoral Officer or the auditor or the FAO, the Financial Accountability Officer, and they don't like the kinds of reports that are coming out, if I read this legislation correctly—and we're going to have to clarify that as we go through committee—section 3.3 says that the government can, by simple majority, fire, with cause, the auditor.

I've been in labour law for a long time. Proving "with cause," depending on what happened, is a bit of an interpretation both ways. I think what probably is going to be needed here is some sort of amendment to the legislation that says that that only happens in the case where there is unanimity amongst the parties. We went through this with the previous Ombudsman, who was not reappointed. He wasn't even fired; he was not reappointed. We went through a process.

This is dangerous because it takes away from the independence of the officer. If they think they may get fired, they may not do the type of work that they should be doing, holding whatever department they've got to account.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Lisa Gretzky): Back to the member for University–Rosedale.

Ms. Jessica Bell: Thank you very much for your comments, the member for Oakville, the member for Perth–Wellington, the member for Timmins and the member for Algoma–Manitoulin.

One thing that resonated with me when I was hearing you speak, and also earlier, was the need to reduce the debt. I don't disagree with you, but it really does concern me that this government is moving forward with tax cuts to high-income earners, the people who can most afford to pay their fair share so that we can tackle the debt. That's what concerns me.

The member for Perth–Wellington was talking about how he listens to his residents. I'm pleased that you do that. I also listen to mine. I'm not hearing that this government is doing a good job. What I am hearing is that people are very scared. They're scared about this government's inaction on addressing long commutes. They're scared about this government's decision to take away rent control on new builds, which evidence suggests will do absolutely zero to make housing more affordable, especially in the near term. They're also concerned about the reduction in checks and balances in government so that we can have the kind of honest, transparent and fiscally responsible government that we need.

I urge you to look at this fall economic statement and look especially closely at the schedules that really have nothing to do with reducing the debt and a lot more to do with advancing your agenda and helping big business. I really urge you to take another look at them.

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

Mr. Kaleed Rasheed: I have the privilege today of speaking on a very important document tabled by the Minister of Finance, the Honourable Vic Fedeli: Bill 57, Restoring Trust, Transparency and Accountability Act.

Ontario is moving forward with its plan to create fairness and opportunity for people across the province. The measures in the 2018 review will help create greater fairness and opportunity for all by supporting the right conditions for families and businesses to succeed. The province faces significant financial challenges in the years ahead, not least of which is addressing the significant deficit and high levels of debt it inherited from the previous government.

During the election, Madam Speaker, we campaigned on a number of promises, which consist of putting more money back into your pocket, creating and protecting jobs, and restoring accountability and trust. Our government has made a promise to the people of Ontario to bring Ontario's fiscal house into order, and that is what we are doing with the 2018 Ontario Economic Outlook and Fiscal Review.

For 13 out of the last 15 years, the previous government ran a deficit, spending more money than it took in through revenues, which were inflated by several non-recurring or one-time factors in 2017, 2018 and prior years. During the previous government's mandate, provincial net debt more than doubled and net debt to gross domestic product, GDP, grew from 27.5% to 40.8%. As a result, Madam Speaker, interest payments on debt are now the fourth-largest line item in Ontario's budget, after health care, education and social services, threatening to crowd out the government's ability to adequately fund important services people use every day.

Our government is taking action to restore trust, transparency and accountability in Ontario's finances, while making life more affordable for Ontario families and businesses. How did we propose to accomplish this? Soon after taking office, the government established an Independent Financial Commission of Inquiry under the Public Inquiries Act, 2009. The commission was mandated to look into the previous government's accounting practices and provide a baseline on the province's fiscal outlook, with the clear intention of being open and transparent.

The results of the report were staggering. Along with many Ontarians, including myself, it was shocking to see what was derived from the report delivered to the government on August 30 of this year. It truly was a dark day for Ontarians. We had discovered that the government had inherited a deficit of \$15 billion from the previous administration. I know that we have discussed this issue in the House many times, but I am saddened and, most importantly, angry to continuously hear about it. Ontarians

have inherited a deficit of \$15 billion from the previous government.

Restoring trust and accountability in Ontario starts with a clear and transparent reporting of the state of the province's finances. Unlike the previous administration, this government is committed to full transparency in the presentation of key economic and fiscal information. The province's fiscal situation is challenging, but the people of Ontario need access to this important information to fully understand the difficult but necessary choices that lie ahead in restoring fiscal balance and sustainability.

Madam Speaker, I have some good news: Based on the commission's recommendation and the current government's quick action and decision-making, the government for the people is now projecting a deficit of \$14.5 billion for the fiscal year of 2018-19. This is a \$500-million improvement. Our government has reduced the inherited \$15-billion deficit from the previous Liberal government by \$500 million in a matter of weeks.

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Madam Speaker, our government for the people is taking action to restore trust, transparency and accountability in Ontario's finances, with the intention of making life more affordable for Ontario families and businesses. The province has saved \$3.2 billion in program expenses by finding efficiencies—without a single job cut, tax hike or reduction in front-line services. We have cancelled \$308 million in planned tax hikes on individuals, families and businesses by the previous government in their 2018 budget. Not only did the government for the people save billions to Ontario taxpayers, it too has helped in reducing our deficit.

Sound measures are now in place to provide significant tax relief, putting more money back into the pockets of the residents of Ontario, Ontario families and businesses. The estimated savings is \$2.7 billion back into Ontario residents' and business' coffers.

Also, this government is providing meaningful tax relief to people and businesses. This tax relief has reduced revenue to the government by almost \$2.7 billion through eliminating tax increases planned or imposed by the previous government, including the cancellation of the cap-and-trade carbon tax. This loss of revenue supports other measures that are being put into place to strengthen our economic competitiveness. Even with this revenue loss, our government has reduced the inherited \$15-billion deficit by \$500 million in a matter of 11 weeks. The surprising aspect is that we were able to do it without a tax hike or reduction in front-line services. The government is committed to returning the province to a balanced budget on a modest, reasonable and pragmatic timetable.

Ontario's economy has struggled over the past 15 years under the previous government, with our economy sliding downwards compared to other provinces. If the current situation proceeds, Ontarians also would have to face a number of challenges that have the potential to adversely affect its growth in the short term and decrease economic prospects and prosperity in the long run.

These challenges include regulatory barriers for businesses, a lack of tax competitiveness, as well as uncertainty related to global trade tensions. In addition, many workers find themselves not suitably trained for today's job market, which hinders income growth and contributes to higher household debt. Under our government's economic plan, Ontario's economy is expected to grow during the 2018-21 period.

The question is, how is our economy expected to grow? Our plan is simple. It was one of our five promises made to the people of Ontario when we were elected, and we are delivering on it now. By creating and protecting jobs, the government has a plan on delivering on this promise.

Our government will reduce red tape by 25% by 2022 to help lower costs and make it easier to start and grow a business right here in Ontario. By showing to the world that Ontario is open for business, by demonstrating that Ontario is a fertile land where businesses are empowered to grow, we will attract more businesses. It's simple math: Prosperous businesses put more money back into their businesses, and employees benefit. This growth is exponential. Successful businesses attract more businesses, which will raise employment, resulting in higher incomes, improved business investment and gains in exports.

Let me give you a prime example, Madam Speaker. Just this weekend, I had spoken to a few small business owners in my riding of Mississauga East-Cooksville. Their main appreciation was the fact that with the minimum wage currently on a pause instead of rising to \$15 an hour, and the sound decisions within the fall economic budget, the shock of uncertainty is no longer there. Small businesses are now able to forecast and spend, knowing that they have a chance to be successful.

Investments through capital expenditures and the continuous hiring of employees demonstrate to them that Ontario is truly open for business.

It even gets better. With the elimination of red tape, and going head-on against the federal government carbon tax, a new level of confidence is emerging among small business owners. A vision is now being developed and the acquisition of new technologies is now front and centre, where over the past 15 years there was absolutely very little innovation to speak about. I should know, myself, as I worked in a leading technology firm that was very much handcuffed by the previous government's policies.

Let us remember one thing: The government for the people is not only for businesses. We stand for and serve all residents of Ontario—everyone, Madam Speaker, everyone.

Our government is introducing one of the most generous tax cuts for low-income workers in a generation, the new Low-income Individuals and Families Tax Credit, also called LIFT. The vast majority of those earning less than \$30,000 per year will pay no personal tax—zero—at all when they file their 2019 tax returns. The low-income taxpayers earning just over \$30,000 will also receive graduated income relief. This measure will provide tax relief to 1.1 million people in Ontario. This is another promise made, promise kept by our government.

This government is looking out for the best interests of all Ontarians. The government for the people recognizes the huge issue that exists with affordable housing supply. Housing supply has not kept up with the strong population growth in Ontario, driving up house prices and rents. Our government is taking steps to expand the supply of homes and rental properties by developing a new Housing Supply Action Plan. Our approach will balance the need to quickly and responsibly increase housing supply while protecting rent control for existing tenants.

Our government respects taxpayers and is leaving more money in your pocket. That's why we cancelled the cap-and-trade carbon tax, saving the average family \$260 a year on gas, home heating and other costs. Our government will use every tool at our disposal to fight the federally imposed carbon tax, including new transparency measures. Ontario families and businesses will know exactly how much money the federal government is taking out of their pockets at the gas pump and on their home heating bills. Prosperity must reach every corner of our province, and that includes northern Ontario.

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Our government will address the delays in northern Ontario's Ring of Fire by working directly with First Nations partners. We will encourage revenue resource sharing agreements between northern and Indigenous communities and mining, forestry and aggregate companies, to share the benefits of resource development.

We will review the Far North Act and improve the safety and reliability of the Trans-Canada Highway, to encourage economic growth.

Our government will work with private gas distributors to expand natural gas networks to over 70 communities and 30,000 households.

We will invest in broadband infrastructure to improve Internet connectivity so these communities and businesses can fully participate in the digital economy.

We will also establish a special mining working group to focus on speeding up regulatory approvals and attracting major new investments.

In addition to keeping with our campaign promise in cutting hospital wait times, we are investing in supporting mental health. Our government is making a historic investment of \$1.9 billion in mental health and addictions services, matching the federal government's commitment.

We are building an additional 1,100 beds and spaces in hospitals and communities, including over 640 new beds to prepare for the flu season.

To end hallway health care, we are creating 6,000 new long-term-care beds, the first wave of more than 15,000 beds to be built over the next five years.

In the national interest, Ontario is relinquishing its veto power over national pipeline projects.

The above measures build on our government's recent action to repeal burdensome red tape imposed by the previous government through Bill 148.

We will also address the skilled trades' labour shortage by modernizing our apprenticeship system and winding

down the Ontario College of Trades, a source of unnecessary complexity for those working in the skilled trades.

By eliminating the WSIB liability, our government has also cut premiums for employers, saving them \$1.45 billion in 2019.

Madam Speaker, Ontario is in trouble. Ontario now has the highest subnational debt of any jurisdiction in the world. Additionally, there are daily interest charges that accumulate on the debt. In 2018-19, the government is forecasting \$12.5 billion in interest payments to service the debt, or almost \$900 this year alone for every man, woman and child in Ontario.

We are going to get this right by putting into action a plan that serves all segments of Ontario. The government is having conversations with the people of Ontario by hosting consultations across the province that will inform the 2019 budget.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Lisa Gretzky): Questions and comments?

Mr. Faisal Hassan: I would like to comment that the member for Mississauga East–Cooksville has shown that the priority of the government is to balance the budget on the backs of the most vulnerable among us.

He talked about tax relief, but it only gives to those wealthiest few among us. It's giving tax relief of \$275 million for them.

He says he's making life more affordable. He's actually making life unaffordable, because he's now introducing rent control exempting new landlords, and the community—like my community in York South–Weston—are unable to afford housing. For example, a one bedroom now costs \$1,850. That means it will continue to rise. Therefore, life is unaffordable.

He also says that he's going to give tax relief for the most vulnerable people, but they also know that two thirds of the minimum wage earners don't pay provincial income tax because they don't earn enough money to be given relief. It appears that this government is attacking the most vulnerable among us rather than providing incentives and opportunities by raising the minimum wage.

Freezing the minimum wage causes them to actually have less income of \$2,000. That means it's not affordable—the most important things such as food and such as my colleague also mentioned about transport and transit.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Lisa Gretzky): Questions and comments?

Interjections.

Ms. Jane McKenna: I'm going to capitalize on that energy right now with my colleagues in here. Are you not excited about the future with this government? Let's hear it.

Interjections.

Ms. Jane McKenna: We're creating an environment for businesses to thrive. I just had a round table and we asked about 26 people to come to it. We ended up with about 37 who asked to come. They were absolutely thrilled that their voices are being heard again, and they have a position to be able to thrive again in Ontario.

Every day when I get up with the Premier and the ministers in this caucus—it's an honour to be here every day, Madam Speaker. The people of our province want us to be the engine of Ontario again, and by goodness we are sure on our way.

The NDP is the loyal opposition. Your job is to keep the government to account. When you were here as the third party, you did everything but that. Now all you're doing to this government is fearmongering. The facts are the facts. The people who voted for you wanted the province to be turned around. We've asked you numerous times, over and over again, to come and help us to make this province as good as it's going to be, as we started on this track about six months ago—to turn the province around again. We need to do what's right for the people of Ontario. I say this over and over again: When you work alone, you make progress; when you work together, you make history. We are going to be, as we are right now, in the making of history. We're thrilled about that. We'd love your input because you have wonderful things to say that will turn this province around. It is encouraging at times when we're in here to hear some of the things that you bring forward to us, and we look forward to hearing much more of that.

The province is depending on us, the 124 people in here, to turn this province around. We're definitely on our way and I'm excited for that. We're energized. The people of Ontario are energized as well.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Lisa Gretzky): Questions and comments?

Mr. Jeff Burch: I listened to my friend from Mississauga East–Cooksville talking about that this government is a government for the people. It's getting tiring hearing that while day by day we see them put legislation forward that is only for certain people. It's for wealthy people. And what happens—

Interjections.

Mr. Jeff Burch: We've seen it. Facts are facts, Speaker. They come out with surtax changes that benefit the wealthy—they don't benefit people at the low end of the scale; they benefit the wealthy—and then they limit the only way that people have to make money, which is their wages.

They freeze minimum wages, which they've always done when they're in government. They did it for nine years and caused this problem the last time they were in government. We're three or four dollars behind what a living wage is. In most places in this province, a living wage is somewhere around \$17 or \$18 an hour, and now we're frozen again at \$14 an hour. We're not talking about exorbitant wages. We're talking about a living wage, where over 70% of the money is used for things like shelter, food and child care, the basic things to take care of your family.

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It's not a partisan comment to say that if someone gets up every day and goes to work, they should make enough to live on. I know a lot of Conservatives who agree with that statement. It's actually a conservative statement that

if you get up in the morning, you go to work and you work hard, you should make enough to provide for your family. You should make enough to live on. You should make enough to feed your kids. You should make enough to put a roof over your head.

But the people on that side of the House don't believe that. They believe in giving tax breaks to their rich friends, while people at the low end of the income scale—squalor. They throw bread crumbs out to 1.1 million people, they say. Those are people who are going to be living in poverty.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Lisa Gretzky): Questions and comments?

Mr. Jeremy Roberts: Listening to the comments from my colleague from Mississauga East–Cooksville, I was struck by the fact that we are 100% in sync here about the importance of getting our finances back in order.

Madam Speaker, when I ran in this election, a lot of people said to me, "What in the world is a 25-year-old doing running for office?" I said to them, "I'm a young person. I'm a millennial. The challenges that we are facing with this growing debt are going to be coming to our next generation." It's going to be on my generation, my children, my grandchildren.

In my campaign office, I had the debt clock mounted up on the wall. Every day when I'd come in, I'd see that debt clock and it was growing bigger and bigger: \$343 billion, \$344 billion. Then I'd think about what that means for each individual Ontarian.

When I was born, the share of public debt per person was around \$3,700, which is a lot of money, but you know what? It's a manageable amount of money. You can wrap your head around that. Today, the share of public debt per person—every single child born today has \$24,000 worth of debt on their head.

We need to start tackling this problem. Every single challenge that we deal with over the next couple of years, be it improving our health care, improving social services, making Ontario open for business—all of it starts with making sure that our public finances are in order, so that our programs can be sustainable and so that people and businesses can have faith that Ontario is a jurisdiction that they can believe in and trust to grow their business.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Lisa Gretzky): Back to the member from Mississauga East–Cooksville for a wrap-up.

Mr. Kaleed Rasheed: Thank you to all my colleagues who commented on my speech, from both sides of the aisle.

Our government for the people understands that respect for the taxpayers is our top priority. The people of Ontario work hard for their money, and the government must use those hard-earned dollars wisely.

To apply this understanding to action, this government will pursue a fiscal plan for the province that puts the taxpayers at the centre of all government decision-making. Our plan is outlined in A Plan for the People, Ontario's economic outlook and fiscal review.

This new approach to public finances will serve three important objectives: (1) restore fiscal balance; (2) reduce

the debt burden; and (3) strengthen accountability and transparency.

In order to meet these commitments, the government has indicated that it will not raise taxes, and will focus on making life affordable for the people of Ontario. It will also ensure value for money, and sustainable outcomes for wider public programs that serve seniors, children, families and vulnerable individuals in our society.

I'm going to end my comments with this line: This is for the people of Ontario. In this government, we will plan smarter, we will spend smarter and we will work smarter to achieve these goals. Promises made, promises kept.

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

Mr. Percy Hatfield: It's always a pleasure to stand in this House on behalf of the good people in my riding of Windsor–Tecumseh. I think it's appropriate that this bill is numbered 57. With all due respect to my friend from Chatham–Kent–Leamington—I used to live in Leamington, Speaker—it makes me think of Heinz 57, I must say. That was a brilliant marketing campaign from about 120 years ago to promote 57 different varieties of pickles. Its meaning has evolved over time and it has morphed into something now that when we hear “Heinz 57”—we could compare it to a dog or whatever—it just means that we're referring to something that doesn't have a pedigree. It's just something that has been tossed together; it's all mixed up in such a way as to become a mongrel of sorts, something without a true pedigree and something we, on this side of the House, certainly wouldn't enter into a competition for “best of show,” this Bill 57. Now, it may be a Conservative bill, Speaker, but it won't be winning any blue ribbons and it won't be winning any red ribbons, because if we're to be judging what is before us on the order paper this afternoon, it's not going to be winning much at all.

Speaker, I went back into Hansard and checked the minister's opening statements on this Heinz bill. Right off the top, he spoke about reinventing the way government operates and how the content within this mongrel of a bill will strengthen accountability and transparency.

By the government's actions—and we are judged by our actions, Speaker—I don't see how we can strengthen transparency and accountability when we get rid of the Environmental Commissioner, the French-language commissioner and the person responsible for at-risk children and youth. That's what this Heinz 57 of a bill does. I fail to understand by any stretch of the imagination how diminishing the work of highly respected, independent watchdogs—these are people whose mandate it is, on behalf of the taxpayers in this province, to keep an eye on government policies and government actions, to make sure that the government is living up to the standards expected of them. Instead, we have a new government flexing its muscle, saying to its critics, or to those whose job it is to be critical if during the course of carrying out their mandated duties they find fault with government policies or actions—what the government is saying is, “Your work is not valued. It's not valued by us, the government,

because we have a feeling you will be vocal and critical of the work we are about to undertake.”

Shame on the government, any government that says one thing and does another. Don't puff up your chest and strut around proclaiming you will be accountable and transparent if your actions demonstrate otherwise.

The francophone community in Ontario is outraged with this bill and this government's decisions. The environmental community right across our great province is outraged with this bill and this government's decisions. The people who care about at-risk children and youth from one end of Ontario to another are outraged because of this bill and the damage it will inflict on some of our most vulnerable young citizens.

Yes, as the minister said off the top in his opening statement when he introduced this Heinz 57 bill here in the chamber, the Ford administration is reinventing the way government operates—and, Speaker, not in a good way, not in an honourable fashion. Not by any stretch of the imagination is this a bill that appreciates the contribution of our francophone residents, that respects the history of our French-speaking neighbours and values the contributions they have made and continue to make in our society. They've just been kicked in the pants.

Speaker, you represent Sandwich Town, part of Windsor West. In 1797, that area was settled. It's the oldest, most historically significant settlement in Ontario. Initially it was the First Nations that came there: the Ojibway, the Odawa, the Potawatomi. In 1747, it was the first Jesuit mission in Upper Canada, established in Sandwich. A French colonial farming settlement formed right after that.

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The French influence in Windsor is still strong right to this day, if you think of the street names that we have, be it Ouellette, Pillette, St. Louis, Lauzon—the list goes on and on. But, Speaker, our francophone residents' history isn't being respected by this bill. The values and contributions they have made and continue to make are not being respected by the government with this Heinz of a bill, this Bill 57.

The people who care about clean drinking water, shoreline protection, clean air and reforestation—they're not being respected in this bill either.

Speaker, one of the ministers in the government of Premier Doug Ford refers on a regular basis to the Liberal “decade and a half of darkness.” It's his way of saying what a disaster the Liberals have been to this province, with so many expensive scandals and bad policies. Well, it's tough to disagree with some of what he has to say, but I get the sense that the early decisions we've seen so far by this Conservative government will turn into an even darker four years under Premier Doug Ford.

Speaker, Minister Fedeli, in introducing this Bill 57—the Heinz bill—said the PC plan is respecting families. Nothing could be further from the truth. It's not respecting francophone families—there's no respect shown in this bill to them—and the poor families or troubled families with children labelled by experts as “at risk.” There's no respect in this mongrel of a bill for them.

And, Speaker, let's talk about families with someone supported by payments from the Workplace Safety and Insurance Board—which we've heard people bragging about this afternoon, that they're cutting the premiums. These people wonder how the government's gift to employers, a \$1.5-billion cut to WSIB premiums, will affect those who need it most in the future.

Of course, the government has a nice gift in the Heinz bill for corporations—the big-money people, the friends of the Conservatives. Their corporate taxes, as we've just heard, will be cut. They won't have to pay as much of their fair share of the total tax bill in Ontario. These friends of the Premier will get a break, a healthy one, a 1% break from 11.5% down to 10.5%. The value of that, as we've heard in this chamber time and time again, is twice that of the size of the break being given to the lowest wage earners in Ontario—twice as much for the rich than for the poorest people.

The minister sometimes, when he struts around over there, reminds me of a little red rooster, Speaker, when he struts his stuff over there, bellowing that one and a half million people won't have to pay a basic income tax. Well, there may be 1.1 million people earning below the threshold of which the minister speaks, but they're not all at the top of that heap. Some of them are in the middle, some of them are at the bottom within that group, that cluster of 1.5 million people among the poorest earning below \$30,000 in Ontario. Those that aren't at the top—those further down—don't pay any income tax now. So they make a headline saying, "We're going to be standing up for 1.5 million people." A lot of those people, two thirds of them, aren't paying any income tax now.

The government makes a big deal out of saying Legion halls across Ontario won't be paying any more property taxes—which is a good thing. It's a good thing. Except they don't pay any taxes now and they haven't for years. They don't pay any in Windsor. I checked with the president of AMO, Jamie McGarvey, the mayor of Owen Sound. I said, "Jamie, does your Legion hall pay any property taxes?" He said, "No, we don't pay property taxes on our Legion halls." I said, "We don't do it in Windsor either, but the Premier is out there saying Legion halls won't have to pay property tax."

Interjection.

Mr. Percy Hatfield: Thank you for that. Yes, thank you for respecting our veterans. I think it's great that we are part of a government that respects our veterans, as we do on all sides of the House. I know there's going to be a monument coming in for those who were sacrificed or who fought in Afghanistan. I say that's one step in the right direction. Let's bring in a Silver Cross or a Memorial Cross licence plate to honour those who lost a son, a spouse or a daughter in that war as well. They have the Silver Cross, or Memorial Cross, licence plates now in British Columbia and Saskatchewan. Why not bring them here in Ontario as part of the celebration when we put up a new monument to those who fought in Afghanistan?

Let me just say, Speaker, that you can grab the headlines—and I know they've been grabbing quite a few

headlines talking about apprentices. Minister Fedeli spoke about apprentices when he spoke in the House introducing this bill, and we've heard several Conservative members this afternoon talk about apprentices. I think that was back in Bill 47, Speaker.

I want to borrow a phrase or two from Charles Dickens at this point. If you read Dickens, we all remember, "It was the best of times, it was the worst of times, it was the age of wisdom, it was the age of foolishness"—that's right, Speaker—written nearly 160 years ago, the opening lines from the beginning of his *A Tale of Two Cities*. Or, in this case, Bill 57, perhaps we could say it's "a tale of two political parties": "It was the spring of hope, it was the winter of despair."

Working people in Ontario, the working poor, the blue-collar and pink-collar worker, the lowest-wage earners, the middle class, had a spring of hope, but under Bill 57 are facing the winter of despair. There are just so many aspects of this bill that the haves in society are winning and the have-nots are losing. For the sake of my argument, Speaker, I see this, as the Conservatives have introduced the bill, as the friends of the haves, and the official opposition as the friends of the have-nots, and why does this bill pick on the have-nots?

A friend of ours is president of Unifor Local 444 in Windsor. He's a skilled tradesman. He held a news conference not that long ago. Dave Cassidy was quoted in the Windsor Star as saying the provincial government's plan to revamp the apprenticeship program for skilled trades and scrap the Ontario College of Trades is simply an attack on workers. "We're going back in time," he said, back to the days and policies of former Conservative Premier Mike Harris, because Harris "wanted to downgrade skilled trades."

Here's a quote that resonated with me from that news conference. Dave Cassidy said, "They want to bring in unskilled labour. Cheap labour is not skilled labour and skilled labour is not cheap."

Dave Cassidy was joined at that news conference by Karl Lovett. As you know, Speaker, he's the business manager of the IBEW, International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers, Local 773. Karl was worried about the watering down of training or oversight, and fears it will undermine public safety. The bill changes the ratio of journeymen to apprentices to 1 to 1, from 2 to 1, 3 to 1 or more.

According to the article written by Mary Caton in the Windsor Star, "Lovett said ratios must be set according to 'the risk of harm and public safety.'" Expanding on that, "He said an apprentice hairdresser who inadvertently applies the wrong dye colour to a customer is not the same as 'an untrained electrical apprentice who makes a catastrophic mistake. Someone would die.'" We've just seen an electrician killed on the job in Leamington within this month, Speaker.

We here in this chamber, as politicians, are not skilled tradespeople, although a few of our members did earn a good living earlier in their lives working in the trades. But only a few of us. Dave Cassidy is a skilled tradesman, as

well as the elected president of Unifor Local 444, and he noted that the curriculum and testing standards used by the Ontario College of Trades were established by people who earned their living working in the skilled trades. And he's worried that government Bill 47, or this one, Bill 57, were designed by bureaucrats and government officials who are saying what the trades are going to look like. He asked a question—a good question, I believe. Dave Cassidy says, “Nurses represent nurses, teachers represent teachers, why can't trades represent trades?” The fear here that members working in the skilled trades in this province have with these bills is that we're turning back the clock, back to the days of a shop hiring just a few trained journeymen and a few apprentices, but having the freedom to hire another, say, 20 or more so-called helpers who are paid much less. These helpers are unskilled and untrained, and, as Dave Cassidy was quoted as saying, “Cheap labour is not skilled labour and skilled labour is not cheap.”

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Dave Cassidy's world is a world where a team of workers on a job site have their individual jobs to do and duties to perform, but when an unskilled, untrained helper screws up, someone else could get hurt—seriously hurt. We don't need to be taking those kinds of reckless chances, and we don't need to be tampering with the skilled trades ratios.

I also noticed in the bill that part of it talks about changing the way Ontario Place is set up: getting rid of the board; having it down to one person; not having somebody from the CNE on the board. For years, there has been speculation that the Premier has wanted a casino on the Ontario Place property. I don't know if that's true or not, but there has been speculation in the media, back in the days when he was a city councillor in Toronto for four years.

As you know, Speaker, we have a wonderful casino in Windsor. It's a good employer. It's good in the community; it pays back to the community. So I'm not speaking for or against a casino on the Ontario Place property.

But I'm saying to the government, who wants to be open and transparent, who wants to be for the people, and who wants to consult with the people—as we're seeing the so-called biggest consultation process in the history of Ontario, when we talk about the education bill that they're tampering with—they say they're going to consult with the people. If that's the case, I know that previously in Ontario, communities were asked if they wanted a casino on a certain site. We hear the members stand up all the time and say, “They put these wind towers here and they didn't give the municipality, they didn't give the people, a chance to say yea or nay.”

Last term, the member from Oxford and I were standing up on a fairly regular basis talking about the plans that may or may not happen to a municipal dump going into Oxford county. We said the people should have a say on whether that dump was allowed to go there.

So I'm saying the people in Toronto should have a say. They should be consulted in a referendum or whatever—by some means—on whether they agree or disagree if, indeed, at some point the Premier or the government says,

“We're going to put a casino at Ontario Place.” I'm not saying it's a good idea or a bad idea, but I think the people deserve to be consulted on it.

A government that believes in consultation, that says they believe in being open and transparent, surely can't ram something down there that the people are opposed to. That just isn't the way government works. You can't stand up one day and say, “Look what you did to wind towers. Look what you did to the municipalities saying they didn't want them, and you put them there anyway”—if you're going to do that, if you're going to make a level playing field on wind turbines, then you should do the same thing if you're talking about casinos.

I have a little bit of time left, and I just want to say that I've had some letters from a couple of school boards in my riding.

The Greater Essex County District School Board has sent letters talking about removing the subsidy provided in recent years to support educators in acquiring their mathematics additional qualification.

We hear a lot—they say they want to improve math, and teachers should take math. There was a plan that said if you upgrade your skills as a teacher, you get paid for those courses. In our area, we had approximately 120 educators who had taken the time to engage in mathematics learning and acquired their Mathematics Additional Qualification. A subsidy is quite simply an important statement of support, and a valuable investment in the Ontario education system. It turns out that the government is thinking about taking that away.

They also sent us a letter about cancelling the summer curriculum writing projects to support Indigenous education. They want that taken back. It allowed people to understand that curriculum.

I also have a letter from the Windsor-Essex Catholic District School Board that talks about determining the funding formula of the school boards. It's supposed to be reviewed and updated every five years, and they want it done. The census data is now 10 years old. They want it updated and they want to:

“—conduct a comprehensive external review of the funding formula, including all grant components and benchmarks, as recommended by the education equity funding task force in 2002;

“—regularly review the formula and update all benchmarks to reflect the province's changing demographics and socio-economic conditions.”

The percentage of students with special education needs now apparently is over 20%, per their report.

So there's a lot that isn't in the bill and a lot of stuff in the bill that should be improved, should be enhanced, and it should get to committee. The government should listen to the opposition and improve the bill before it gets passed.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Lisa Gretzky): Questions and comments?

Mr. Rudy Cuzzetto: I'm proud to rise here and speak today on supporting Bill 57, the Restoring Trust, Transparency and Accountability Act, introduced by the Minister of Finance. In particular, I'd like to focus on the

proposed Low-income Individuals and Families Tax Credit, also known as LIFT, which was spoken about by the member from Windsor–Tecumseh.

When the previous government passed Bill 148, tens of thousands of Ontarians lost their jobs. Research by economist and professor Anindya Sen at the University of Waterloo showed that young people and immigrants were hardest hit. Rapid “increases to the minimum wage,” he wrote, “have a high likelihood of leading to more unemployed immigrants as well as more poverty.”

Fortunately, there are other, more effective, ways to help low-income workers. That’s what our Minister of Finance has done with the LIFT Credit in Bill 57. To help low-income workers and families, our Minister of Finance has proposed one of the most generous low-income tax credits in a generation. It will put more money in the pockets of over one million people across Ontario, and every single dollar of this credit is targeted to low-income workers. One in six Ontario taxpayers will qualify for the LIFT Credit starting on January 1. That will give \$850 per person, or \$1,700 per couple. A single person who works full-time at minimum wage will pay no personal income tax, just as we promised. It’s another promise made and another promise kept.

The LIFT Credit will make a real difference in the day-to-day lives of low-income families in Mississauga–Lakeshore and across Ontario. I’m proud to support this new LIFT Credit, and I urge all members to join me in supporting Bill 57.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Lisa Gretzky): Questions and comments?

Miss Monique Taylor: I’d like to congratulate the member from Windsor–Tecumseh for his 10 minutes on this bill.

Mr. Percy Hatfield: Twenty minutes, actually.

Miss Monique Taylor: Twenty minutes; sorry. I only caught the last 10 minutes, which was—that’s the problem, that we find everything so rushed around here that we don’t know from one minute to the next what actually is happening.

Later this evening, I will be speaking my 10 minutes on this bill and I’ll be focusing very heavily on the Provincial Advocate for Children and Youth. I heard very clearly from the member, several times, that there wasn’t enough consultation that happened when speaking to different stakeholders, and their concerns that consultation hasn’t happened. I can say very clearly that consultation did not happen when it came to cutting the office of the provincial advocate. The provincial advocate himself had not heard from the government that his office was going to be cut, that it was going to be eliminated as an independent oversight mechanism of the Ontario Legislature. The Ombudsman wasn’t consulted that he was going to be given extra powers in very many forms when it came to children’s services, when it came to French-language services, and when it comes to our Environmental Commissioner’s office being cut.

These are major oversight bodies that are being cut from the Legislature, that are independent voices to help

people in this House govern and to make good decisions, because they are independent, because they are not appointed, because they don’t come with a clear direction or mandate. They’re set there to be able to listen to the people, to talk about systemic issues that they find. All of these offices are going to be cut, with no consultation from this government at all.

Congratulations to the member on his 20 minutes. I look forward to further debate this afternoon.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Lisa Gretzky): Questions and comments?

Mr. Vijay Thanigasalam: The fall economic update finally gives the people of Ontario faith in the fiscal responsibility of the Ontario government. The previous government has saddled this province with an almost unbearable deficit, adding to the overall debt we carry. This situation is simply untenable and cannot be allowed to continue.

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I am proud to say that this government is taking swift action to address this problem. In a short few months, thanks to the hard work of the Minister of Finance and the President of the Treasury Board, we have managed to reduce the deficit and start finding efficiencies. These efficiencies were not found through job cuts in the public sector, but rather through a common sense and innovative approach. We have saved \$3.2 billion in program expenses, we have cancelled \$308 million in planned tax hikes and we have reduced the deficit by \$500 million in just a few short weeks.

We are providing relief to low-income workers through the new LIFT program, in which we will see the vast majority of those earning \$30,000 or less per year paying no personal income taxes to the province. The fall economic statement certainly has shown that with an innovative approach focused on finding efficiencies, this government is able to deliver on its promises. I look forward to continuing to see the progress that this government will make in clawing the province out of the fiscal hole that the previous Liberal government has left us in.

Madam Speaker, this measure will provide tax relief to 1.1 million people in Ontario. This is another promise made and promise kept by our government.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Lisa Gretzky): Questions and comments?

Ms. Peggy Sattler: I’d like to congratulate my colleague the member for Windsor–Tecumseh for his remarks on the government’s fall economic statement and the legislation that accompanies it. He covered a number of schedules that are included in the bill in his remarks, but there are a couple of things that I wanted to highlight in my two minutes.

The first is the LIFT Credit. We’ve heard members from the government side talk about that credit, but Ontarians understand what’s going on here. They are not buying what the government is selling. Last week, we had a debate about the legislation to cancel the \$15 minimum wage. Ontarians know—low-income people know—that

they would have been much better off getting that \$1-an-hour raise by going to \$15 an hour than they are by getting this credit.

I think it's telling—it really shows where the priorities of this government are—that the government is spending twice as much to give a tax break to the wealthiest among us compared to the relatively small amount of money that they are spending on this new credit. There's no question that the lowest-income people in this province would have had more money in their pocket at the end of the day if they had received that \$15 minimum wage. This credit is only going to benefit people who pay taxes, and among the lowest-income there are only a third who fall into that low-income tax bracket who actually pay taxes. It is an illusory benefit that is not going to address the real problems that low-income people face.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Lisa Gretzky): Back to the member from Windsor–Tecumseh.

Mr. Percy Hatfield: Speaker, let me correct my record: I said that the president of AMO is the mayor of Owen Sound; I meant Parry Sound. I think I was looking at the member from Bruce–Grey–Owen Sound at the time.

Anyway, I want to thank those who have commented on my 20 minutes. The member from Mississauga–Lakeshore, I know, is a former Unifor member at a Ford plant. He must be feeling the pain of his brothers and sisters in Oshawa these days when the Premier throws in the towel and says, “Oh, we'll get you some retraining,” as opposed to, “We're going to stand and fight for those jobs. We're going to get a new product in there.” That's what I would have expected as a former member of Unifor now sitting in the Conservative caucus.

The member from Hamilton Mountain, from a steel town: Steel is a big part of the automotive industry. She has seen what cutbacks in Hamilton have done. People have stood up and fought for jobs and fought for pensions, as opposed to throwing in the towel.

The member from Scarborough–Rouge Park: I remember hearing his maiden speech, his inaugural address, when he talked about how he first got here, working hard as a blue-collar worker to pull himself up. If he's standing up for the working people today, he should be standing up for a \$15 minimum wage, because you're going to get more money, a couple of thousand dollars more in your pocket, from the \$15 minimum wage than you are from a supposed tax break that two thirds of that 1.1 million don't get anyway because they don't earn enough to pay that tax. My friend from London West made that point over and over again.

You talk about the LIFT program. It's a good program, but don't say that it's going to help out 1.1 million; the numbers aren't there. The people at the top of the heap will get a tax break; the people a little bit further down and at the bottom don't pay any taxes now. It's the same with the Legion halls: They don't pay property taxes now. It looks good in a headline but doesn't do much for anybody else.

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

Ms. Mitzie Hunter: It's a pleasure to rise in the Legislature, as always, to speak to the item before us today, Bill 57. As I was listening to some of the speakers talk about the state of Ontario's economy, I wondered what Ontario have they lived in, or do they live in, and what Ontario they are experiencing.

The government's fall economic statement, on page 35, paints a very gloomy picture of Ontario and of Ontario's collective achievements over the last number of years. I think it's quite disappointing that the government is seeking to really rewrite the facts and the history. What it starts off by saying is that Ontario's economy underperformed compared to its provincial peers in 12 of the past 14 years under the previous government, completely ignoring the fact that Ontario has led the G7 countries in economic growth and that Ontario has experienced the lowest unemployment rate in two decades.

I recently heard the federal Minister of Finance say that Canada is experiencing the lowest unemployment rate in 40 years. So I think that record is continuing to head in the right direction; yet, in Ontario, we have a government that does not celebrate Ontario's achievements—or acknowledge them, for that matter.

In the FAO's economic and budget outlook that was tabled last spring, there's actually a really interesting provincial comparison that looks at the total revenue and the revenue per capita, at total expenditures and the expenditures per capita, based on Ontario's GDP. Ontario actually spends the lowest, on a per capita basis, on government services than any other jurisdiction in Canada. This is something that has been worked at in terms of our public service, together with government, to make sure that the investments that we're making in Ontario's people are having real results.

If you look at the revenues per capita, it's the second-lowest revenues per capita. It really begs the question, in terms of the government's continuous direction of lowering revenues, lowering what the treasury has available to invest in programs and services for the benefit of the people of Ontario: What's motivating them? Why is it that they're doing this when we already have the second-lowest revenue intake per capita and the lowest program spending per capita in this country?

The opportunity to speak on Bill 57: While it's an opportunity that I really value because I'm speaking on behalf of my constituents in Scarborough–Guildwood and on behalf of my colleagues in the Liberal caucus, it's not easy to talk about the disappointment that I see in the members opposite who stand every morning during question period to cheer without thought about how their government is hurting people who are vulnerable in this province.

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I think about the people in my constituency. You're cheering because you've put a halt on the raising of the minimum wage. Well, many of them are working multiple jobs to make ends meet. If you look at the Daily Bread Food Bank's recent report on the rise of food bank usage, 89% of that is in Scarborough. It hits my community square on.

Some of these changes—they hurt. I say that quite honestly because I know that it's affecting very vulnerable people. The trend that we're seeing here, especially in Bill 57, is to establish more reasons to cut, additional contexts for making more cuts, keeping that pressure to reduce spending, despite the fact that we have the lowest per capita spending on government expenditures of any other jurisdiction in this country. This is targeting the most vulnerable in our society.

Mr. Speaker, what I want to talk about today, as it relates to the fall economic statement and the update, is that these changes are having a profound effect on the people of this province—changes like removing the absolute authority of this body, this legislative body, over the independent officers, to select, to set the terms of their employment and their replacements, should that be needed. That's always been something that has been respected and regarded. Having just come out of a situation of majority government, of course independent officers do provide a sharp critique of the government and the actions of government, but it's always in the spirit of what is best for Ontarians and how we collectively make this province work and benefit everyone. To remove that absolute independence and authority, and to put decisions in the hands of the government to make those on their own, is a mistake.

If we look at the three officers that were in the line of sight immediately for this government—the child advocate, the Environmental Commissioner and, of course, the French-language commissioner—we can see that this government is indeed short-sighted. At a Toronto and Region Conservation Authority event recently, I had an opportunity to have dinner with the Environmental Commissioner and a number of her staff, and to really see the passion and the commitment for the work that they do. I took a copy of the Environmental Bill of Rights. These are things that we should all share in common in this province: the protection of our environment for the future of this province.

There are so many important aspects in what the commissioner does and the work she performs. It wasn't always glowing praise from the Environmental Commissioner under our previous Liberal government—not at all. In fact, there were many instances when that sharp criticism moved our government to take important actions, to improve our protections and how we make decisions that affect the environment. The fact that her portfolio is being removed and that independence and that sole focus of that team—yes, some of the functions will be under the Auditor General, but the Auditor General has a very broad mandate. Much of the current mandate of the Auditor General is to actually look back at what government actions have resulted in, whereas the Environmental Commissioner's focus is to also look forward. This is indeed short-sighted and not really being mindful of the effects of climate change and what we need to be doing.

Today, I was at the University of Toronto, Madam Speaker—nice to see you have returned—giving a lecture to political science students. In the questions that arose,

one of the questions was around GM's decision to pull out its operations from Oshawa. One of the reasons that was cited was the carbon tax. In response to that question, I answered it very clearly to the student. I said that our government, our Liberal government, did not implement a carbon tax in this province. We actually implemented a system that was market-based and crafted with the input of business, including the auto sector. In fact, it was a market system that was linked to California, linked to Quebec, and with Ontario, that worked together with business and the market to recognize that we have a collective responsibility of reducing greenhouse gas emissions, and that there is a price to pay for polluting. That's really the basics of the system.

This current Conservative government was very hasty in ripping that system out, cancelling it and doing away with it. But it was so hasty that they don't have a new system. They don't have a new plan of their own to recognize that there is a cost to pollution—and to have a plan in place to do that. When a company now says that there is the threat of a carbon tax, that uncertainty was created by the current Conservative government and how hastily they removed the cap-and-trade system without having another plan in place. I think that's unfortunate, but it's very typical of the chaotic way in which this government is managing things. Now the result is that we have a major auto manufacturer that is citing those issues as one of the reasons that they are pulling out a major operation in this province.

I have to say that when I saw the government's response to what they are going to do to fight for Ontario jobs and to protect Ontario workers—and, more importantly, to create new opportunities for the future—it was disappointing, because their only response was, "We're going to use our training system." We have a fabulous training and employment system in this province that supports workers in transition. Having been the former Minister of Advanced Education and Skills Development, I am well aware that we have that system in place. But our economy, our communities, our families and the workers in Ontario deserve more than that.

They deserve a government that is going to be thoughtful about what is next. How do we support Ontario's economy with a plan that thinks about innovation and thinks about what is next? What comes next in the future? I have yet to hear that from this current government when it comes to the situation with respect to the auto sector and the GM decision.

It really begs the question: Where are they spending their time? Are they spending their time putting up posters and slogans? Or are they spending their time really sitting down and talking to some of those decision-makers and really setting out an economic plan that Ontarians can see is going to lead to a productive and worthwhile future?

When you think about the growth in our economy over the last decade, you can see that the investments that were made by the previous Liberal government are supporting a growing province, are supporting the economic growth in our province. Whether those are investments in educa-

tion at the elementary and secondary levels or the investments in the post-secondary levels, those investments are creating economic opportunities that we benefit from.

I do want to also touch on some of the other points that may not have been talked about quite as much but really do affect how people will live and work in this province. For instance, the recent removal of rent control on new rental units: This is an issue that affects my riding greatly. Yes, we are keeping the caps on older buildings, but what we have to be concerned about is how the removal of rent control will affect the cost of rental units overall, and the pressure that will put on the availability of units in a market that is already very tight for rental units. I believe it's less than 1% in Toronto. This is going to create even more pressure to access affordable housing in this city. Who does this benefit? Who does this favour? Does this benefit the renter and the people who are seeking access to those units, or does this benefit the developer? I have to question the decision.

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What about the historical context of rent control and the fact that, previously, we did not have rent control on new units? That did not stimulate the growth of more affordable housing in the marketplace. What is needed is a policy, a strategy for affordable housing—a strategy that creates a balance of supportive and social housing with market-driven housing and all types of housing that is needed, and inclusionary zoning, so that you take available land and you're making the most of that land based on its permitted usage. All of that is important but not talked about by this government. Instead, during the campaign what Premier Ford had said was, "Let the market decide." That's where he stands. He believes that the market should decide. Well, oftentimes, vulnerable people are at the expense of the market deciding. That, too, is unfortunate.

I also want to just mention the caution around our crown assets. The NDP actually just raised the alarm around the sale of the Hearn site. Prime waterfront location—yes, it's on brownfield land, but the fact is, a unilateral decision was made in secret. No other bids brought in at all, just a single discussion, and that land has disappeared.

What's next? Ontario Place? Is that going to just be traded away or put to uses, like Ferris wheels and casinos, that perhaps are not the highest use of that particular piece of property, our waterfront property that should be, really, held in trust for all Ontarians, regardless of where they live, to come and to enjoy—another caution for this government.

In my last few minutes, I want to mention the cancelling of the university campuses. When we talk about the need to create an economy in Ontario that is thriving and prosperous and, really, to build on the growth that Ontario has seen, and the leading growth that we have seen in the last decade, how do we do that? We have to invest in education at all levels, from the early years through to elementary and secondary, and into post-secondary education.

The fact that this government has cancelled three university campuses that were set to expand in areas like cybersecurity—that was the Brampton campus's focus—or in science, technology, engineering, arts and math—STEAM-focused work that the other sites were planning to do—is really short-sighted. It just really shows that they don't have that vision for an economic future that's based on innovation, that's based on technology.

The French-language university and how that university was really designed to be the centre of francophonie and the culture of francophonie in Ontario and to bring collaborative partnerships together—very, very short-sighted and shows that this government really has no plan for Ontario's economy.

Let's close by talking about those who are most vulnerable in our province. In my riding, Bee and Theresa came to see me, to talk about what they hope to see in the government's changes to social assistance. I have to say that I haven't seen that vision or compassion come forward from this government. The minister announced, last Thursday, very little detail on what the plan is. But what is clear: People who have disabilities are going to find it harder to access social supports from this government, a government that is already limiting the opportunities for those who are earning the least by limiting the expansion of the minimum wage.

Madam Speaker, this fall economic statement lacks transparency. It lacks details. It lacks a real plan and a vision for the economic future of this province and is taking Ontario decades back in a number of key areas. I believe that the government should listen to the opposition and to members of the community who are coming forward and should take the time, slow down, and strengthen the economic plan for this province.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Lisa Gretzky): Questions and comments?

Mr. Parm Gill: I want to thank the member from Scarborough—Guildwood for her speech, but I was taken aback a bit, I must say, to hear the lecturing coming from the Liberals. They were in power for 15 years, and let's be honest: Life under the Liberals had become very, very difficult, which we heard loud and clear during the campaign. There's no secret about that.

The member mentioned a few different items. It's difficult for me to capture everything in two minutes, but when it comes to the province's revenue being the second-lowest in terms of intake based on per capita and the lowest per capita spending in terms of government services and so forth—if they ever thought about: Why is that revenue so low? When you're trying to kill small businesses with an unbelievable amount of red tape and regulations and literally trying to buy votes leading up to an election campaign—

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Lisa Gretzky): I'm going to ask the member to withdraw.

Mr. Parm Gill: Withdraw.

There were a lot of empty promises, Madam Speaker, made leading up to the election campaign. I can tell you,

in my riding of Milton, the member who was a minister at the time was there literally three weeks before the campaign started to make an announcement on a university which had been coming for 10 years before but never actually arrived—never actually serious. In terms of the expansion on the 401 along the Milton corridor, there were lots of photo ops leading up to the campaign, but it took them 15 years just to get there to make an announcement. It's a little bit disingenuous to stand there and try to lecture the government—

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Lisa Gretzky): I'm going to ask the member to withdraw again.

Mr. Parm Gill: Withdraw.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Lisa Gretzky): Questions and comments?

Mr. Jamie West: It's always interesting when I rise here to speak and find out I'm agreeing with Conservatives and Liberals. Any time they talk about which government is worse, I agree with both of them: that they both are not very good.

It's interesting: The member from Scarborough—Guildwood brought a lot of good concerns and complaints. Some of them align with New Democrats, and one of them was privatization. I think it comes from more of a substantial and solid base when New Democrats talk about not privatizing public resources, especially considering that Hydro One was probably linked very strongly to the downfall of that government.

But the Conservatives are no different when they talk about these weird ideas that they're going to remove rent control and that's going to give us a lower rent cost; or they're going to dissolve the mandate of the French-language services commissioner and that's going to give us better French language and French culture; or that they're going to freeze minimum wage at \$14 and that will create better-paying jobs, for some reason, somehow.

And then this thing about the provincial tax, where, if you're a low-income earner, you're not going to pay provincial tax, and that's going to be better than the \$2,000 that that minimum wage raise would have put into your pockets. It's sort of a fantasy and, "We hope this is going to happen." I think they should change the border signs to "hoping for business" instead of "open for business," because it doesn't make sense to me.

The problem with the tax is specifically, when you look at it, that you still have to pay taxes. Even if you're not paying provincially, you still have to pay federally. A concern that you have with low-income earners is that if they don't pay tax, and they don't file for the federal tax, they're not eligible for those federal incentives that are geared to help low-income earners.

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The other part about the tax is that most low-income earners don't qualify for tax. They don't pay anything anyway. So it's literally "thanks for nothing" when they offer things like this, because for a lot of people, it's a formality to do their taxes, but they make so little money that they don't have any taxes to pay at the end anyway.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Lisa Gretzky): Questions and comments?

Mr. Billy Pang: Every time I share my speeches they say, "Don't speak too long," so I want to share my debate in a song.

Sung to the tune of Take Me Home, Country Roads.

Almost heaven, Ontario...

Government for the people...

Promise made, promise kept...

Cutting red tape...

Cleaning up the mess...

Bill 57, a bill that's down to earth.

Our PC government is a down-to-earth government. Why I say that is because the PC government is dealing with a more than \$300-billion debt and a \$15-billion deficit that the opposition and the Liberals never mentioned. Sounds like the debt and deficit were never there. Sounds like their argument comes from the moon.

But we were elected to clean up the mess. This is what we call a down-to-earth government. The people elected a PC government to deliver PC promises, not NDP or Liberal promises.

So, what is the PC government delivering? We are putting Ontario's fiscal house in order. We are lowering the individual and family income tax. We are working on housing supply action and cutting down the carbon tax and keeping carbon tax transparency.

Last week, when I went through a gas station and when I looked at 94.9 cents per litre—wow. This is what our government is working on.

Bill 57, to me, is a masterpiece for Ontario.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Lisa Gretzky): Questions and comments?

Mr. Sol Mamakwa: I remember getting a message from the north about \$3 per litre for gas, so I don't know about 94 cents.

I want to speak about the Provincial Advocate for Children and Youth Act and the changes that are made. One of the things I've seen there is that it does not cover children who are outside the CAS. Also, not only that, but it does not cover other youth who are seeking mental health services or special needs.

Sometimes we forget that the provision of access to developmental services or mental health services for children and adolescents is a system that, up in the north, is very minimal at best and non-existent at worst.

There is such a high need for mental health services for children and youth in the north. I remember that in the calendar year of 2017, in the fly-in communities, we had 37 suicides in our territory. When you actually do the math, a high percentage of them were very young people. The youngest that I know was around 11 years old.

I think the government has to realize the impact that it has on this. I hope we start to look at change for the betterment of our youth.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Lisa Gretzky): Back to the member from Scarborough–Guildwood.

Ms. Mitzie Hunter: I want to thank all members from all sides for their comments.

But I can't help but go to the PC crooner, because the member from Markham–Unionville has to remember that the people of this province, once they cast their ballot and elect a government, expect the government to govern for all the people. It's not just for the portion of the population—which is not 40%; if you think about all of the eligible voters, it's far less than that—who elected you.

In the consideration of that, you have to not only think about yourselves, rewarding your pals, doing side deals, selling off crown assets. That's not really why people elected you.

Actually, the responsibility is for all the people in this province, even those who did not vote for you—and there are more, actually, who did not than who did, in terms of eligible voters—

Interjections.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Lisa Gretzky): Order.

Ms. Mitzie Hunter: In terms of eligible voters, right? Think about that as you make your decisions.

When we talk about the economic future of the province, it's not about the past all the time, pointing fingers at the past. It's your watch now. It is about what your decisions are, and how they are going to impact Ontario's growth and Ontario's prosperity. You can't cut your way out of that. At some point, you have to begin making the investments that the people in this province need and deserve.

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

Ms. Goldie Ghamari: I would like to start off, first of all, by taking the opportunity to applaud the Minister of Finance for introducing this very important bill.

Applause.

Ms. Goldie Ghamari: Thank you. Praise be to all my colleagues who have spoken to this matter today.

A little over a week ago, on November 15, our government released its first fall fiscal update. When our government was elected on June 7, we were given a mandate by the people of Ontario to restore trust between the government and Ontarians. We promised to put more money in the pockets of the hard-working people of Ontario.

After having reviewed Bill 57 myself—I've got my little sticky notes in there as well—I am proud to say that Bill 57 delivers on all that we have promised. It's a plan to make life more affordable to residents all across Ontario, while at the same time addressing the province's fiscal challenges. Promises made, promises kept.

Madam Speaker, before diving into the details of this plan, it's important to keep in mind the fiscal mess that our government inherited from the previous Liberal government.

The line-by-line audit conducted by the Independent Financial Commission of Inquiry revealed that the previous Liberal government left Ontario with a \$15-billion

deficit. Supported and abetted by the New Democratic Party of this province, the previous Liberal government left Ontario with a net debt of more than one third of a trillion dollars—\$347 billion in 2018 and 2019.

The unprecedented and irresponsible fiscal policy of the Liberal government has left us with a budget wherein the fourth-largest line item is interest payments, coming after only health care, education and social services.

The larger the interest payments that a government is required to make, the less funding there is available for vital public programs. The burden of this debt ultimately falls not only on the shoulders of all Ontarians, but also on those who have yet to be born.

Fifteen years of reckless spending and mismanagement by the previous Liberal government has left our province extremely vulnerable to the next economic downturn. This type of thinking produces crippling debt that, when left unchecked, would devastate hospitals, schools and our social safety net.

The Financial Accountability Officer, an authority on this matter, said that this deficit and this debt are not sustainable for the people of Ontario. The fact of the matter is that the NDP, with a 97% voting record that supported the Liberal Party's reckless tax-and-spend policies, were part of the problem. That is why the people of Ontario overwhelmingly voted to ensure that a PC government would come up with the solution.

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And what's worse, the previous government took every action imaginable to shield the magnitude of their spending problem. First, they attempted to mask their structural deficit by using one-time revenues. Then they used off-book accounting to make the deficit appear to be lower than it actually was. Lastly, when those attempts to deceive the public did not work, they made a conscious decision to run billions of dollars in deficits with no credible plan to balance the budget. This is the legacy left by the previous Liberal government.

Considering this record, I think that we owe the Auditor General and the Independent Financial Commission of Inquiry a tremendous debt of gratitude for ensuring these abuses were brought to the public spotlight. In the same vein, we should also congratulate the members of the Select Committee on Financial Transparency for their hard work towards ensuring that these kinds of abuses are not seen in this province ever again.

It is due to the previous government's record of deception and abuse of trust that one of our government's top priorities has been to restore trust in government and its finances. We are approaching Ontario's finances like the majority of individuals and families approach their household budgets. We are committed to living within our means, paying down our debts and making every single dollar count. We believe that not only is it a fiscal imperative to balance the budget to pay down Ontario's debts, it is a moral imperative as well. We owe it to the next generation to protect their public services and to ensure that they have proper funding down the road. That is why

our government took immediate action to mitigate our inherited deficit.

In the fiscal update, our government committed to reducing the debt, restoring fiscal balance and strengthening accountability and transparency measures. Discretionary spending on things like meals and travel have been significantly reduced in public service. We focused on finding inefficiencies such as getting rid of outdated land lines and fax machines and switching to cellphones and email because, after all, it is the current year.

On the election trail, we promised to clean up the mess at Hydro One. The naysayers said it couldn't be done. Once again, the verdict is clear. Promises made, promises kept.

The era where family hydro bills rose dramatically while corporate insiders pocketed millions has finally come to an end. We have reined in the extravagant compensation packages provided to executives of Hydro One and are in the process of conducting a comprehensive review of all government agencies. To this end, our government has already uncovered a savings of \$3.7 billion by finding efficiencies, all without losing a single job or experiencing a reduction in front-line services. We have been able to do this while providing individuals, families and businesses with \$2.7 billion in tax relief. This has led to the 2018-19 deficit having been reduced by \$500 million in a matter of weeks, and we are just getting started.

Let me be clear, Madam Speaker: We are taking a balanced approach. We are taking a reasonable approach. We will continue to transform and modernize government to allow it to operate and provide services more efficiently and carve out a path to a balanced budget.

As part of our continued commitment to making life more affordable for families and consumers, our government has introduced one of the most generous tax credits for low-income individuals in a generation: the Low-Income Individuals and Families Tax Credit, also known as LIFT.

Mr. Rick Nicholls: Lift them up.

Ms. Goldie Ghamari: Lift them up.

Starting with the 2019 tax return, individuals earning \$30,000 or less will not pay a single penny in provincial income tax. In addition to this, those earning just over \$30,000 will be seeking graduated tax relief as well. That means more money left in the pockets of those who have earned it.

Our government is working hard day in and day out trying to save people money. This is why we cancelled the regressive and ineffective cap-and-trade carbon tax, saving families roughly \$260 a year. I want to recognize the Minister of the Environment, Conservation and Parks for his leadership on this file. The results have been clear: Home heating bills are down, gas prices are down and life is more affordable.

However, this government's stand against the carbon tax will not end there. We will continue to join forces with political allies across the country, such as Saskatchewan Premier Scott Moe, UCP leader and future Premier of Alberta Jason Kenney, Manitoba Premier Brian Pallister

and the next Prime Minister of Canada, Andrew Scheer, and use every tool at our disposal to fight the federally imposed carbon tax. One of these new tools is new transparency measures relating to gas and home heating bills, which will now show a separate line item depicting exactly how much the carbon tax is costing you.

Under the leadership of the Minister of Energy, Northern Development and Mines, the Green Energy Act is being repealed. No longer will Liberal cronies benefit through highly subsidized wind and solar projects being forced on local communities. Cancelling 758 unnecessary contracts will provide \$790 million in savings to electricity ratepayers. No government should make life less affordable for families and consumers.

Our government respects consumers. That is why we brought back buck-a-beer and stopped the three-cent-a-litre beer tax hike, once again leaving more money in the pockets of consumers. This government will also be moving forward in allowing the LCBO, the Beer Store and other eligible retailers to sell alcohol from 9 a.m. to 11 p.m. seven days a week. Our government for the people will also be opening a public consultation process to move forward with the expansion of beer and wine sales to even more grocery stores as well as corner stores and big box stores.

Mr. Randy Pettapiece: Put one in Monkton.

Ms. Goldie Ghamari: We'll try to put one in Monkton.

Madam Speaker, our government for the people has declared that 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 will lead by example to further the national interest by unilaterally relinquishing our veto over new pipeline construction within our borders. Now is the time to work together as a nation in order to get these desperately needed pipelines built.

Our government promised to put an end to hallway health care. In this instance, I am once again happy to report, promises made, promises kept. We're in the process of building 6,000 new long-term-care beds in communities all across Ontario, with another 9,000 new beds in the pipeline, which will be delivered to those communities that need them the most. In advance of flu season, we will also be investing \$90 million in order to create 1,100 beds in communities across Ontario. That's an additional \$90 million on top of what was already promised.

This government is also putting together a new housing supply action plan to address the housing crisis. The root of this crisis is that housing supply is not keeping up with population growth, thus causing demand to exceed supply, driving up home prices and rents. In order to combat this crisis, then, we need to build more affordable quality homes. That is why, starting on November 15, our government began adopting a balanced approach. We will incentivize developers to build more rental housing by exempting new units from rent control while at the same time protecting rent control for tenants of existing units so that they can continue to rent affordable homes. What we have here, again, is a case of promises made and promises kept.

This government remains steadfast in its commitment to create and protect jobs all across Ontario—another one of our core commitments to the people. To this end, we are cutting job-killing red tape by 25% by the year 2022 and we're reducing costs for businesses. Madam Speaker, Ontario is officially open for business.

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We have also stopped the planned \$308 million in tax hikes by the previous Liberal government, saving small businesses in Ontario up to \$40,000 a year. We will not be mirroring the federal Liberal government's attack on small business owners. We are going to ensure that more young people can pursue careers in skilled trades by modernizing the province's apprenticeship system.

Our government is also unwinding the Ontario College of Trades as it is a burdensome layer of regulations for skilled tradespeople that adds an unnecessary source of complexity. My father, who is an electrician, sends his personal best to the government for getting rid of the Ontario College of Trades. You also get my personal thanks for not having to listen to this over the dinner table anymore.

Together, we are building an Ontario where prosperity touches every corner, an Ontario where anyone can start a business, grow that business, and create jobs in the process. That is how we are going to make Ontario the economic engine of Canada once again.

I have only mentioned a few of the many initiatives that our government for the people is implementing in order to make life more affordable and to bring prosperity and hope back to the province. That being said, the road ahead of us is not an easy one. The current state of Ontario's finances is of significant concern, and the fiscal hole left to us by the previous Liberal government's reckless spending and mismanagement is deep. Difficult decisions will have to be made. Everyone across the province will have to make sacrifices without exception. It will require the wholesale transformation of government and relentless fiscal discipline.

However, there is also an opportunity to embrace reform and transform how the government serves the people. The path forward is clear and that is why it is so important that we maintain our resolve and our discipline so that we may ultimately restore our books to balance. We don't owe it only to current Ontarians, Madam Speaker, but also to those who have not yet been born. We must tighten our own belts, with the knowledge that it will provide this generation and future ones with the secure, prosperous future they deserve.

Madam Speaker, before I finish I just wanted to reiterate some of the key talking points about Bill 57 that was released by the government on November 23. On November 23, the Premier announced three new policy directions that Ontario's government for the people will adopt in recognition of the significant and ongoing contributions of Franco-Ontarians and francophones to Ontario over the past 400 years. Ontario's government for the people will propose amendments to Bill 57 to create the position of French Language Services Commissioner

under the auspices of the office of Ombudsman, to maintain independence in conducting investigations and, as a part of that, make recommendations to improve the provision of French-language services and encourage compliance with the French Language Services Act.

It will be recommended to the Lieutenant Governor that the current Office of Francophone Affairs become the Ministry of Francophone Affairs. I'm proud to say that this morning we introduced our new Minister of Francophone Affairs, the Honourable Caroline Mulroney. In this new role, Minister Mulroney will be empowered to advocate for Franco-Ontarians and the delivery of French-language services.

Furthermore, the Office of the Premier will hire a senior policy adviser responsible for francophone affairs. Now, Madam Speaker, *je ne suis pas francophile, mais je suis allée à l'école d'immersion et je peux parler français. Je pense que c'est vraiment important to respect and to acknowledge our significant and diverse French culture here in Ontario. That is why, even though my parents do not speak a word of French, they put my sister and me in French immersion: because they recognized the importance of being bilingual. For that, I am thankful to them. I look forward to practising my French. I'm also very pleased with this announcement.*

More than that, this shows that we truly are a government for the people. Just because we introduced legislation doesn't mean that we're not amenable to changing it. We're here to listen. We are here to serve. Our Premier showed true leadership, because when he heard from the people of Ontario, he decided to take action and make sure that everyone is respected and that everyone's needs are taken care of. That includes Franco-Ontarians and francophones in Ontario. I'm so proud—*je suis tellement fière*—to be a part of the government and this party.

Madam Speaker, in closing, I'd just like to say that, together, we can secure the future of our public services and build a prosperous Ontario. This government will never lose sight of who we are fighting for. Ours is a government of the people, by the people and for the people. I'd like to thank the minister for proposing this bill and introducing it here today. It is a tremendous honour not only to listen to all of my colleagues, but to have an opportunity to speak for it as well and to share the thoughts and concerns not only of myself, but of the people of Carleton.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Lisa Gretzky): Questions and comments?

Mr. Kevin Yarde: With all due respect, Ontarians deserve better. That is why we, as the NDP, believe that everyone who works in Ontario should be able to afford and build a decent life, and we will continue to fight for it.

The member from Markham–Stouffville said a little bit earlier that the NDP is fearmongering and that the PCs will continue to cut, and that is something which we have been seeing. Well, it is not fearmongering. As a matter of fact, it is fact. These cuts will do nothing more to reduce the debt.

All I'm hearing from the Conservatives here is that we have no money. We have no money for mental health

services, no money for health care, no money for overdose sites, no money for children in poverty, no money for the police, no money for firefighters, no money to hire more corrections officers, no money to fix our schools, no money for universities in English or in French. There's no money for affordable housing. There's no money for funding health care for the elderly. There's no money for northern First Nations communities. There's no money to clean up the mercury contamination in Grassy Narrows. There's no money to protect our auto sector. There's no money for seniors struggling to pay for their medications. There's no money for Hurontario LRT passengers. There's no money for transportation in northern Ontario. There's no money for widening Highway 3 in south-western Ontario. But we do have money for lawyers and our political insiders.

Bill 57 is wrong, and we'll continue to fight against it.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Lisa Gretzky): Questions and comments?

Mr. Kaleed Rasheed: Thank you to my colleague for having a conversation on the bill. I agree with her, actually. My wife and I are trying our best so that our children also learn French. I mean, it's an official language, so we want them to be bilingual.

Coming to the point from my respected colleague from the other side, Brampton North, about money, money, money, the Ontario government is taking our responsibility of being the custodian of Ontario's financial budget very seriously. The government is taking action to restore trust, transparency and accountability in Ontario's finances while making life more affordable for Ontario families and businesses. Not only has the government for the people saved billions to Ontario taxpayers, but it has helped reduce our deficit. The province has saved \$3.2 billion in program expenses by finding efficiencies without a single job cut, tax hike or reduction in front-line services.

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Ontarians' jobs and financial health matter to us. We are committed to returning the province to a balanced budget on a modest, reasonable and, most importantly, pragmatic timetable. As I said earlier as well, and to my friend from Brampton North, this government will plan smarter, spend smarter and work smarter—

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Lisa Gretzky): Thank you. Questions and comments?

M^{me} France Gélinas: It was interesting listening to the member talk about the French Language Services Commissioner, whose office will be no more, as well as the French university that we have worked for for 40 years that will be no more.

Last Friday night at 5:30, the Premier announced a few steps back because the francophone population said loud and clear that they are not going to accept this. I stand with the francophone population in saying it is proof that you do not understand the francophone population of Ontario by saying that you could put a similar office under the auspices of the Ombudsman and expect it to have the same

effect on French-language services. It will not, it is not acceptable, and it has to be an independent office.

You will remember, Speaker, that I brought two private member's bills to make the French-language commissioner, who used to report to a minister, an officer of this Legislature. Why did we want that? First, to make sure that he would continue to have a budget, because now we all know his budget is \$2.9 million for everybody to see, but also because we wanted to make sure that he would gain the respect necessary to be able to work with the different offices of the different ministries to improve their French-language offerings.

So expect 41 communities to have rallies this weekend against this.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Lisa Gretzky): Questions and comments?

Mrs. Belinda Karahalios: It is my honour, as always, to speak in the House today. We are speaking about Bill 57. The member from Brampton North spoke, and he talked about fearmongering. My response is, please show me the facts. He's saying there's no money for this, no money for that. I would encourage you to look to your left at the independent members, because it is due to their actions over the last 15 years that we have no money. In fact, we have negative money. We don't even have "no money." We don't have two dimes to rub together.

I have a son who's two and a half years old. He's very squishy; he's very cute.

Hon. Lisa MacLeod: Squishy?

Mrs. Belinda Karahalios: Yes, squishy. I'm going to try to teach him financial responsibility. For example, carrying debt is not wise. Most people carry mortgages of a couple of hundred thousand dollars. That's understandable. But something like a \$15-billion deficit that our province is currently carrying and the more than \$320 billion that we have in debt—those are not wise decisions, and that is causing our economy to suffer.

Mr. Rick Nicholls: What is the NDP plan?

Mrs. Belinda Karahalios: I'm not sure what their plan is, Mr. Nicholls, but I would love to see the plan. That's the thing. It's easy to sit in the opposition benches and criticize. Where are the solutions? We cannot raise taxes. People are suffering. We need to help them. If we can create an environment where jobs can prosper, more people can have jobs and more people can pay taxes, which means more money for programs. That is how we get the economy moving, not through adding increased taxation. That doesn't help anybody.

The member from Scarborough–Guildwood mentioned that there are a lot of people who didn't vote for us. My last note I want to say before my time runs out is, yes, a lot of people didn't vote for us. In Cambridge, we have 87,000-plus electors, but I am responsible for over 100,000 people. I don't care if you voted for me or not, because I work for you. That is what I want people to remember every single day.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Lisa Gretzky): Back to the member from Carleton.

Ms. Goldie Ghamari: Je voudrais remercier les députés de Brampton North, Mississauga East–Cooksville, Nickel Belt et Cambridge pour leurs commentaires.

At the end of the day, the French Language Services Commissioner's role and responsibilities will still be there, and the people of Ontario will still be served. All of this is going to be under the Ombudsman. In fact, under his eye is where all this is going to be taken care of.

With respect to the member from Brampton North and his comments about no money, he's right; there is no money. That's the problem. There is no money, because there has been 15 years of unchecked financial irresponsibility and 15 years of promises being made with no money to back them up—and, not only that, the member opposite is from a party that has a 97% track record of supporting these irresponsible financial policies. When he says that there's no money, I agree. There is no money. That's why we're in this mess in the first place.

We have to stop trying to buy people's votes with fake promises, with money that we don't have, and instead provide a responsible outcome. We have a responsibility to be honest with people. Would you rather someone say that there's no money and be honest, or would you rather someone say, "Oh, we'll figure something out"? The reality is that it doesn't work that way.

In order to make sure that there is more money, we need to make sure that we're paying off our interest. We need to make sure that interest isn't the fourth-biggest spending item on our agenda. To the members, I say: There's no money; you're right. Let's work together to come to a solution.

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

Mr. Wayne Gates: It's always a pleasure to rise in the House and talk about Bill 57.

But I'm going to start talking about how hard it was for me to stand up today and even talk for 20 minutes in this House. As hard as it is for me, can you imagine what's going on in Oshawa today? When those workers went into that plant, some of them didn't know they were going to be told that the plant was closing. Can you imagine going into that? And here's what happened: They were hugging each other, they were crying, and they were saying to each other, "What are we going to do?" Some have worked there 25 to 30 years. Some have worked there seven or eight, raised their family and bought a mortgage. Having said all that, it's tough for me to rise and talk about the 2,500 jobs that might be lost in Oshawa today.

I want to say to the leadership at Unifor Local 222 that anything they need from the NDP and myself, we will be there for them. I give you that commitment.

But here's what bothered me today. I didn't have a question today, but I listened. I'm very good at listening—not bad at talking either, but I'm a good listener. But this was the reaction by the Premier of Ontario. Now, think about this. I want the PCs to listen. This is your leader saying this: "They're gone; they're done." That's what Ford said on the GM Oshawa plant closing today. Think

about that. Do you know what the workers wanted to hear from your leader? They wanted to hear him say it's wrong what General Motors is doing. How are they closing a plant in Canada when we have the highest productivity, the highest quality and the best safety record?

When you talk about "open for business," let's take a look at what else we have to our advantage. Do you know what our advantage is, anybody? PCs, you can help me on this, because it's your leader who said they were gone. Do you know what our advantage is? We have a low dollar. For the first time in almost 30 years, our dollar is about where it should be: somewhere between 78 cents and 84 cents. That should be an advantage, if General Motors is seriously looking at trying to make a profit.

1650

Oh, and speaking about a profit: Did General Motors make a profit in the last year? I'm asking my PC friends. I know they're not paying attention to me because they've been told not to. Put your hand up. Did they make a profit? Do you know? Do you know what? They made \$3 billion—that's with a B—in profit, and they're closing the Oshawa facility. That's what your leader said: "They're gone. Move on." Let me tell you, we're going to fight for those jobs.

I'm going to tell you the difference between the two parties. I don't want to talk about the 300,000 jobs you guys keep talking about that were lost in the province of Ontario. Why don't you tell the people of Ontario the truth? Tell them how we lost the 300,000 jobs—because they just talked about the dollar. Here's what happened with our 300,000 jobs in Ontario: The dollar went up to a buck ten as manufacturing jobs left because we had an artificially high dollar that was being driven by the oil sector. That's what happened to the 300,000 jobs. So don't stand up and use that one again.

You talk about hydro rates and why they went so high. Guess who privatized hydro? Anybody know? Help me out, Conservatives.

Interjection: The Conservatives.

Mr. Wayne Gates: The Conservatives privatized hydro. That was the start of the rise of hydro prices.

How did it get stopped? Anybody know? It was CUPE that said, "We're going to fight back." They took you to court, and then you backed down and stopped the privatization.

The one that really bothers me—about the auto sector, because I was there. I've been an auto worker my entire life. I'm proud of it, by the way. I'm proud I'm a union guy. I'm proud to have my local, Local 199, first under UAW and then CAW and now Unifor. I'm very proud of that.

I want to tell you what the PCs said during the bailout. How many remember the bailout? This is another reason why every single taxpayer in the province of Ontario, including the Conservatives, should be upset. When General Motors was going bankrupt, I was at the table. Canadians—from coast to coast to coast, by the way—gave General Motors a loan for \$10 billion. They never paid it all back. There was a deal made between the Liberal

government—\$10 billion. We kept them afloat. We said to them, “We need the good-paying jobs in the province of Ontario. We need the supply base.” We needed to make sure the retirees who had given their life to that corporation would get their pensions and their benefits. Equally as important: Their spouses would be able to get their benefits.

Reluctantly, by the way—reluctantly, by levels of government—they said, “We have to do this. We have to protect the auto sector.” That was a short 12 years ago. Here today, they’re closing five plants—one in Canada. I believe there are another four being closed in the States. I haven’t had the chance to go through it all.

Think about it. Do you know where they’re not closing a plant? As they expanded in plants in 1999—in Mexico. No plant was announced today, in the restructuring, that they’re closing in Mexico. We just did the NAFTA agreement. Do you know how much money Mexico gave to General Motors to stay alive? The Americans gave them billions under Obama because he realized he couldn’t lose the auto sector in the States. Canadians realized we couldn’t lose the auto sector, and we gave them \$10 billion that was going to be paid back by loans. Do you know what happened? Twelve years later, Mexico’s plants are growing. They’re investing in Mexico. Do you know how much Mexico gave General Motors to stay alive? Anybody know?

My partner from the Green Party, do you know?

Mr. Mike Schreiner: Nothing.

Mr. Wayne Gates: They gave them nothing.

So you would think that the corporation that’s making \$3 billion—where would they invest? Where would they close their plants? They would close them in Mexico and keep Canadian plants open—particularly that our plants have the highest productivity. The Canadian auto worker is the best. I might not have been the best, but I can tell you that, overall, Canadian auto workers are the best in the industrialized world.

Here’s the difference: You had Ford say, “They’re gone. Don’t worry about it. Move on. We’ll get you more EI. We’ll do all of this stuff for you.” Do you know what they want? They want a job. They want a good-paying job with benefits and a pension plan. Do you know what they want to do with that? They want to raise their family. They want to make sure they pay their mortgage. They want to make sure they can get their kids into post-secondary education, whether it’s university or college.

What was the difference between the leadership? I think it’s fair to compare the leadership. The leader of the NDP this morning, and the MPP from Oshawa, Jennifer French, said, “We will fight like hell to save good-paying auto jobs in Oshawa.” That’s what the leader said. We’re not giving up, nor should we.

But then I was a little concerned. Where do we go, because it’s a unionized workplace? Was there something I didn’t know? Was there something I’m not being told? I wasn’t at the bargaining table four years ago. Obviously, I was in here, elected as an MPP, something I’m extremely proud of, representing Niagara. But I do have a GM facility in St. Catharines.

Jerry Dias had a press conference today. He’s the president of Unifor. I’m sure everybody in this room knows who Jerry is. Here’s what he said, and I want the PCs to listen to this, and I hope their leader listens to it: “We signed a four-year agreement with General Motors, and nowhere in that agreement did it say it would close the Oshawa plant.” Think about that. The union signed a collective agreement in good faith. The membership ratified it in good faith. But nobody agreed to close the plant during the term of that collective agreement. This is what else Jerry said: “We will fight this any way we have to.”

You see the difference. Andrea Horwath and the NDP are saying we’re going to fight this. Jerry Dias, probably the best-known union leader in the country, says, “We’re going to do everything we can to fight this.” Here’s the part that I know everybody understands very clearly when Unifor, particularly my union, speaks: “If we have to do that legally or illegally, we’re going to do that.”

That’s what leadership does. They stand up and fight for their membership. There’s the difference between where we’re at.

Let’s talk about Oshawa for a minute. This is a community that has respect right across the labour movement. They’ve had some great leaders come out of Oshawa. The president of the OFL today, Chris Buckley, is out of 222.

Do you know what those members did? For 100 years, they gave back to the community. They were the most generous that you could find anywhere. You ask an auto worker for \$10 for whatever the cause is, and they’re going to do it. Go talk to the United Way. It’s in the millions and millions, probably the hundreds of millions, over that time that they donated to the United Way. They are such an important part of their community.

The other thing that I don’t know, because this all hit yesterday afternoon, to my understanding—I guess the Premier of Ontario was told it was happening yesterday afternoon, so I hear. Here’s what I don’t know, and something that I’m equally concerned about and everybody in this room should be concerned about: What effect will this have on retirees? What effect will it have on their pensions and the contributions by General Motors into the pension plan? What’s going to happen to their spouses who rely on that pension when we die? Because in most cases—not all the time, but in most cases—the man usually dies anywhere from three to seven years before the woman. That’s the stat that they have in the auto sector. It might not be like that everywhere, but that’s the stat we have.

I apologize. I’ve got to take a little drink of water here.

I’m going to get off the auto sector, but I’ve going to tell you, to the caucus over on that side of the House: You have an obligation to stand up and fight for good-paying jobs in the province of Ontario. We should send a clear message to any corporation that if you get tax dollars from anybody, you should be protecting those jobs.

You guys are all over there. You all know somebody who worked in the auto sector, whether it’s in your riding or it’s an aunt or an uncle. You know how important auto jobs are to the overall health of the province. You guys shouldn’t be saying, “It’s gone. It’s over. Get rid of it. We don’t care.”

I'll finish by saying this—and we have some PC guys who were here when this was said; it wasn't that many years ago. Your party said, "Let the auto industry die." Don't let it die. You can do better. You have to do better. The Premier of this province has to stick up for Oshawa workers and tell General Motors, "You're not closing that plant."

That's the end of what I'll say on the auto sector before I get into my formal presentation.

1700

I don't think they—I can't say that. One of the PC members, earlier today, talked about how we're making sure that we get everything we can so that we have enough money for social, health care and education. We learned this weekend that down on the waterfront, the old hydro—I think it's called R.L. Hearn—16 acres right on the waterfront. Now think about this: 16 acres, and it's very close to where the LCBO used to be—

Mr. Will Bouma: Point of order, Madam Speaker. I was hoping—

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Lisa Gretzky): The member will wait to be recognized. The member from Brantford–Brant.

Mr. Will Bouma: Thank you. I was wondering how this relates to the debate of Bill 57.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Lisa Gretzky): Thank you for the point of order. I will caution the member to make sure that he is tying his comments back to the bill.

Mr. Wayne Gates: I appreciate the member standing up and questioning that. It's called "transparency," and it's right in here. I may be wrong. Thank you for allowing me to rise in the House today to discuss restoring trust, so trust is in what I'm going to talk about today, transparency is what I'm going to talk about on this issue, and accountability. Not only is it pertaining to the bill, it covers all three. I just wanted to let you know that. You can challenge me if you like, but I'll finish this story on the hydro land.

So it was owned by the LCBO, and the province sold it, got rid of it. Do you know what they got for an acre? Anybody on your side? Fifty-nine million dollars per acre for the four acres that they sold with the LCBO. That sounds like that might be fair. I met with the real estate people today. They would probably tell me that's a fair deal. Waterfront property in Toronto—are you kidding me? It's got to be worth at least \$60 million. I wouldn't pay it, because I don't have it, but it's got to be worth \$60 million.

So here we have this old hydro facility right on the waterfront. It's gorgeous—go drive by it—beautiful. It's 16 acres, and you'll never guess what it was sold for: \$16 million for 16 acres. A million dollars an acre on the waterfront in Toronto—are you kidding me? You can't buy a rundown semi in Toronto for a million dollars, never mind an acre on the waterfront. If you're going to talk about—because I know my colleague wants to make sure I stay on the bill—trust, transparency and accountability, there's a good place to start on that particular issue.

Madam Speaker, I've only got four minutes left and I haven't started my speech yet. I'm going to start that now. Hopefully it will be on the bill and I won't be interrupted.

We have been discussing this bill and the fall economic statement for over a week. It's interesting to me that this government has tried to paint a picture of what this means for Ontario. They believe this is a new vision for Ontario. In my opinion, this is not a new vision for Ontario. We witnessed for 15 years the previous Liberal government making life harder for everyday people. I saw in my riding of Niagara Falls when all sorts of things actually got a lot harder for people living in my riding. Hydro costs went through the roof, health care was being cut and people were falling behind. Decisions were not made in the best interests of the people; they were made in the best interests of their friends.

What people are telling me is that, ultimately, they paid the price. The past government was making policy decisions for two main reasons:

"(1) How can I help my friends, the lobbyists and the insiders?"

"(2) How can I get re-elected and hold onto power?"

Obviously, the Liberals didn't succeed on the second point, but they sure did on the first.

Madam Speaker, now what you see from this current government is more of the same. It's the same story we saw from them and from Mike Harris before them: more backroom deals. I just gave you an example of a backroom deal. That's going to cost taxpayers a lot of money. They help their friends, help their insiders and help the ultra-rich. When they talk about the tax breaks that they did for the low income, my colleague talked about the fact that a lot of them don't make enough money to pay tax. You gave lots of money, lots of hard-earned tax dollars, to the rich. Make no mistake about it: You're doing the same thing, so I want to make sure you know that.

We see more cuts to the services that people in Ontario and my riding of Niagara Falls, Niagara-on-the-Lake and Fort Erie depend on. We've truly gone from bad to worse. We've witnessed a cut of \$3.2 billion from these important services that we as a government should be providing to the residents of this province. This government is losing billions in revenue and ignoring the urgent needs of our environment. We've seen this playbook a million times from Conservative governments. We saw it in the 1990s under Mike Harris, what he did to the province.

I've only got a couple of minutes left, so I'm obviously not going to get past the other 19 pages I have. I'm going to keep saying this: You're going to hear this from me, the Conservative government is going to hear this from me until I lose my seat here in this House, because there's nothing more important than our environment. How can I tell you guys to wake up? Wake up to our environment. Look at what's going on in California. It's burning. Why is it burning? Because they weren't getting any rain. In California, people are dying. In Quebec, same thing: We had a drought there this summer. You know what happened? People died.

The environment and climate change are real. You can't just kind of push it to the side because you want to make sure that your buddies make money, that they make a profit. Well, let me inform you guys: Corporations and the rich in society are doing extremely well. They don't need your tax break. They're making billions. I've got one thing in here with the president of Loblaws. He makes something like \$4,000 a minute. He doesn't need your tax break, but what we do need is to make sure that our environment is taken care of.

Quite frankly, it's not for me. I'm getting old. I'm probably going to kick out in 10 years or so. But you know who it's important for? My kids and my grandkids. That's what is important. You guys have to make sure that you get on side and protect our environment, and I know you're not there yet. But I'm going to stand up here as often as I can to remind you how important it is.

The one thing that's going to challenge us: our water. We're using our water as a sewer, right across the province of Ontario. Let's smarten up and protect our environment.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Lisa Gretzky): Questions and comments?

Mr. Toby Barrett: I appreciate the comments from the member from Niagara Falls. Much of his discussion was about something that is on everybody's mind today, a very sad day for the province of Ontario and the announcement we've received with respect to the auto sector.

There are different ways of approaching that. I've gone through, several years ago, as the member would know, a bit of a crisis with respect to the steel industry, with respect to US Steel and Stelco—Stelco, then US Steel, and back to Stelco again. When push came to shove, we found the only approach to take was for everybody to work together. Part of that role lay with elected representatives like myself. I had an opportunity to work with a member on your side of the House, to work with the company and to work with the union.

In the context of Bill 57, we're dealing with the finances of this government and the economy. As you said, we're blessed with a low dollar right now. We're doing our best to have low taxes, to have low electricity, to have low energy, to lower the burden of red tape and to bring in labour laws that actually work and inculcate much more training. You're right: We have very highly skilled professional workers in the auto industry. What worries me is we have to up our game. Obviously, the autoworkers of Mexico are also becoming, as I understand it, very professional, highly trained and skilled.

We're dealing in a tough world right now. Both you and I, member, have been to at least one conference together in the United States. I've attended four down there on NAFTA over the past year and a half. Two of them, I paid my own way in.

In Ontario, all of us have to work together and we have to up our game.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Lisa Gretzky): Questions and comments?

Ms. Peggy Sattler: I am very proud to rise today to respond to the comments from my colleague the member

for Niagara Falls. I think we all heard his passion as he talked about the news today out of Oshawa and really put on the table something that many of us are thinking that really does have a connection to the debate before us today.

1710

I heard the member from Carleton just a few moments ago in her speech on this bill. She talked proudly about the things that her government has done. They reintroduced buck-a-beer. This legislation freezes the beer tax rate. They have extended hours for LCBO stores. We also know they put up signs at border points. This is their idea of an economic strategy, and in the meantime, our auto sector is, as we have seen in Oshawa, at huge, enormous risk.

We saw the list today of the people this Premier has met with since he took office. He was too busy meeting behind closed doors with some of his friends on Toronto city council as he was plotting to bring in legislation to cut the size of council, too busy doing that instead of meeting with GM. He only apparently heard about this yesterday. Why wasn't he in conversations, why wasn't he in discussions with the auto industry representatives in this province to talk about what the auto sector needs in order to stay competitive and to keep those good jobs here in Ontario?

Speaker, if we don't have a government that starts to think seriously about economic development, we are going to see a lot more communities like Oshawa in this province.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Lisa Gretzky): Questions and comments?

Mr. Will Bouma: I'd like to thank the comrade from Niagara Falls and the members from Haldimand-Norfolk and London West for their comments as we continue to debate this afternoon. I still don't see the direct connection to Bill 57, but I have to say that my heart absolutely goes out to the people in Durham region today—and, indeed, across the entire province of Ontario—who depend upon automotive manufacturing and parts manufacturing for their livelihoods.

I can't help but think of the words of a great man who said, "If it moves, tax it. If it keeps moving, regulate it. And if it stops moving, subsidize it." Those words by Ronald Reagan, I think, pretty much put in a nutshell the attitude that I see towards business in general coming from the opposition: "Obviously, we have to tax it, regulate it and then, when the jobs are in threat of being lost, we have to subsidize it or find another way of doing that."

I do have to call the member to task for some comments that he made which I found quite troubling, because I don't know if I appreciate the member from Niagara Falls implying that the NDP supports and condones illegal activity by an auto union, as he said earlier this afternoon. We've heard quite a bit from the opposition that we should not be wasting our resources fighting a job-killing, family-destroying carbon tax, but then they call us to task for not fighting to keep a large business that they continually tell us we should be taxing more, because they can afford to pay a little bit more.

Well, as we heard from our Premier today, despite his best efforts on the phone all afternoon yesterday, they're gone, and so we have to think of innovative ways of moving forward. That's why I'm supporting Bill 57: to make life easier in Ontario.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Lisa Gretzky): Questions and comments?

Ms. Sara Singh: It's an honour to rise here today and add to the debate. I'd like to thank my colleague from Niagara Falls for his very passionate debate today here in the House. Also, my colleagues from Haldimand-Norfolk, London West and Brantford-Brant: Each of them contributed something different to the conversation.

But I just want to pick up on some points that have been a general theme here today. I think, for us, this fall economic statement came about—the Progressive Conservative government is really using our \$15-billion-plus deficit as a rationale to cut, cut and cut more from Ontario's families. I think it's very surprising. The deficit was really no surprise to many of us here; as a new member, I wasn't surprised by the deficit. However, I think that what we've seen here are cuts that actually put more money in the pockets of our Conservative friends than they do for the most vulnerable people here in this province.

Those are some of the concerns that we're raising today—that in fact, we're seeing more people in this province being given less, like those receiving OW or ODSP, or those living on minimum wage. They are seeing their benefits clawed back. They are seeing their minimum wage clawed back. But we're seeing really great tax breaks for those earning the highest incomes in our province while those who deserve more are actually getting less.

We've also seen this government do the opposite, which is de-vest in our economy. There were some really important areas that we could have seen some potential growth in; for example, our education sector. So, rather than invest in the economy, we've seen this government again cut what would have been critical investments to creating good-paying jobs, or good opportunities for students in this province. Instead, we saw the opposite.

I look forward to sharing more in my 10 minutes.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Lisa Gretzky): Back to the member for Niagara Falls.

Mr. Wayne Gates: I really do appreciate most of the comments from my colleagues—just saying—but I will address a couple of them that were said about working together.

I can tell you that I have worked with bargaining teams and have bargained 150 collective agreements, including with General Motors, and including with small business, big business and banks. It didn't matter what it was; I was able to bargain with them. So I know how to work together, because you can't get a collective agreement without working together.

But in this particular case, Jerry Dias is saying that General Motors signed a contract. Sometimes there are good things in a contract; sometimes there are bad things in a contract. At the end of the day, do you know what

you're supposed to do? You're supposed to live up to that contract. You're supposed to defend that contract. You defend it to your members, even though they're mad at you. They might not like what you agreed to. But you put your name down there, you sign that agreement and you make sure that you live up to that agreement until the next time you get to the bargaining table. Then, if there are things that either party doesn't like, they put demands forward, and you bargain. That's when it's called for.

So I absolutely do know how to work with people.

I want to say really clearly: General Motors had a contract for four years. The national president of Unifor is saying that there is nothing in that agreement that says they can close that facility.

As far as saying do I agree whether Unifor does something illegal—let me tell you: I've been in Unifor; I've been in CAW. You are not telling the president of that union how he's going to represent his membership. I'll tell you that right now. They will do whatever they have to, to stand up and fight for that membership.

A couple of the other things that I wanted to talk about: On the minimum wage—I've got 11 seconds. Guys, the minimum wage—you're not going to raise it until 2025? They just announced this week that inflation is 2.3%. It's six years. Wake up.

HOUSE SITTINGS

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Lisa Gretzky): I recognize the Minister of Government and Consumer Services on a point of order.

Hon. Bill Walker: Thank you, Madam Speaker. I am seeking unanimous consent to put forward a motion without notice regarding night sittings.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Lisa Gretzky): Mr. Walker is seeking unanimous consent to put forward a motion without notice. Agreed? Agreed.

Minister?

Hon. Bill Walker: I move that, notwithstanding the motion passed earlier today, that at 6 p.m. today, this House stand adjourned until 9 a.m. tomorrow morning.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Lisa Gretzky): Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? That's carried.

Motion agreed to.

RESTORING TRUST, TRANSPARENCY AND ACCOUNTABILITY ACT, 2018

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

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

Mr. Mike Schreiner: I'll just have it noted that I'm willing to work until midnight tonight, or however long you would like.

It's a pleasure to rise to speak on Bill 57. But I want to just take a moment to let the auto workers in Oshawa know that the Green Party stands behind you. Ontario should be leading the electric vehicle revolution, not losing jobs to it.

Bill 57 touches on 65 pieces of legislation, so in the limited amount of time I have, I'm going to talk about three key areas in which I am concerned that Bill 57 undermines our democracy.

The first is losing oversight from the Environmental Commissioner, the child advocate and the French Language Services Commissioner. Secondly, it's undermining the independence of the remaining legislative officers who serve this assembly. Third, it's opening the door back up to big money in politics.

Dismantling the checks and balances on government is wrong and is dangerous. Our democracy is stronger with independent officers of the government monitoring government policy. Independent officers signal what is valuable to our politics, what is valuable to our province, and until Bill 57, a clean environment, protecting the most vulnerable children and standing up for French-language services were important to the Ontario government.

1720

If this was about saving money, then maybe we could have a bit of a debate, because we do have to get Ontario's deficit under control. But these moves to undermine the independence of our legislative officers are not about saving money. They're about a power grab. They are about removing the checks and balances that hold government accountable. That's why it's wrong. That's why I'll be fighting against it, because I believe in independent oversight of government.

Secondly, and most troublesome, Bill 57 undermines the independence of legislative officers who have served this assembly, and that is incredibly dangerous. Bill 57 gives new authority to a majority government to arbitrarily suspend independent officers of this Legislature without cause.

Mr. Rick Nicholls: Ask the Liberals what they did.

Mr. Mike Schreiner: I know. That's exactly why we need these protections in place from whatever majority government is in place. The fact that Bill 57 takes those checks and balances away is incredibly dangerous and very troubling.

That is exactly why earlier today I asked for a point of privilege to determine whether independent officers of the Legislature are protected from intimidation—because that's what Bill 57 does. Let's say the Integrity Commissioner is conducting an investigation of the Premier's office and the government doesn't like it. With a majority vote in this House, they can suspend the Integrity Commissioner, or, if the House isn't sitting, with a decision in cabinet, they can suspend the Integrity Commissioner. They can do that to the Auditor General. They can do it to the Clerk of the Legislature even. That is wrong.

Think of the battles the previous government had with the Auditor General. I know the members opposite, when they were on the opposition benches, used to complain

about that, and rightfully so. But imagine if the previous government could have just suspended the Auditor General with a majority vote. That's exactly what the government is proposing to do.

Already, Canadians and Ontarians know that far too much power is concentrated in the Premier's office, and this bill concentrates even more power into the Premier's office.

Then the third point I want to make is that Bill 57 opens the door to big money in politics again. I can tell you that I worked so hard, as the leader of a fourth political party without even a seat in this Legislature, to get big money out of politics, and I will continue to fight to keep it out of politics. Going back to the Wild West of donations, opening things up for cash-for-access events, is wrong. I fought so hard in the previous government's legislation to have donors certify that they were not collectively—individually, but collectively then—donating as members of a corporation or a union as a way to make sure there weren't loopholes around Bay and on corporate and union donations to political parties. Bill 57 opens the door back up to that.

I ask the members opposite, why reopen these checks, these accountability mechanisms? We saw how much trouble the previous Liberal government got into with their cash-for-access fundraising events with a Wild West approach to fundraising, and all of us worked so hard—as a matter of fact, there was all-party support to get rid of big money in politics. So why reopen it up?

I'm asking members of the government to amend Bill 57. Let's all stand up to keep big money out of politics, to maintain the independence of legislative officers and ensure transparency and accountability in this government.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Lisa Gretzky): Questions and comments?

Ms. Peggy Sattler: I am pleased to rise to respond to the comments from the member from Guelph concerning Bill 57, the budget bill that implements the fall economic statement.

I certainly echo many of the concerns that were shared by the member about the bill, in particular about the elimination of three of the most critical independent oversight mechanisms that we have available to us, not just in this Legislative Assembly, but in the province of Ontario. They are, of course, the Provincial Advocate for Children and Youth, the Environmental Commissioner of Ontario and the French Language Services Commissioner.

The interesting thing is, this government claims to be all about financial stewardship. Well, how much money is this government saving by eliminating those positions? It is literally change under the cushions of the couch. It is so minimal, the amount of money that is being saved. But what is being lost is any ability to monitor and to provide independent oversight of what is going on in this province.

We know that this was a vindictive, spiteful act by this government. In a way, it was a pre-emptive strike, because they know that the Environmental Commissioner and the child and youth advocate are some of this province's

fiercest critics of the kinds of actions that this government is taking.

Speaker, we are very, very concerned about the chill that may descend upon this province without those independent voices speaking out about the real costs, the real consequences of the actions this government is taking.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Lisa Gretzky): Questions and comments?

Mr. Rick Nicholls: I appreciate the vim, the vigour and the enthusiasm that the member from Cambridge exudes. I'm not so certain that he was fully accurate with regard to the fundraising and cash-for-access and those types of things. We're looking at making it easier, but we're certainly not looking at corporate donations and we're certainly not looking at union donations. I may stand to be corrected on that, but I believe that needs to be looked at.

I hear also about cut, cut, cut. One of the other members had talked about the things that we're cutting. You know what? If you don't have something, how do you cut it? You don't have it.

They talk about how we continually talk about the \$15-billion deficit. Again, what we're doing is a belt-tightening exercise. The previous Liberal government didn't wear a belt. They did none of that. When you take a look at the NDP platform in the last election, for goodness' sake, it was the Liberal plan on steroids. All of a sudden, you look at it and you go, "Where on earth is their plan?" And they're critical of us.

What I'd also like to talk about is this carbon tax and the transparency element of that. We respect taxpayers, and, of course, leaving more money in people's pockets is first and foremost for us.

Down in the great riding of Chatham-Kent–Leamington—but you see it all over, right now—gas prices previously, about a month ago or three weeks ago, were hovering around \$1.23, depending upon where you live, I suppose. Now in Chatham-Kent, as an example, it's around 98 cents. So we're seeing a major cut. Why? Because our government eliminated that carbon tax.

Having said that, I did the math very quickly, and for me, a tank of gas a week—60 litres at 20 cents is 12 bucks, times 50 weeks. Justin Trudeau, come January 1, is putting that tax back in. It's going to cost Ontarians more money.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Lisa Gretzky): Questions and comments? The member for Brampton North.

Applause.

Mr. Kevin Yarde: Thank you, Brampton Centre.

I just want to remind the audience, people who may be tuning in, or some of the members who just showed up here, that this Bill 57 is unfair. The government thinks that all they have to do now is just put their feet up and do nothing. They are saying there is no money.

1730

For those of you who didn't hear me earlier, I want to reiterate again some of these areas that they're cutting. There's no money for mental health services. There's no money for overdose sites. There's no money for children in poverty. There's no money for firefighters or police. There's no money to hire more corrections officers. We

don't have any money to fix our crumbling schools. We don't have any money for universities in Brampton, in Milton or in Markham. We don't have money for a francophone university. We don't have money for affordable housing. We don't have money for funding health care for seniors. We don't have money for northern First Nations communities or to clean up the mercury contamination in Grassy Narrows. We don't have money to protect the auto sector. We don't have money for seniors struggling to pay for their medications. We don't have money for the Hurontario LRT. We don't have money for passenger transportation in northern Ontario. We don't have money for widening Highway 3 in southwestern Ontario. But we do have money for the lawyers and our insider friends.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Lisa Gretzky): Questions and comments?

Mr. Jeremy Roberts: Before I address the comments from my good friend the member from Guelph, I just was struck a moment ago when the comment was made that we are doing nothing to support mental health services. Here, I have a quote from Adrienne Spafford, who is the CEO of Addictions and Mental Health Ontario: "For far too long there has been too much talking and not enough action on addiction and mental health." Addictions and Mental Health Ontario "commends the Ontario government for its promise kept on a 10-year, \$1.9-billion investment." That's our record.

To address the comments from my good friend the member from Guelph: The member from Guelph and I agree on a number of things. We've had some wonderful conversations on how we can improve Ontario's energy system and how we can make the system more efficient and make use of Canada's wonderful natural resources.

But where we sometimes differ is in this area of making sure that we are not crippling businesses' ability to thrive and succeed in our province. Unfortunately, policies like cap-and-trade and carbon pricing—which the member for Guelph is pleased to support and advocate for—are contrary to the sorts of policies that we want to drive Ontario forward. That's why we're reducing those taxes and fighting against the carbon tax—to make sure that businesses can thrive.

I also just want to briefly take umbrage with the fact that the member from Guelph brought up getting rid of the Environmental Commissioner. I think the member from Guelph is selling himself short, because back in 1707, when the first member of Parliament was ever elected, the idea was that they would represent and advocate. I think the member from Guelph is doing a wonderful job as an advocate for the environment and raising some important jobs, as I'm sure every member in this House will continue to do for as long as we are fortunate to have a House of representatives.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Lisa Gretzky): Back to the member for Guelph.

Mr. Mike Schreiner: I'm pleased to rise and further this debate. I want to start by thanking the member from Chatham-Kent–Leamington. I'm hoping that I can work with the member opposite in amending Bill 57, because

taking out the requirement that requires donors to certify that they are donating on their own behalf is wrong. That has been easy to implement, and that was put into the legislation to make sure that we close any loopholes that would allow corporate and union donations to political parties. As a matter of fact, I remember having that conversation with Conservative members at the time the original bill came through. Let's change that part of Bill 57 to keep corporate and union donations out.

I want to thank the member from London West for bringing up how important independent oversight is and the member from Brampton North, who talked about fairness. One of the things that just crystalized it for me in Bill 57 was, the government is giving the richest people in Ontario, the top 1%, a big tax break, and they're taking away the child advocate, who stands up for the most vulnerable children in our province. I think that is wrong.

Bill 57 isn't about reducing the deficit or saving money. It's about removing oversight. It's about removing accountability. It's about removing the checks and balances that hold government accountable. I'll remind the members opposite that there will be one day when they won't be a majority government anymore, and you will wish that you had had that oversight in place.

Finally, I just want to thank the member from Ottawa West—Nepean and remind him, once again, that the top-performing economies in the world all have a price on carbon pollution. I want us to be a top-performing economy with a price on pollution.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Lisa Gretzky): Pursuant to standing order 47(c), I am now required to interrupt the proceedings and announce that there has been more than six and one-half hours of debate on the motion for second reading of this bill. This debate will therefore be deemed adjourned unless the government House leader specifies otherwise.

Minister of Government and Consumer Services.

Hon. Bill Walker: We wish debate to continue.

Mr. Rick Nicholls: Point of order.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Lisa Gretzky): I recognize the member for Chatham-Kent—Leamington on a point of order.

Mr. Rick Nicholls: Thank you very much, Madam Speaker. Earlier, when I was doing a two-minute hit, I referred to the member from Guelph as “the member from Cambridge.” I apologize. For the record, it was the member from Guelph that I was referring to.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Lisa Gretzky): Thank you. All members are allowed to correct their record.

Further debate?

Mr. Jeremy Roberts: It's a pleasure to rise today to speak on Bill 57 and the fall economic statement that our wonderful Minister of Finance delivered last week.

I want to begin by just acknowledging the unfortunate news we received this morning about the closure of the plant in Oshawa. My family has some history in the auto sector. You see, Madam Speaker, my grandfather was from New Brunswick. He was an Acadian from New Brunswick. When he was 16 years old, he set off to find

work in Ontario and moved to Windsor, where he worked for Ford and got the start of his career back then and built a family—a family that included my mother and her seven brothers. My father always tells me that if he can give me one piece of dating advice, it's “Don't date a woman who has seven brothers.” But that's beyond the point.

My grandfather came to Ontario and chose to come to Windsor because, at that time, when he was 16 years old, Ontario was a place of opportunity. Ontario was a place that was thriving, had a growing industry and seemed like the kind of place where you wanted to start a family. Unfortunately, over the past 15 years, we've seen that change. We've seen Ontario go from a have province to a have-not province, and we have seen Ontario pursue a number of damaging policies that have driven businesses straight out of this province and meant that it is no longer that place of opportunity that my grandfather once saw when he was 16 years old.

Madam Speaker, I think that's something we need to consider here today when we look at the events that happened this morning. My heart goes out to these workers at GM. I can't possibly imagine how they must have felt receiving that news last night, just weeks away from Christmas. But this needs to be a clarion call for every single member of this House that we all need to do our part to make sure we are pursuing policies that are going to make Ontario open for business and are going to allow opportunity to thrive for generations to come so that, in some year way down the future, there's going to be a bright-eyed 16-year-old like my grandfather who says, “Do you know what? I need to pack up and head to Ontario, because that's the place I want to be.”

Now, how are we going to make Ontario open for business? How are we going to create that environment of opportunity for everyone? Well, Madam Speaker, that starts by having a good, solid fiscal and financial foundation to build upon. That is exactly what we started with, with this fall economic statement.

We saw the Liberals leave us in an unfortunate situation. The financial commission of inquiry and the line-by-line audit unsurprisingly found that our deficit was a lot bigger than we had presumed. Shocking, I know. We actually found ourselves with a \$15-billion deficit that we needed to tackle.

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I find sometimes, Madam Speaker, that not always do people completely understand the importance of why we have to tackle deficits. Why do we need to tackle debt? The reason is because if we don't we are simply punting our problems on to future generations, which is exactly not what we want to be doing. We want to make sure that we are leaving—

Interjections.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Lisa Gretzky): My apologies. With the amount of conversations going on all over the chamber, I'm having a really hard time hearing the member that's speaking, even with an earpiece in. So if everybody can please bring the volume down, that would be appreciated. Thank you.

Back to the member for Ottawa West—Nepean.

Mr. Jeremy Roberts: Thank you, Madam Speaker. I try to speak loudly, but even sometimes—so why are balanced budgets important? Balanced budgets are important so we aren't leaving the next generation with mountains of debt. I spoke earlier today about the fact that every single child born today has \$24,000 worth of debt on their shoulders. That's a lot of money for each and every person. Every time I go in and speak to a grade 5 class or a grade 10 civics class, I share that number with them. These children are shocked to learn that and shocked to learn that this problem is being punted down the road for them.

While members opposite may sometimes reference the fact that right now we have a good interest rate, a low interest rate, and we might as well borrow, the fact of the matter is that interest rates have been low for a while, but there is no guarantee that they will stay that way. If situations worsen and those interest rates happen to jump, we are going to find ourselves in a very challenging situation where we are seeing huge chunks of our budget being eaten away by interest payments on the debt when they could have otherwise been going to supporting the most vulnerable in our communities.

We also need to make sure that we're keeping an eye on our province's credit rating. Unfortunately, we saw policies pursued by the previous government that led to our credit rating being decreased over time. That makes Ontario less attractive as a place to start and grow a business. Again, these are the sorts of things that create a foundation for a strong business environment.

The other day, I happened to be chatting with this fellow I met on the street, and he said to me, "Mr. Roberts, the other day, I was walking along and I saw this shiny object on the side of the road. I picked it up, and it was a genie lamp. I rubbed the genie lamp and out popped a genie." The genie said to this man, "I will give you any wish that you want." So the man thought about it, and he turned to the genie and said, "Genie, I would like to live forever." The genie turned to the man and said, "I'm sorry sir, but I cannot possibly make you live forever. Forever is far too long a time. Please, ask me for anything else." So the man thought about it, and he turned back to the genie and said, "Genie, I would like to live until the provincial Liberals under Kathleen Wynne balance the budget." The genie replied to him, "You cheeky bugger, you."

I think that just goes to show you, Madam Speaker, that the previous government was pursuing a set of policies that were going to continue to exacerbate the problem. That's not the route that we wanted to choose. Unfortunately, we hear time and time again that what the members opposite here in the official opposition want to do is to double down on the policies of the former government. They keep talking about the minimum wage increase and saying that, my gosh, we are hurting so many workers by not increasing the minimum wage.

Madam Speaker, I like to consider myself someone fairly well-read. I read the Statistics Canada reports that showed that this past summer when they increased the minimum wage, we saw youth unemployment rise. I read

the report from the Macdonald-Laurier Institute that showed that, after the minimum wage was increased, we saw income growth slow significantly in Ontario. I read the studies out of Seattle, where they increased the minimum wage to \$15, that showed that it actually caused poverty to increase rather than decrease.

So I would just caution the members opposite. Do they truly want to double down on some of these failed policies, or do they want to go a different route, a route that's actually going to deal with these problems by creating more high-paying jobs for those unemployed struggling people so that we can thrive and prosper as a society, rather than pursuing policies that even academic literature and government data are showing don't work?

Now, of course, Madam Speaker, when we're talking about how to balance a budget, there are three strategies that one government can pursue. A government can choose to raise taxes to balance a budget. A government can choose to find savings in its expenditures. A government can also try to spur economic growth, to grow its revenue base. Those are three different ways that a government can pursue to balance a budget.

Our government has made it extremely clear that raising taxes is off the table in terms of balancing the budget, because if we heard one thing time and time again at the doors, it was that Ontarians were sick and tired of being taxed to death. Whether it was hydro rates or carbon taxes, one thing after another was piling up and it was creating the sort of environment that was driving people out of the province, which wasn't going to help solve the problem in the long run.

Instead, we're taking the approach where we're saying we're going to figure out how we can lower costs for Ontarians. We've already moved forward with eliminating cap-and-trade. In this fall economic statement we announced that we are going to cancel a number of the surtax increases that were set to come into effect. These are things that are going to save Ontarians money and they're going to make Ontario a more encouraging place to stay, thrive, start a business, start a family, whatever they might want to do. That's the kind of approach we're taking.

We're also going to look at bringing in—in fact, sorry. We're not even going to look at it. We are doing it. We are bringing in the LIFT tax credit. This is going to be an enormous tax credit that is going to help low-income Ontarians across this province who are earning \$30,000 or less. What this is going to mean is significant tax relief to 1.1 million Ontarians. Let me repeat that: 1.1 million Ontarians who are low-income earners are going to get significant money back in their pockets. That is going to help to make sure they can thrive and succeed.

Mr. Kevin Yarde: All of them?

Mr. Jeremy Roberts: Yes, exactly. All of them, all 1.1 million of them are going to receive significant tax support. That's the kind of approach we're going to take there.

How are we going to tackle that budget deficit, then? We are going to have to use strategies 2 or 3. That is, we're going to have to find savings or we're going to have to figure out ways to grow the economy.

How are we going to find savings? It turns out that our President of the Treasury Board has been incredibly successful so far at finding ways that we can do government more efficiently—so successful, in fact, that in the six short months we've been here, he has found \$3.2-billion worth of savings here in this province, \$3.2 billion that we aren't leaving to future generations to have to deal with later on in life. I'm incredibly impressed by the work that the President of the Treasury Board is doing, and I have no doubt that he is going to continue to do wonderful work in that regard, in figuring out how we can get rid of that \$15-billion deficit so that we aren't leaving this problem to future generations.

Now, on to growing the economy. This is something that our government is particularly keen on doing. In fact, we were so keen on it that we have actually made sure that we are sending the signal to the world that Ontario is open for business again. What are some of the things that we're doing to make sure that we know that Ontario is open for business? That goes back to tax competitiveness. Unfortunately, we're seeing a situation where the government in the United States—he who shall not be named—has brought in a number of tax competitiveness measures that have made Ontario less able to compete against our American neighbours. So in order to make sure that our businesses aren't fleeing south to that more competitive jurisdiction, we need to take action ourselves to make sure that our companies here at home aren't dealing with the punitive costs of a carbon tax like the Prime Minister would have us deal with—or the opposition—and that we are also not dealing with punitive things like exorbitant hydro rates, which I think every single member in this House, save for perhaps the independent members here, will have heard numerous stories about at the door over the course of the recent election, which, my gosh, I can't quite believe is already six months past.

1750

Those are the sorts of things that we're going to be doing, and that's going to attract more people here, get more people working and make sure that we're growing Ontario's economy, adding to our revenue base and helping to tackle that important deficit challenge.

Now, I mentioned earlier that the NDP would have us double down on the policies of the previous government. I have some wonderful information for them. What we're talking about doing here on our side in terms of finding savings, lowering taxes and growing our economy, we're not just doing blindly. We have a model to follow in the former federal government of Prime Minister Stephen Harper, who did a brilliant, brilliant job.

I was fortunate to work for the late finance minister, the Honourable Jim Flaherty, a colleague of the member from Kenora and the member from Milton. When I worked for the late Minister Flaherty, we were taking a number of different actions. One, we were consistently lowering taxes. In fact, we lowered the overall federal tax burden to its lowest level in 50 years. Because of that, we were named in Bloomberg magazine the best place to grow and start a business in the world. That's a wonderful thing to

look for. That's the sort of thing that we want to make sure we're doing.

In fact, the cuts that we were providing to families in the middle and lower class were taking millions of people off the tax roll. It also meant that, for the first time in Canadian history, our middle class was stronger than the middle class in the United States—for the first time ever. So that's on the first point. We lowered taxes federally. That's the kind of model we're going to look at following here that worked for us previously, and here we have a model to follow again.

Now, let's talk about finding savings. The previous federal government realized the importance of making sure that we weren't leaving mountains of debt to future generations. In fact, one of the first things that Prime Minister Harper and Minister Flaherty did was pay down \$37 billion off the debt, in 2006 and 2007. That was money that was paid back so it wasn't left for future generations. I can only hope that, in my time here in this Legislature, I get to see a day where we start paying down Ontario's debt the same way that we did federally.

On top of that, we all know that we faced an unfortunate situation in 2008 with the global economic recession. Of course, that meant that we had to provide some stimulating funds into the economy to make sure we made it through that global economic recession. Unlike the previous government here, who didn't have any plan to return to balance, we actually pursued a plan to return us to balance. That brought us to 2015, when I was proud to stand with Minister Joe Oliver and announce a \$1.4-billion surplus for Canada. Those were the days.

Now, what did a balanced budget mean for Ontario—what did a plan to balance the budget mean for the government of Canada, and what will it mean for us? Well, it meant to Canada that we had an AAA credit rating. We were one of the few jurisdictions in the world to have an AAA credit rating. We had one of the strongest economic growths in the entire G7, second only to Germany, I believe. We had strong income growth across different generations. Again, we saw that we were the best place to grow and start a business, because people saw how the government of Canada was dealing with their finances and they said, "That's the kind of place that we can trust to start our business and to make sure that we're a good place to be."

So here we have a wonderful record—a road map, one might say—on the sorts of policies that we want to pursue, and I'm thrilled to see that those are the sorts of policies that we're including here. We have a concrete plan now to say, "You know what? We need to start paying down that deficit." Come budget 2019, I have no doubt we will see the specifics of that plan coming down.

We see us bringing back tax competitiveness. We see us making sure that we are not going to let us continue to cross that 40% debt-to-GDP threshold. A former member of the former government once said that that was a "red line that should never be crossed." We crossed it. That's something that I can't stand. As a millennial, to see that, to see us moving in that direction—we have to turn the

ship around and start working our way towards a better, brighter future.

I'll finish on one thing, Madam Speaker: When I was in my previous job, I helped coordinate something called the Student Budget Consultation, where we consulted with over 85,000 high school students from across the country on their priorities for the federal budget. Their number one priority by a huge margin was paying down the debt. That was the most important priority for high school students, four years running. Young people care about our future. Young people care about paying down our debt, making

sure that we have a strong financial situation. That's what we're pursuing.

Madam Speaker, I'm thrilled to vote in support of this incredible bill and I look forward to working with the Minister of Finance.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Lisa Gretzky): Thank you.
Second reading debate deemed adjourned.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Lisa Gretzky): Seeing the time on the clock, this House stands adjourned until tomorrow at 9 a.m.

The House adjourned at 1757.

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Armstrong, Teresa J. (NDP)	London—Fanshawe	Deputy Opposition House Leader / Leader parlementaire adjointe de l'opposition officielle
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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

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Gravelle, Michael (LIB)	Thunder Bay—Superior North / Thunder Bay—Supérieur-Nord	
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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
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Deepak Anand, Doly Begum
Jeff Burch, Amy Fee
Michael Gravelle, Joel Harden
Belinda Karahalios, Robin Martin
Sheref Sabawy, Nina Tangri
Effie J. Triantafilopoulos
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**Select Committee on Financial Transparency / Comité spécial
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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