

Legislative
Assembly
of Ontario



Assemblée
législative
de l'Ontario

**Official Report
of Debates
(Hansard)**

No. 66

**Journal
des débats
(Hansard)**

N° 66

1st Session
42nd Parliament
Tuesday
19 February 2019

1^{re} session
42^e législature
Mardi
19 février 2019

Speaker: Honourable Ted Arnott
Clerk: Todd Decker

Président : L'honorable Ted Arnott
Greffier : Todd Decker

Hansard on the Internet

Hansard and other documents of the Legislative Assembly can be on your personal computer within hours after each sitting. The address is:

Le Journal des débats sur Internet

L'adresse pour faire paraître sur votre ordinateur personnel le Journal et d'autres documents de l'Assemblée législative en quelques heures seulement après la séance est :

<https://www.ola.org/>

Index inquiries

Reference to a cumulative index of previous issues may be obtained by calling the Hansard Reporting Service indexing staff at 416-325-7400.

Renseignements sur l'index

Adressez vos questions portant sur des numéros précédents du Journal des débats au personnel de l'index, qui vous fourniront des références aux pages dans l'index cumulatif, en composant le 416-325-7400.

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



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

ISSN 1180-2987

CONTENTS / TABLE DES MATIÈRES

Tuesday 19 February 2019 / Mardi 19 février 2019

Royal assent / Sanction royale

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott) 3009

ORDERS OF THE DAY / ORDRE DU JOUR

Safe and Supportive Classrooms Act, 2019, Bill 48, Ms. Thompson / Loi de 2019 pour des écoles sûres et axées sur le soutien, projet de loi 48,

Mme Thompson

Mr. Joel Harden..... 3009

Mr. Vijay Thanigasalam..... 3010

Ms. Laura Mae Lindo..... 3011

Mr. Paul Calandra 3011

Ms. Peggy Sattler 3011

Mr. Joel Harden..... 3012

Ms. Donna Skelly..... 3012

Mr. Michael Mantha 3013

Mr. Robert Bailey 3013

Mme France Gélinas 3014

Mme Natalia Kusendova..... 3014

Ms. Donna Skelly..... 3014

Ms. Jill Andrew 3015

Mr. Sam Oosterhoff 3016

M. Guy Bourgouin..... 3016

Ms. Goldie Ghamari..... 3017

Mrs. Jennifer (Jennie) Stevens 3017

Ms. Jill Andrew 3017

Mr. Mike Harris 3018

Private members' public business

Mr. Lorne Coe..... 3019

Motion agreed to 3019

INTRODUCTION OF VISITORS / PRÉSENTATION DES VISITEURS

Miss Monique Taylor 3019

Mr. Ross Romano 3019

Ms. Suze Morrison 3019

Ms. Jane McKenna..... 3019

Ms. Laura Mae Lindo..... 3019

Mr. Randy Pettapiece 3019

Ms. Rima Berns-McGown 3019

Mr. Mike Schreiner 3019

Ms. Goldie Ghamari..... 3019

Ms. Marit Stiles..... 3020

Mr. Aris Babikian 3020

Mr. Ian Arthur 3020

Hon. Laurie Scott 3020

Mme France Gélinas 3020

Mrs. Gila Martow 3020

Mr. Stephen Lecce 3020

Tabling of sessional papers

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott)..... 3020

Domestic violence

Ms. Sara Singh..... 3020

ORAL QUESTIONS / QUESTIONS ORALES

Health care

Ms. Andrea Horwath..... 3020

Hon. Doug Ford 3020

Hon. Christine Elliott 3021

Health care

Ms. Andrea Horwath 3021

Hon. Doug Ford 3021

Hon. Christine Elliott 3021

Health care

Ms. Andrea Horwath..... 3022

Hon. Doug Ford 3022

Hon. Lisa MacLeod..... 3022

Automotive industry

Mr. Stephen Crawford..... 3022

Hon. Todd Smith 3023

Autism treatment

Miss Monique Taylor 3023

Hon. Lisa MacLeod..... 3023

Automotive industry

Mrs. Belinda Karahalios..... 3024

Hon. Merrilee Fullerton..... 3024

Post-secondary education

Ms. Andrea Horwath 3024

Hon. Doug Ford 3024

Autism treatment

Mr. John Fraser 3025

Hon. Lisa MacLeod..... 3025

Tuition

Ms. Goldie Ghamari..... 3026

Hon. Merrilee Fullerton..... 3026

Cancer treatment

Mme France Gélinas 3026

Hon. Christine Elliott 3027

Indigenous programs and services

Mme Nathalie Des Rosiers..... 3027

Hon. Greg Rickford..... 3027

Tuition	
Mr. Vijay Thanigasalam.....	3027
Hon. Merrilee Fullerton	3028

Autism treatment	
Ms. Rima Berns-McGown	3028
Hon. Lisa MacLeod.....	3029

Public transit	
Ms. Christine Hogarth.....	3029
Hon. Jeff Yurek.....	3029

Health care	
Ms. Teresa J. Armstrong	3030
Hon. Christine Elliott	3030

Visitors	
Ms. Mitzie Hunter	3030

Safe and Supportive Classrooms Act, 2019, Bill 48, Ms. Thompson / Loi de 2019 pour des écoles sûres et axées sur le soutien, projet de loi 48, Mme Thompson	
Second reading agreed to	3031

Visitors	
Ms. Peggy Sattler	3031
Mr. Deepak Anand	3032
Mrs. Nina Tangri.....	3032

**INTRODUCTION OF VISITORS /
PRÉSENTATION DES VISITEURS**

Mrs. Robin Martin.....	3032
Hon. Sylvia Jones.....	3032
Mr. Robert Bailey	3032
Mr. Kevin Yarde	3032

**MEMBERS' STATEMENTS /
DÉCLARATIONS DES DÉPUTÉS**

Autism treatment	
Ms. Jill Andrew.....	3032

KF Aerospace	
Ms. Donna Skelly.....	3032

London community organizations	
Ms. Teresa J. Armstrong	3033

Abilities Centre	
Mr. Lorne Coe.....	3033

Alma Mater Society of Queen's University	
Mr. Ian Arthur	3033

Minister's conduct	
Mr. Michael Coteau	3033

Education funding	
Ms. Effie J. Triantafilopoulos	3034

Autism treatment	
Ms. Catherine Fife.....	3034

Palliative care	
Ms. Jill Dunlop.....	3034

Lung disease	
Mrs. Robin Martin.....	3034

**REPORTS BY COMMITTEES /
RAPPORTS DES COMITÉS**

Standing Committee on Government Agencies	
The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott).....	3035
Report deemed adopted.....	3035

Standing Committee on Public Accounts	
Ms. Catherine Fife.....	3035
Debate adjourned	3035

**INTRODUCTION OF BILLS /
DÉPÔT DES PROJETS DE LOI**

Comprehensive Ontario Police Services Act, 2019, Bill 68, Ms. Jones / Loi de 2019 sur la refonte complète des services de police de l'Ontario, projet de loi 68, Mme Jones	
First reading agreed to.....	3035
Hon. Sylvia Jones.....	3035

Golden Girls Act, 2019, Bill 69, Ms. Park / Loi de 2019 sur les Golden Girls, projet de loi 69, Mme Park	
First reading agreed to.....	3036
Ms. Lindsey Park	3036

Registered Professional Planners Act, 2019, Bill 70, Mr. Coe / Loi de 2019 sur les urbanistes certifiés, projet de loi 70, M. Coe	
First reading agreed to.....	3036
Mr. Lorne Coe.....	3036

PETITIONS / PÉTITIONS

Autism treatment	
Miss Monique Taylor	3036

Fish and wildlife management	
Mr. Norman Miller.....	3036

Environmental protection	
Mr. Mike Schreiner	3037

West Lincoln Memorial Hospital	
Mr. Sam Oosterhoff.....	3037

Tuition	
Ms. Teresa J. Armstrong	3037

Fish and wildlife management	
Mr. Dave Smith.....	3037

Long-term care	
Mme France Gélinas	3038

Tuition	
Mr. Ian Arthur	3038
Tuition	
Ms. Laura Mae Lindo.....	3038
Child care workers	
Ms. Rima Berns-McGown	3038
Tuition	
Ms. Laura Mae Lindo.....	3038
Arts and cultural funding	
Ms. Jill Andrew.....	3039

ORDERS OF THE DAY / ORDRE DU JOUR

Restoring Ontario's Competitiveness Act, 2019, Bill 66, Mr. Todd Smith / Loi de 2019 visant à rétablir la compétitivité de l'Ontario, projet de loi 66, M. Todd Smith	
Hon. Todd Smith.....	3039

Hon. Lisa M. Thompson	3042
Mr. Michael Parsa	3045
Ms. Jessica Bell.....	3048
Ms. Donna Skelly.....	3048
Ms. Rima Berns-McGown	3048
Mr. Robert Bailey.....	3048
Mr. Michael Parsa	3049
Ms. Catherine Fife.....	3049
Second reading debate deemed adjourned	3057

**ADJOURNMENT DEBATE / DÉBAT SUR
LA MOTION D'AJOURNEMENT**

Government accountability	
Mr. John Fraser	3057
Mr. Doug Downey	3058

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY
OF ONTARIO

Tuesday 19 February 2019

ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE
DE L'ONTARIO

Mardi 19 février 2019

The House met at 0900.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Let us begin by pausing for a moment of silence for inner thought and personal reflection.

Prayers.

ROYAL ASSENT
SANCTION ROYALE

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): I beg to inform the House that in the name of Her Majesty the Queen, Her Honour the Lieutenant Governor has been pleased to assent to a certain bill in her office.

The Deputy Clerk (Mr. Trevor Day): The following is the title of the bill to which Her Honour did assent:

An Act to amend the Labour Relations Act, 1995 / Loi modifiant la Loi de 1995 sur les relations de travail.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

SAFE AND SUPPORTIVE
CLASSROOMS ACT, 2019

LOI DE 2019 POUR DES ÉCOLES SÛRES
ET AXÉES SUR LE SOUTIEN

Resuming the debate adjourned on November 19, 2018, on the motion for second reading of the following bill:

Bill 48, An Act to amend various Acts in relation to education and child care / Projet de loi 48, Loi modifiant diverses lois en ce qui concerne l'éducation et la garde d'enfants.

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

Mr. Joel Harden: Good morning, Speaker. Good morning, colleagues. It's great to be back.

I rise this morning to talk about our friend in the government's bill on safe and supportive classrooms. This is a laudable objective. This is something everybody in this place should agree with. But in the time I have this morning, I want to talk about something that is absent in this bill and which needs to be in this bill. It's something that many members of this House have talked about at length. That's the issue of violence in our public school system, in our classrooms, and the untenable situation in which we are putting too many teachers, too many educational assistants, too many students and too many families in not providing enough supports for their children and for those working with their children to make sure our schools are safe.

The Elementary Teachers' Federation of Ontario surveyed their members two years ago on the issue of violence in the classroom. What they found was that 70% of

their membership had directly experienced or witnessed violence in the classroom. The Ontario English Catholic Teachers' Association did the same survey, and in that case we found, when that survey was conducted, that over 84% of OECTA members had experienced violence in the classroom first-hand or had witnessed it. This is, by any estimate, a serious, primal concern. It ought to be.

What troubles me is when the first major piece of legislation that my friends in government introduce, notwithstanding the public school sex ed curriculum, is this, the issue of required, mandatory math tests and ensuring student safety against any sexual misconduct—which, of course, both objectives are valid, but when you have a situation where violence is present in our schools and educators and kids are suffering, I'm wondering why that is absent from this bill.

I want to talk about two particular stories which motivate me to rise in this House this morning. I want to talk about Michelle. Michelle is an early childhood educator and she contacted me when we asked—because that's our approach as we do this work. We want to know from the front-line workers how things are going in the school system. Michelle contacted us directly and said, "Joel, let me tell you about what life is like as an ECE in my elementary classroom: 29 kids crammed in a room where there are ritual moments where the classroom has to be vacated because of concerns of violence." And as Michelle discusses in her note to me, it's not necessarily the children, it's not necessarily the talents of the teachers which is at issue; it's the size of the junior kindergarten class.

Our friends previously in government, the Liberals, introduced the wonderful concept of all-day kindergarten, but unfortunately, the class caps that apply to the educating classrooms in grades 1 through to 8 don't apply to junior and senior kindergarten. So what happens? You have a chaotic situation where teachers are put in a room with a whole bunch of four- and five-year-olds, many of whom have special needs.

In the last couple of weeks, we have been introduced to a public debate on autism, and that is going to be a major focal point of our discussion this week. What Michelle writes to me about is the need and want to do her utmost to help a child with autism in her class. But in one particular intervention where this child was becoming violent and the classroom had to be cleared for the second time on the same day, Michelle pinwheeled back, because the child had overwhelmed her in this particular moment as she was trying to break up an altercation. She fell back into the door of the classroom, hitting herself on her eye, bruising her own face. I wish I could show you, Speaker, the picture

of Michelle and what it looked like to go home that day with a massive black eye.

I want Michelle to know that everybody in this Legislature cares about her. We should be caring about safe and supportive classrooms. But do you know what, Speaker? We should also be caring for the autistic child that Michelle was attempting to help. What people in Ottawa Centre have told me, and I have briefly talked to some of my colleagues here and they've heard the same thing, is that we are about to unleash a tsunami on our public education system of kids with autism who are going into our schools with a lack of adequate supports. What I know from first-hand experience talking to people like Michelle is that the people who will be on the front lines attempting to negotiate that situation are teachers, education workers, ECEs and EAs.

0910

It's not right for us to sit in this gilded House with this wonderful pageantry of debate while we unleash violence on those of us who actually work directly with our children.

My friend the member from Whitby talked about this in 2017, and I want to quote his words. After surveying the same research that I'm talking about this morning, the member said, "There can be no doubt about the magnitude of the problem of violence in Ontario's classrooms and the need for demonstrated, meaningful action."

He went on to say, "I'm talking about the need for more services to address children's mental health as well as the need to ensure that funding for special needs is also allocated to front-line support services, to help ensure the success and well-being of every student.

"Classrooms are meant to be places of learning where teachers, like my daughter, encourage their students to explore the many parts of the curriculum. At the end of the day, teachers should be able to teach, students should not be afraid to go to school and parents should be confident in their children's safety and opportunity to receive a high-quality education."

Hear, hear to every single word that the member from Whitby said in the last sitting of the Legislature.

But here's the problem, Speaker, and here's what I heard when we convened an emergency round table on Saturday of parents of children with autism and autistic adults: We are not ready. We're not even close to being ready. We have school boards, we have parents, we have advocates for people with autism ringing an alarm bell, and all we can muster at the moment that we're in right now, in this sitting of the Legislature, is a bill requiring teachers to conduct math tests and to protect people against sexual misconduct. I'm not saying these things aren't important. But think of the magnitude of a wait-list of 23,000 people being empty—representing 34,000 students—and think of what's going to be visited upon an already strained public education system. I invite my friends in government to consider that.

I also invite you to think about something else.

When I don't know the answer to a question, my approach in life is to try to convene a conversation with people in my community to educate me. That's what

Saturday was. We have great food in Ottawa, particularly at the shawarma shops that decorate the riding. So we put out a lot of shawarma for people. And we put out a lot of boxes of Kleenex, because it was hard for parents to talk about their fears for their children walking into classrooms unprepared, knowing the progress some of them had made through intervention therapies, and worried that that progress was going to slip away.

Speaker, I spoke to Kerry, a mom back in Ottawa, as I travelled here last night. She was still up, trying to put her autistic son to bed. She and her husband have been having the conversation about what's going to happen to their son. She was telling me—and I could hear the noise in the house, in the background—of the son struggling and fighting not to go to bed. Kerry noted that that was actually progress, to be at 9:30 at night, at a moment where her son can get a half-decent sleep to get ready for therapy work the next day. The thought that on April 1 that six-year-old is going to lose access to that service which is going to help that six-year-old be successful breaks my heart. It should break the heart of every single member in this Legislature.

What I hope happens at 10:30, when we convene with our cudgels to fight in question period, and this entire week and next week is that we rise above the partisan fray; we remember that we are guardians of our public services, as legislators; we remember that it's in all of our interests to figure out how we make sure every child can thrive and succeed.

We have a situation where violence is rampant in our schools because there are not adequate supports. I submit that that should be the priority. That should be woven into this bill. We should have adequate funding so that mental health services are available to every single student in our public school system, so that the teachers who are on the front lines get the training they need, get the staffing complements that they need. That should be in this bill.

Don't tell me that the cupboard's bare. Don't tell me that we can't afford it. Don't tell me, "The deficit made me do it." This is a rich province in a rich country, and I've seen enough open-bar receptions by lobbyist organizations in this building to tell me that there is money sloshing around to make sure every kid gets a great start. Let's turn the page together for once. Let's make sure our schools are safe.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Percy Hatfield): Questions and comments?

Mr. Vijay Thanigasalam: The health, safety and well-being of our children and students is our number one priority. The government has zero tolerance for sexual abuse of Ontario's students and children. We are taking action now to make our schools and early years and child care settings safer. These changes would include the success, health and safety of Ontario's students and children, and put parents' rights and voices first. This would provide more confidence to parents that the government is working to keep our kids safe.

We are preparing to make changes to council size and composition to better serve and protect the public interest in

regulating Ontario's teaching profession. These changes to the OCT are in the public interest and help put parents and students first.

We are taking action to help to ensure that students and children who have been the subject of alleged sexual abuse or acts of child pornography by educators have access to the supports they need.

Our government is committed to improving the success of Ontario's students. We are supporting teachers to be better prepared to teach the fundamentals of math. These changes will provide more confidence to parents that the government is working to ensure that Ontario continues to have one of the best education systems in the world.

As I mentioned, the health, safety and well-being of our children and students is the number one priority for our government.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Percy Hatfield): Questions and comments?

Ms. Laura Mae Lindo: If the health, safety and security or well-being of our students is at the heart of this bill, then I am pleading with the government to listen to my colleague from Ottawa Centre.

The discussion that we just had around violence in the classroom—violence in the classroom is a symptom of underfunding of a system. That is the reason that my colleague stood up in this House to discuss concrete examples of what happens when our system says one thing but does another. If we really want to ensure that our children are safe when they go to school, if we really want to ensure that our educators are safe when they are doing one of the biggest jobs in the world—a job that we wish, as parents, we could be at home to do—then we have to make sure that we provide adequate resources for that system. We can't do that if we continue to think of the issues at hand in silos.

The cuts to autism funding are going to have an impact on the safety and security of our children and our educators in the system. My colleague from Ottawa Centre provided concrete examples of exactly what is happening here. What's missing from this bill is real, concrete resourcing of a system that has been starved of resources for far too long. A math test for educators is not going to solve that problem. Resourcing the education system, however, will solve that problem. That's what I'm hoping that our government will actually listen to.

Educators are telling them what the system needs. Our students are telling them what the system needs. Violence is a symptom of a larger problem. Violence in the classroom is a symptom of starving a system. That is where the issue is. That's the reason why we have the rallies we do.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Percy Hatfield): Questions and comments?

Mr. Paul Calandra: Welcome back, to all of my colleagues. I listened very intently to what the members opposite said, as well as the comments from both members.

It's clear that this bill isn't meant to be an omnibus bill. This bill is not meant to be a bill that solves all of the problems that we have in the education system—many of the problems that, of course, were left behind—but a lot of

problems that have developed over the years as technology has changed, as the education system has changed and what our kids need to learn has changed. This bill starts to address some of those issues.

0920

We've heard from a lot of parents, we've heard from educators that there need to be a little bit better options for security and safety of our students and of our teachers. This bill starts to address that. We've heard loud and clear from parents that mathematics is an issue with our students. This bill starts to address that. It helps to give teachers and students the tools that they need. But of course, it is not meant to be an omnibus bill. I'm actually quite surprised to hear the members opposite requesting and seeming to be advocating for the government to come forward with an omnibus bill—a large bill that would seem to solve all of the problems of the education system. I don't think that would be appropriate for the government to do.

We have a lot of listening that we still need to do. There are a lot of differences between urban and rural settings when it comes to our education system. There are a lot of differences that we're hearing from board to board. We have to solve some of those problems. But this bill addresses some of those very important immediate needs that parents have highlighted for us, that the minister in her initial consultations and all of the members have heard: specifically, keeping our students safe; giving the resources to our teachers so that they can be better prepared to teach our students math and so that they are safe; making changes to the College of Teachers. These are all good first steps in revamping our education system to give our students and to give our teachers the tools that they need to succeed.

I do look forward to working with the members opposite to bring forward even more bills to improve the system for students and our teachers.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Percy Hatfield): Questions and comments?

Ms. Peggy Sattler: It's a pleasure to rise to offer some thoughts on the comments from my colleague the member for Ottawa Centre.

He talked about an emergency round table that he held in Ottawa on the weekend. Speaker, I had a similar town hall on education just last week. I have to say that it is somewhat ironic that we're here this morning talking about safe and supportive classrooms. When I had my education town hall, I heard from parents who are very concerned about the potential to remove the caps on class sizes and to have increased class sizes, particularly in the early years.

I heard from a parent who has a three-year-old little boy with autism. That three-year-old will be eligible for full-day kindergarten this coming September, but she's terrified about the prospect of sending him into a classroom that could have 30, 31, 32 children—who knows? She is very worried that this will not be a safe and supportive environment for her little boy.

This bill refers to service animals in classrooms. That will be a very supportive thing for a number of students

with autism, but it will do nothing for that tsunami of young people with autism who are going to be relying on our schools for support because the Conservatives want to change the autism program, which is going to deny services to thousands and thousands of students with autism across this province.

There is no question that the provisions in this bill are needed, especially around the sexual assault. However, we need to do much, much more if we are truly to ensure safe and supportive classrooms for Ontario students.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Percy Hatfield): We'll return to the member from Ottawa Centre for his summation.

Mr. Joel Harden: I want to thank the members from Scarborough–Rouge Park, Kitchener Centre, Markham–Stouffville and London West for their comments.

In the short amount of time I have here, I want to invite us all to put ourselves in the shoes of other folks who are about to face a pretty challenging testing experience. I want you to put yourself in the shoes of a teacher, of an educational assistant, of an ECE, attempting to break up an altercation in the classroom between a child who needs more help with autism services and a raucous and unruly environment.

I want to invite you, as the member from Whitby said in the previous Legislature, to the teachers in Durham region who have been issued Kevlar-grade clothing to prevent against biting and scratching and violence in the classroom—put ourselves in the shoes of those people.

Put ourselves in the shoes of Kerry's son—Kerry, who I spoke to last night—who cannot negotiate conflict well, who flaps his hands and cries and screams, and has had some progress in his own development but will be pushed into the public school system with little support. Put ourselves in the shoes of that six-year-old boy and ask ourselves, "Can Ontario do better?"

Are we going to spend every day in this place arguing about the deficit and about how little money we have to help Kerry and Michelle and that six-year-old boy? Are we going to dig deep and realize, frankly, to my friend from Markham–Stouffville, we do need an omnibus bill right now with appropriate supports to be able to deliver what people in the education system need? You folks are great at omnibus bills. I see them all the time. Bring one forward with the adequate supports that kids and teachers need. Bring it now; we need it. I'm telling you we need it. If we could work on it collectively together in the next two weeks, the people of this province would stand up and applaud all of us.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Percy Hatfield): Further debate?

Ms. Donna Skelly: Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and good morning. I'm pleased to have an opportunity this morning to speak in favour of Bill 48, our government's Safe and Supportive Classrooms Act.

I believe that in the province of Ontario, our children deserve to feel safe when interacting with their teachers at school, as well as to expect their teachers to have the required skill set in order to help improve their

mathematics skills. Parents should not have to worry about our children being harmed by those we are trusting to educate them, especially in a system that provides one of the best educations in the world.

Mr. Speaker, the title of Bill 48 says it all. We want our classrooms to be safe and supportive places where our children can thrive. We want them to learn the skills they need to succeed in the real world once they leave school.

One of the ways the Safe and Supportive Classrooms Act does this is by introducing math proficiency tests that teachers must take before they can become fully certified under the Ontario College of Teachers Act. This is to address the slow but steady decrease in standardized math scores that we have seen in Ontario in recent years. We need to reverse this trajectory, and this is one tool to help do so.

As parliamentary assistant to the Minister of Economic Development, Job Creation and Trade, as well as a member of the Standing Committee on Finance and Economic Affairs, I've had an opportunity to travel around the province and listen to the concerns of many groups of people, including employers. One thing that I keep hearing and that our government keeps hearing is that there is a shortage of skilled workers right across Ontario. There is a mismatch. Students are spending years in school and not learning the skills they need to have successful careers and fill increasing numbers of vacancies in many good, well-paying jobs. It's important for students to graduate with the skills they need to be successful in their future education, their work, and elsewhere. This is something that we have heard from students, parents and employers. In particular, the purpose of our "for the parents" consultation last year was to solicit parental and public feedback on what they want to see as part of their children's education. I know that the Minister of Education and our government are encouraged that thousands and thousands of responses were provided. We are analyzing the results of the consultation so that we can make the necessary reforms to improve our province's education system.

I also would like to point out, Mr. Speaker, that our government is currently holding consultations with our partners in the education sector that relate to hiring practices and more. These consultations, which will be wrapping up at the end of this week, are part of our government's commitment to listen and figure out how we can make our province's services work better for everyone.

In today's world, our children need to be proficient in numeracy and financial literacy. I believe this is absolutely essential. It is critical to their success and independence in the long term. In order for them to be proficient, we need to help ensure that our educators are also proficient in these areas. We have learned, as mentioned in earlier debates, that if teachers are not confident in the fundamental tenets of math—or any subject, for that matter—then there is a natural hesitancy in teaching that subject.

0930

It is well documented that a problem has existed in this area for a very long time. As a parent of two young adults, who remembers helping my sons with math homework

when they were in elementary school and high school, I find it alarming that only half of grade 6 students are able to meet provincial math standards. This lack of a strong mathematics foundation in elementary school is carried over into our secondary school system, with over half of students not meeting provincial standards in grade 9 applied math classes.

As one of the four major components of the STEM academic discipline, mathematics is a subject that is vital for most college and university programs, as well as in so many well-paying, skilled jobs in the workforce right across Ontario.

I want to make it clear that our government is not putting the blame for these low performances solely on teachers, but as I said earlier, if a teacher feels that they are not comfortable in the basics of mathematics, then they are likely to be somewhat hesitant in teaching math to the students. By putting math proficiency tests in place, as Bill 48 does, students and parents can be assured that their teachers have the skill set and the knowledge required to help their children succeed.

There are other provisions in the Safe and Supportive Classrooms Act that I would like to highlight briefly. First, passing Bill 48 will allow our government to respond in an appropriate manner to a governance review that has been under way since last spring by the Ontario College of Teachers. This is important to ensure that the College of Teachers is more accountable to Ontarians, especially to parents who want to make sure their children are being taught by the best in their field.

Second, schedule 2 of Bill 48 allows the government to make an amendment to the Education Act with respect to establishing policy and guidelines for service animals in schools, and requires school boards to comply with them. This is an important step to take so that students with special needs can have the support of their service animals when they are in school.

As we know, many visually impaired or blind students across the province use guide dogs to help them safely get to where they need to be. Others with special needs use therapy dogs to help enhance their educational experience. These dogs do a great service to these individual children, their families and, indeed, to all Ontarians, and this is to be encouraged. This is why those who use service animals should not be faced with hurdles when it comes to bringing them into their schools. Bill 48 will remedy this situation.

There must also be absolutely no tolerance for adults who abuse their power when they are in the presence of children—absolutely no tolerance. As a mother, this is very important to me. Educators have a duty to keep our children safe when they are in our classrooms. This is something that both parents and students should expect without exception.

The Safe and Supportive Classrooms Act is explicit in what exactly constitutes professional misconduct by a teacher or early childhood educator and what does not. Under Bill 48, professional misconduct includes sexual abuse of a child, sexual misconduct, prohibited acts involving child pornography, and prescribed sexual acts.

By listing these acts explicitly and clearly as actions of professional misconduct in both the Early Childhood Educators Act, 2007, and the Ontario College of Teachers Act, 1996, our government is making sure there can be no confusion about what constitutes inappropriate behaviour toward children.

Our children deserve to have the best education possible in Ontario to prepare them for successful futures. Our children deserve no less.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Percy Hatfield): Questions and comments?

Mr. Michael Mantha: Good morning to you, Speaker. It's great to be back on behalf of the good people of Algoma-Manitoulin.

We're going to be able to see the stark difference as far as—of course, we're not opposed to the items that are within the context of this bill; however, there's much, much more that can be done.

With that note, before I go any further with the brief comments that I have, I want to give a shout-out to Mrs. Heather Cudmore, who is the teacher in the grade 4 and 5 over at Blind River Public School. I took them up on their challenge to come into the classroom. Actually, they sent an email to me with a bunch of questions, and I responded to them, "Better than answering them in an email, how about I come and visit your classroom?" So I did. I have to tell you that on normal occasions when you meet up with adults, organizations and stuff, you kind of know what the setting is, but in front of a classroom of grade 4s and 5s, my butterflies were at an all-time high. You just never know what's going to come out of those kids.

What I do want to tell the kids is—remember when we were talking about symbolism when I was in the classroom? And it's unfortunate, but I will send you a picture of it, kids—is that over my shoulder here, there is an owl, and you know what that owl means. Right in front of me, I'm looking at the eagle. That is the context of what we need to do with this bill. As I look up at the eagle—I listened to what you brought forward, a lot of the issues that you had as students, along with your teachers, so I'm doing my job in regard to being vigilant. I'm going to have my opportunity to speak, I hope, to this bill very shortly. I'm going to be bringing ideas forward. I'm going to be bringing amendments that possibly could be done, and hopefully we'll get it done at committee.

The role of this government is to look up to that eagle and be wise and listen to the suggestions that are coming from this side. Remember when we talked about being open and being a government for all the people and not just fighting all the time?

Again, it was such a pleasure meeting with you guys in your classroom. Like I said, any time you want me to come back, I'm there for you.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Percy Hatfield): Questions and comments?

Mr. Robert Bailey: It's a pleasure to rise today and to represent and speak on behalf of the riding of Sarnia-Lambton.

I also had the opportunity over the intersession break to attend a couple of schools and speak to grade 5 and 6

classes. They certainly can ask you a number of interesting questions, as the member from Algoma–Manitoulin said.

I remember the first time I went to a school, about three years ago now, and when I went in there I made the mistake of answering a question—one young man said, “Do you know my dad? He’s so-and-so.” I said, “Oh, yes.” Another hand went up—“Do you know my mother?” Before long, it was that kind of whole narrative. Finally, the teacher spoke up and said, “Class, just a minute. Let’s just assume that Mr. Bailey probably knows all your moms, dads, grandparents and siblings. Let’s move on to some other subject.” So I was careful the other day. I started the session out by saying, “I’m pretty sure I know a number of your parents and grandparents, so don’t ask me that so that we won’t get caught down that road.”

Anyway, we are here about Bill 48 today, and I appreciate the opportunity to say a few words on it. The member from Flamborough–Glanbrook mentioned a number of issues: the sexual abuse of students or children by any member of the teachers—we want to make sure that that is put in place; the review of the Ontario College of Teachers; also the study and the emphasis on mathematics. Also, it’s very interesting that we’re going to take another look at service animals for therapy and for comfort, so we make sure we have more clarity around the province for those children who need service animals in the classroom and on school buses so they can take part in the school year like they should.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Percy Hatfield): Questions and comments?

M^{me} France Gélinas: It’s a pleasure to talk about the Safe and Supportive Classrooms Act. The bill has to live up to its name. The bill is called “safe and supportive classrooms,” and when a parent of a child with autism reads this, they really read that as, “There is going to be something in that bill to support my child.” But it’s not the case. There are some good steps forward to make our classrooms safer, but there are some huge gaps that we all know have been there—whether we talk about violence in our classrooms, whether we talk about children with autism needing to be supported.

We had Sean and Julia Staddon from Sudbury organize a rally in Sudbury on Friday. On Friday afternoon, the wind was blowing, it was snowing; you couldn’t see four feet in front of you. They came out by the dozens to support kids with autism.

0940

A woman named Chantal Chartrand from my riding, from Capreol, came out. She has two children with autism. Her daughter was one of the lucky ones who—she has severe autism, but she gets close to 20 hours of therapy a week. You should see the difference it made in that child in the last year, since September, since she started intensive behavioural therapy. You would not recognize her. She’s verbal now. She controls her tantrums. She’s a completely different child. But she has Gavin. Gavin is only three years old. He has been diagnosed also. She’s very worried. She wants a supportive classroom for all children.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Percy Hatfield): Questions and comments?

M^{me} Natalia Kusendova: Bonjour, monsieur le Président. C’est un plaisir d’être de retour dans cette Chambre avec tous mes collègues. Je suis fière de prendre la parole aujourd’hui pour appuyer le projet de loi 48 sur la sécurité et le soutien dans les classes scolaires. Ma collègue la députée de Flamborough–Glanbrook a parlé avec tellement d’éloquence des fondements de ce projet de loi.

Notre gouvernement reconnaît qu’il reste encore beaucoup de travail à faire pour améliorer les résultats des élèves en mathématiques. Nous voulons aider à mettre nos enseignants en la meilleure position possible pour atteindre le succès avant même d’entrer dans la classe. Les modifications de la loi 48 proposées vont donner aux parents la confiance qu’ils méritent, sachant que le gouvernement s’emploie à faire en sorte que les enseignants de l’Ontario possèdent les compétences fondamentales pour enseigner les mathématiques.

Some of you may know that I’m an immigrant to Canada. I came at age 12. Just to give some perspective about where we stand in math, when I entered our school system in grade 7, I actually didn’t have to put any effort into the study of mathematics until grade 11. I was so advanced, coming from a European system. So there is a lot of work that we need to do to ensure that our students are successful in fundamentals such as mathematics, literacy and technology going forward.

On est confiant que ce projet de loi va soutenir les étudiants, les familles, les enseignants et tous les conseils scolaires en Ontario.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Percy Hatfield): We’ll return to the member from Flamborough–Glanbrook for her two-minute summation.

Ms. Donna Skelly: Mr. Speaker, I really do genuinely believe that our children deserve the best education they can possibly get in the province of Ontario. I do believe that our children deserve to be safe and protected when they are attending schools—elementary schools, high schools and schools of post-secondary education—right across Ontario.

Parents should never ever have to worry about their children being harmed by those they trust to take care of them at school. They should also believe that they are getting the best education by people who are qualified and comfortable providing it. They should not have to worry about their children learning the basics, especially something as important as math.

As I mentioned earlier, as the parliamentary assistant to the Minister of Economic Development, Job Creation and Trade, as well as a member of the Standing Committee on Finance and Economic Affairs, I did have the chance to travel across Ontario on several occasions. Without a doubt—and my colleagues across the floor who were able to attend some of these meetings will agree—the number one issue raised is, we cannot find people to fill high-paying jobs. They don’t have the skill sets. That was the number one issue raised at every meeting we held across Ontario. One of the problems: They’re not getting the basics in math. This will address that. It’s an important step towards addressing that void that is becoming a critical issue.

I also want to make sure that our parents feel comfortable that the people they entrust with their children will not harm their children. Bill 48 will provide those assurances. There must be absolutely no tolerance for adults who abuse their power when they are in the presence of children—no tolerance.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Percy Hatfield): Further debate?

Ms. Jill Andrew: Good morning, Mr. Speaker. I've seen first-hand, as an educator, what effective structural conditions coupled with caring and safe adults who support the growth of our children can look like.

The Conservative Mike Harris years saw the sudden sidelining of arts education—something Mike Harris referred to as a frill—and his introduction of standardized curriculum which took a problematic one-size-fits-all approach to schooling that totally ignored different student approaches to learning and unique student needs. These approaches contributed to what unsafe, unsupportive failed classrooms look like today.

Unsafe, unsupportive classrooms are underfunded. Our Ontario schools are currently underfunded and literally falling apart to the tune of \$16 billion in school disrepairs. There are too many students in classrooms bursting at the seams and far too little resources for special-needs children who continue to be an afterthought for this Conservative government. One only has to look at this government's inhumane cuts to the Ontario Autism Program to see just how disconnected this government is to the real needs of families across the province raising children with autism spectrum disorders.

One size does not fit all. Consult with families and listen to them. Listen to parents of autistic children like Nicole Wilson. Nicole is a wait-list parent. Her son was diagnosed at two-and-a-half-years old and is non-verbal. He will be six this year and he hasn't received any services. In Nicole's own words, she said, "I am completely crushed that my son will never see quality services, be given a chance to be independent one day, or use his own voice."

There are too few education workers, mental health workers and EAs, and not nearly enough time for one-on-one help for kids. Class sizes must be capped. Otherwise, our children cannot learn. Our children deserve better.

Our children will continue to fall through the cracks, Speaker, without classroom caps, and violence in classrooms and behavioural issues will continue to soar. Educators and classroom staff are doing their best. They're literally digging into their own pockets at times to provide supports that students, parents and guardians should be able to expect from their schools, and their schools from their province.

Courtesy of the former Liberal government, we continue to see these dismal effects of a Conservative education funding formula that the Liberal government refused to rewrite over the past 15 years, despite the cries of parent and school communities, trustees, education associations and advocacy groups begging not to see children's education go backwards from bad to worse.

A rewritten education funding formula rooted in equity instead of the often-misused concept of equality would

breathe new life into our schools and into needs-specific resources students require to thrive. It's clear that both the Liberals and the Conservatives confused the terminology, and our children continue to pay the price. As Fix Our Schools so eloquently stated on the legacy of the broken funding formula, "In a nutshell, they confused equal for equitable; and therefore funding student needs, school needs and community needs were nowhere in the equation."

A one-size-fits-all approach to funding misses the fact that sometimes unequal dollars must be spent in order to actually reach equity.

Bill 48 cannot be the answer to children who get nosebleeds in the summer because of the heat in the classrooms. Bill 48 cannot be the answer to those who are freezing in class in the winter. It cannot be the answer to kids learning in school portables year-round despite weather conditions. The Conservative answer to our students was to cut \$100 million that was going to be used for school repairs.

This Conservative government scrapped Parents Reaching Out Grants without letting parents even know of their decision beforehand. The government cut specialized programming for elementary and secondary students across the province to the tune of \$25 million last year. Included on the chopping block: Focus on Youth after-school programs targeting underprivileged, lower-income and often racialized youth; in-class tutors—so much for student success; Indigenous-focused collaborative inquiry; and the \$2,500 SpeakUp grants led by students—so much for student voice.

Unsafe and unsupportive schools are also ones where students do not see themselves, their realities and their histories reflected in the things they're learning and the hidden curriculum in the hallways, window displays—you name it. The Conservatives cut the Indigenous curriculum writing sessions and have placed our children in danger by mandating schools use an outdated, old health and physical education, or sex ed curriculum, from 1998 which excludes mention of gender identity, consent, cyberbullying, LGBT lives, and social media safety.

How can this government expect to keep children safe and supported if they're peddling a curriculum from the last century in 2019 and threatening educators with snitch lines. Heck, I had a Motorola flip phone in 1998 and I used a typewriter.

0950

I am in full support of throwing the book at any adult who sexually abuses children in schools. I am a survivor. Bill 48 aims to revoke the teaching licence of educators found guilty of sexual abuse, and that is spot-on. I will give any Conservative a high-five to throwing the book at sexual abusers. However, Bill 48 is an omnibus bill that jumbles things together that should never be in conversation with one another. Teachers, math scores and sexual abuse—I don't see the logic. Combining these is ridiculous and it takes away time from actually debating each important issue properly.

Again, this is an omnibus bill meant to distract people from what's really going on—a lack of transparency by

this Conservative government. Case in point: Bill 48 seeks to eliminate the public interest committee at the Ontario College of Teachers. I'm a member. This committee is for us, the public. The independence and self-regulatory role of the College of Teachers is put at risk by allowing the Conservative government wide-ranging powers over its governance. The last thing we need is more Conservative insiders stripping the voices of teachers in the public interest while government-appointed members—friends—take the helm.

Bill 48 is requiring teachers to take a math proficiency test at the beginning of their career, while simultaneously cancelling math supports for teachers. It just doesn't make sense. Furthermore, what is the proposal for a mandatory math test for teachers based on? Is there enough data to show that this kind of testing has been proven to improve children's test scores? Sam Hammond, president of ETFO, called the mandatory test "unwarranted and unnecessary." Have consultations with parents and educators been conducted to ensure this is the right approach? Has literally anyone—anyone—asked for this change?

The truth is, this government is proposing an ill-thought-out answer to a question no one has asked. Even if we hold for a moment the idea that a student's score on standardized tests is some sort of an indicator of their success—which it has been proven not to be—it is still yet to be proven that making teachers take a mandatory math test would address student problems more so than properly resourcing schools with educational supports in the classroom for individualized student attention, capped classroom sizes, better learning conditions, mental health workers and EAs.

To reiterate, classrooms are underfunded, under-resourced and overcrowded. Let's name the elephant in the room. Bill 48 does absolutely nothing to address the real problems in the classroom and in the curriculum. Class sizes are growing, and this government has threatened to take away caps on kindergarten to grade 3 classes. This reduces the amount of time teachers can spend with kids individually so those who need the support will actually get the support. Kids are falling through the cracks. To reiterate, the government cut \$25 million just a couple of months ago from programs that help the most marginalized, disadvantaged, peripheral students we have seen. Again, this is the same government that has derailed and disbanded the Provincial Advocate for Children and Youth, an independent voice for Ontario's most vulnerable young people.

It appears the Conservatives aren't realizing that the parents and children of Ontario are not buying what they are selling. Parents like Hillary will continue to fight the government to ensure their kids aren't dragged backward by a government that thinks children are efficiencies. Our children deserve better. Ontario families deserve better and they deserve transparency at every turn.

Let's call Bill 48 what it is: an opportunity for the Conservative government to make sweeping changes to the Early Childhood Educators Act, the Ontario College of Teachers Act and the Teaching Profession Act all at once,

and at breakneck speed, to increase its control over the governance structure of what should be the self-regulating College of Teachers. Let's try respecting teachers for a change. Let's try supporting teachers for a change.

Again, I support Bill 48's call to throw the book at sexual abusers. There aren't enough books to throw at those folks. But the rest of the bill needs a drastic overhaul. I ask the government to give our children what children, parents, guardians, educators, social workers, academics and doctors are asking for: better schools, functioning schools, fixed schools, schools that offer a curriculum that actually saves lives, and supports for the kids who are most at the margins.

I plead with the government: Listen first, act second. Do not let the power of being the government go to your heads.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Percy Hatfield): Questions and comments?

Mr. Sam Oosterhoff: I wish to welcome all my colleagues back to the Legislature. I hope you had a very good rest where you had the opportunity also to interact a lot with your constituents and bring their concerns back to this House, because that is, of course, the most important task of each and every one of us as elected representatives for our respective constituencies.

I want to thank, of course, in that context, the member for St. Paul's for speaking very passionately about some of the issues that she felt with this piece of legislation. I understand, having sat in opposition myself for a year and a half prior to being elected to the government benches along with so many of my colleagues in a truly historic majority government for the Progressive Conservatives, a government for the people—I understand some of the frustration that there can be on the opposition benches when it comes to making sure that you're speaking about particular areas that maybe you feel are very important.

Here on the government benches, we understand the need to really listen to what the parents, the students and educators across Ontario are saying. What they've spoken to us about is a lot of these concerns that we see reflected in the bill. They've spoken to us about the need to address math scores here in the province of Ontario. They've spoken to us about the need to change the Ontario College of Teachers and make it more responsive. And they've also, of course, spoken to us about the need to ensure that we have more supports for those children and families who need service animals.

I'm very excited to be able to respond to the minister's—sorry, the member's comments this morning—

Ms. Jill Andrew: Foreshadowing. Thank you.

Mr. Sam Oosterhoff: Give it a little bit of time. We know you'll cross the benches.

I have to disagree with a component of the premise. I think it's very important that we see this as what it is: an effort on behalf of our government to show support to our students and those who need it most.

Thank you very much for your speech this morning.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Percy Hatfield): Questions and comments?

M. Guy Bourguin: Il me fait plaisir de me lever aujourd'hui. Je souhaite aussi la bienvenue à tous les

collègues. On revient pour essayer de faire des changements qui comptent pour les personnes de l'Ontario.

J'ai eu la chance cette semaine—surtout avec tous les changements proposés par le gouvernement—de rencontrer les parents du petit Cedric Roy de Kapuskasing. Cedric a besoin de 20 heures de thérapie par semaine. Il les reçoit à l'école. Mais avec le nouveau plan qu'ils offrent, il va plutôt recevoir un petit deux heures de thérapie par semaine. Deux heures; son spécialiste lui a prescrit 20 heures. On parle d'un enfant autiste. Ses parents disent que pour eux autres—il faut que vous compreniez la région de Mushkegowuk. Kapuskasing est à deux heures de Timmins. La différence que ces parents-là doivent compenser pour que le petit Cedric puisse avoir ses 20 heures de thérapie, il va falloir qu'ils dépensent la différence pour se rendre à Timmins pour que les services soient donnés.

Ça, c'est la réalité. C'est la réalité des coupures que les familles vont ressentir. C'est bien bon de dire qu'on va faire les changements pour les mathématiques; ça ne s'arrête pas aux mathématiques. Vous vivez une réalité; les parents vont vivre une réalité; le petit Cedric va vivre une réalité. Pour le petit Cedric, ça améliore sa condition de vie. On joue avec la vie du monde puis on s'arrête aux mathématiques. On s'arrête sur des principes quand on joue avec la vie des enfants.

Je peux vous dire, ces parents-là, ils ne sont pas les seuls. J'ai des commettants de Smooth Rock Falls, aussi : même situation. Ce qui fait que je dis au gouvernement : écoutez ce côté de la Chambre quand on vous dit que les effets que ces jeunes vont recevoir, qu'eux et leurs familles vont vivre, c'est important.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Percy Hatfield): Questions and comments?

Ms. Goldie Ghamari: I would like to start off first by taking this opportunity to thank the Minister of Education for introducing this very important bill, and all my colleagues for the really informative and interesting discussion this morning.

Life skills is an area that is often neglectfully overlooked. A few weeks ago, I hosted Minister Todd Smith for a meet-and-greet with BIAs, business owners and farmers from across the riding of Carleton, and the lack of basic skills possessed by children and youth is an issue that came up time and time again.

1000

Graham Green of Abby Hill Farms explained that many of the students who come to work on his farm don't have basic math skills, while others are unable to even cook for themselves. Jeffrey Morris, owner of the Manotick Messenger and of the Barrhaven Independent, noted that he knows honour students who can't even read an analog clock.

Somewhere along the line over the last 15 years, we have failed our students. We need to make sure our students are well equipped to cope with stress, to feel confident in their skills and to hope for a great future in whatever career path they choose.

I want to thank everyone who took the time to take part in our public consultation and provided their feedback.

Know that your voice was heard and that the rich and extensive data our government has collected will provide a pathway forward for years to come. The Safe and Supportive Classrooms Act, if passed, will not only make sure that children are learning in a safe and supportive space, but it will also ensure that we have one of the best education and child care systems in the world. We are sending a very clear message with the proposed changes in Bill 48. The safety, health and well-being of our children in this province is our government's number one priority.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Percy Hatfield): Questions and comments?

Mrs. Jennifer (Jennie) Stevens: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Bill 48, the Safe and Supportive Classrooms Act, is a crucial piece of legislation, but let's not stray from the root cause of the problem that we are speaking of today: Classrooms are underfunded. This is the bottom line. The resources needed to provide enough one-on-one time with students are simply not there, let alone for the students who struggle with certain subjects, students who require accommodations to their type of learning. No two children are the same. We cannot treat them the same.

Over the past couple of months, I have had many constituents come to speak to me in my constituent office. They're voicing concerns with problematic classroom sizes and classroom ratios. One incident led to a kindergarten student being hurt after another child was using an object to fight with him. His teacher could not keep an eye on all 34 students—four- and five-year-olds, might I add. The results? An injury that could have turned into a hospital visit very quickly. This government doesn't seem to realize that these cuts, too, will directly affect their own children.

How exactly does the math proficiency test at the beginning of a teacher's career address the issue of irrational classroom ratios? Short answer: It doesn't. Teachers are simply not able to accommodate all students within a day or to provide each child with critical one-on-one time. Could it be that math scores are declining because the teachers do not have the time to sit and explain and to ensure that each of their students understands the material? Of course it is.

This government needs to connect the dots between test scores, classroom sizes, funding and accessibilities. Only then can we truly begin to provide an environment that strives for and supports our children.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Percy Hatfield): And we will return to the member from Toronto—St. Paul's.

Ms. Jill Andrew: I would like to thank everyone in the House today who has spoken in regard to Bill 48.

It is ironic, because Bill 48 is called the Safe and Supportive Classrooms Act, but what this bill is actually doing is that it's putting skills before the safety of our kids and educators. The bill privileges math scores, while children with autism and other special needs go forgotten.

It is a concern to me that we're not addressing the real issues here. Our schools are underfunded, our schools are under-resourced and our schools are overcrowded. In order to get to the root cause and to really create safe and

supportive classrooms for our kids—who I'm certain we all care about, regardless of our party affiliations—we have to do what's right: that is, to put our personal interests and our personal egos aside and speak to parents, speak to autism advocates, speak to children advocates. Don't bully them. Don't try to get them to like your agenda or agree with your defunct autism plan. That's not the way we do it. We speak to parents and we hear what they have to say. We speak to children, we visit schools and we see what's actually happening.

We need more resources. We need more caring adults in the room who get it, who are there to teach, there to support, there to encourage our children's thriving in the classroom and in the school community at large. That is what Bill 48 really needs to address. We do that with inclusive curriculum. We do that with physical and health education that's from this century, not the last century. We do that by addressing the real issues—not an omnibus bill that puts everything into a pot and stirs.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Percy Hatfield): Further debate? The member for Kitchener–Conestoga.

Mr. Mike Harris: Thank you, Mr. Speaker, for affording me the opportunity to rise in the Legislature today. It's great to see you. It's great to be back. I'm happy to have a chance today to speak on Bill 48, the Safe and Supportive Classrooms Act. It is an honour and a privilege to do so.

Before I begin, I would like to take a moment and welcome back all of my colleagues to the House following the winter recess. These past couple of months were well deserved for all of the members in this chamber, as we have been working non-stop since day one and getting strong results. These winter months have been a great opportunity for all of us to reconnect with the constituents and stakeholders of our respective ridings.

It's always a good idea once in a while to place into Hansard a recounting of an MPP's riding itinerary, if only to compliment their hard-working staff, who keep operations humming 52 weeks a year. Last Thursday, I chaired a CEO round table facilitated by the Greater Kitchener Waterloo Chamber of Commerce, which urged our government to continue our current path towards promoting economic growth. Following that, I visited a south Kitchener manufacturer whose power pipe drain recovery system is gaining market share internationally. The next day, I joined my outstanding regional colleague the member for Kitchener South–Hespeler, Amy Fee, in opening the Grand River Hospital's new pain management centre—and before that, St. Jude's School in Kitchener for the official opening of Spectrum Academy, Ontario's first full-day education and therapy-integrated school for autistic children. Before I continue, I want to compliment my colleague for her passion and dedication on the autism file and also for her fight on getting service dogs in our schools, which is such an important part of this bill. That afternoon, I also sat down with Waterloo Catholic District School Board to discuss some schools in my riding and some of the topics found in Bill 48.

It is not as if our government took our foot off the pedal these past few months. We accomplished a great deal in a

short time as it pertains to policy and planning. In the time this Legislature was not sitting, our Premier and government did not sit on our hands. We did not stop working to make Ontario open for business or to save Ontario families time and money.

In December, our government made very significant announcements on the GO train file. The Honourable Jeff Yurek, Minister of Transportation, came down to Kitchener in mid-December to inform my constituents that there would be an increase in GO train service for Waterloo region. Then, on January 7, I am proud to say that our government's 25% GO train service increase officially came into effect.

We kicked off the new year on the right foot by freezing driver and vehicle fees on January 1. Let me say that this is only the tip of the iceberg in terms of what the government has accomplished on the auto file since the beginning of 2019. On January 9, for example, our government launched consultations to lower auto insurance rates in Ontario. Then, on January 22, we expanded Ontario's Automated Vehicle Pilot Program.

On that note, let me add that our government takes digitization very seriously. We are taking some much-needed action to modernize the way we do things here in Ontario and to bring our business services up to speed with the rest of North America. For example, on January 24, we launched new technology at a truck inspection station that saved commercial carriers time, money and fuel.

Even my own private member's bill, Bill 50, the Cutting Red Tape for Motor Vehicle Dealers Act, which passed second reading on November 22 and was ordered to the Standing Committee on the Legislative Assembly, harnesses the benefits of digitization by proposing that registration of newly purchased vehicles be streamlined by allowing auto dealers to complete the registrations in-house at their dealerships in an electronic format.

We know that our work, although hotly contested in this chamber at times, is paying off already and in a big way. For example, we found out on February 8 that employment in Ontario increased by over 41,000 new jobs in January alone. It's incredible, especially when one considers that we added 34,000 full-time positions.

It is no wonder things are going so well for Ontario's economy under our government's Open for Business mandate, when one considers that just this past January the Canadian Federation of Independent Business gave Ontario an A-minus on its red tape report card. That is a drastic increase from the C-plus rating that it gave the previous government in 2018. To hammer this point home, our Premier, the Honourable Doug Ford, was the first in Ontario's history to receive the Golden Scissors Award from the Canadian Federation of Independent Business. I'm proud to be part of the positive change that is sweeping across this province.

It's time to continue pushing forward our government's mandate in the Legislature now that we have returned, and it starts today with Bill 48. It was Family Day yesterday, Mr. Speaker, and this bill and our government's mandate are all about serving the families of this province and making sure that they can grow and prosper.

Our government does not simply want to be a government for today but also a government for tomorrow. We care about not only the short-term interests of this province but also the long-term outcome. We want to do everything within our power to set up future generations for success. Ensuring the long-term prosperity of Ontario's families begins with improving our education system and ensuring that our children are set up for success in the economy of tomorrow. As the father of five beautiful children, I can clearly see the strength and importance of this message. I'd be remiss if I didn't mention them, Mr. Speaker. My children, quite frankly, are what motivate me to perform at my very best, day in and day out, as an elected official.

Finally, Bill 48, the Safe and Supportive Classrooms Act is being debated here today in the name of this objective: serving the educational interests of our children. Bill 48 was introduced to ensure that our education system lives up to the standards and visions that we have for Ontario's future generations.

With that, Mr. Speaker, I move, pursuant to standing order 48, that the question now be put.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Percy Hatfield): Mr. Harris has moved that the question be now put. I'm of the understanding that we've had 22 speakers, five days of debate—nine hours and 38 minutes approximately. I'm satisfied that there has been sufficient debate to allow this question to be put to the House.

Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? I heard a no.

All those in favour of the motion that the question be now put, please say "aye."

All those opposed to the motion that the question be now put, please say "nay."

In my opinion, the ayes have it. I declare the motion carried.

PRIVATE MEMBERS' PUBLIC BUSINESS

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Percy Hatfield): Orders of the day? I recognize the member from Whitby, the chief government whip.

Mr. Lorne Coe: I seek unanimous consent to put forward a motion without notice regarding the notice dates for two items of private members' business. I move that the notice for ballot 47, standing in the name of Mr. Coe, and ballot item 48—

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Percy Hatfield): The member is seeking unanimous consent. Does the member have unanimous consent? Agreed.

Back to the member for Whitby.

Mr. Lorne Coe: I move that the notice for ballot item 47, standing in the name of Mr. Coe, and ballot item 48, standing in the name of Ms. Park, be waived.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Percy Hatfield): Mr. Coe has moved that the notice for ballot item 47, standing in the name of Mr. Coe, and ballot item 48, standing in the name of Ms. Park, be waived. Is it the pleasure of the House that this carry? Carried.

Motion agreed to.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Percy Hatfield): Seeing the time on the clock, that we're so close to 10:15, we will now stand in recess until question period at 10:30 this morning.

The House recessed from 1012 to 1030.

INTRODUCTION OF VISITORS

Miss Monique Taylor: It gives me great pride to rise today as a new grandparent.

Applause.

Miss Monique Taylor: My new granddaughter, Sophia, came into the world on February 15. I'm so proud of her mom and dad and my beautiful daughter, Destinee. Thank you so much.

I'd also like to welcome to the Legislature this morning Chris Day, who is a resident in my constituency. Welcome to Queen's Park, Chris.

Mr. Ross Romano: It's a pleasure today to rise, especially after the Family Day weekend, and welcome to the House today my entire family from Sault Ste. Marie: my wife, Heather Mendes—one need only look at my wife and know I'm an overachiever—and my three young children, Jayden, Jackson and Jarrett, just over here in the wing.

Ms. Suze Morrison: I'm pleased today to welcome to the House Vanshika Dhawan, my legislative intern who will be with us for about another six weeks. I'm so happy to have you here in the House. Welcome.

Ms. Jane McKenna: I see they're just coming in now. I would just like to say little Hazel is here today with her mom, Stephanie, and her sister, Nola, and my eldest daughter, Jennifer, all the way from Windsor West, so the members here will be grateful to welcome them. She's giving us a wave. She's here today for a great cause. If anyone wants to donate, please go down to the cafeteria after for World Down Syndrome Day. It's approaching on March 21. We're thrilled to have her here.

Ms. Laura Mae Lindo: I'm so excited to rise today and wish my mommy a very happy birthday. Some may know her as a graduate at 79. Today she's 80. Happy birthday, Mommy.

Mr. Randy Pettapiece: I'd like to welcome Wendy Eaton, from Listowel, this morning to the Ontario Legislature. She's the proud mother of page Alyssa Eaton, who is a grade 8 student at North Perth Westfield Elementary School. Welcome.

Ms. Rima Berns-McGown: I'd like to welcome to the Legislature today Michele Costa, Kristen Gaull and Freda Kourteridis, all of whom are moms whose kids have autism, as well as Romy Rewald and Eva Lattanzio, who are ABA therapists. Welcome to the Legislature and welcome to Queen's Park.

Mr. Mike Schreiner: I'd like to welcome members from McKellar Structured Settlements, located in Guelph, who are here at Queen's Park today, as well as the Ontario Brain Injury Association. They will be hosting a reception over the noon hour today. Everyone is welcome to attend.

Ms. Goldie Ghamari: It's my pleasure to introduce Rory Taylor, my legislative assistant, to the House. He

hails from the riding of Carleton, from the beautiful city of Manotick. I'm glad to see that Carleton is alive and well here in the Legislature. Thank you and welcome, Rory.

Ms. Marit Stiles: It's great to be back and to be able to welcome Sam Hammond, president of the Elementary Teachers' Federation of Ontario, and Harvey Bischof, president of the Ontario Secondary School Teachers' Federation, representing so many educators across our province. Thank you for being here.

Mr. Aris Babikian: Mr. Speaker, good morning. On behalf of my colleague Rudy Cuzzetto, I would like to welcome Brittany Gillingham and Ralph Fenik of McKellar Structured Settlements, together with representatives of the Ontario Brain Injury Association and the Brain Injury Society of Toronto. Welcome to the House.

Mr. Ian Arthur: I'd like to take a moment to welcome Aaron Bailey and Alden Torres from my constituency. They're members of the Queen's New Democrats and organizers for Queen's students for OSAP. Welcome to the Legislature. It's great to have you here.

Hon. Laurie Scott: I'd like to introduce Thomas Keys-Brasier, who is page captain here today. With him and supporting him is his mother, Shelley Keys-Brasier, and also his grandfather Murray Keys and aunt Dakota Brasier. Welcome to the Legislature.

M^{me} France Gélinas: I would like to welcome to the House Clara Pasieka, who is with OLIP and will be in my office for the next term. Welcome to the House.

Mrs. Gila Martow: I want to welcome Ariella Kimmel, who is here to help McKellar Structured Settlements. They're having a reception today at lunchtime, noon, in room 228. Welcome.

Mr. Stephen Lecce: Good morning, Mr. Speaker. I want to introduce Nicolas Bottger, a proud former resident of Vaughan, former executive director and CEO of the Ontario Student Trustees' Association and current student at the University of Western Ontario. Welcome to the Legislature.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Thank you. That concludes our time for introduction of guests.

1040

TABLING OF SESSIONAL PAPERS

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): I beg to inform the House that during the adjournment, the following documents were tabled:

—a report concerning the review of cabinet ministers' and opposition leaders' expense claims, complete as of December 17, 2018, from the Office of the Integrity Commissioner of Ontario; and

—a report entitled *Income in Ontario: Growth, Distribution and Mobility*, Winter 2019, from the Financial Accountability Office of Ontario.

DOMESTIC VIOLENCE

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): I want to recognize the member for Brampton Centre on a point of order.

Ms. Sara Singh: I'd like to seek unanimous consent from the House for a moment of silence for Riya Rajkumar,

who unfortunately lost her life on February 14. If we could have a moment of silence for her—but also to reflect on the work that we need to do as legislators here in the House to ensure that no child experiences the impacts of domestic violence in our province.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): The member for Brampton Centre is seeking unanimous consent of the House for a moment's silence. Agreed? Agreed.

The House observed a moment's silence.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Thank you very much. I recognize the member for Ottawa South on a point of—

Mr. John Fraser: I'd like to ask for unanimous consent to ask a question on behalf of the member for Don Valley West.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): The member for Ottawa South is seeking unanimous consent of the House to ask a question on behalf of the member for Don Valley West. Agreed? Agreed.

It is now time for oral questions. I recognize the leader of the official opposition.

ORAL QUESTIONS

HEALTH CARE

Ms. Andrea Horwath: Thank you, Speaker. Welcome back. I hope you had a good holiday season.

My question is to the Premier. For generations, Canadians have embraced the idea that our health care system should be there for patients, not for profit. We know the Liberals left our health care system in a mess, but as the Ford government moves forward, patients want to know: Does the Premier agree with the principle that our health care system should be there for patients and not for profit?

Hon. Doug Ford: Through you, Mr. Speaker: It's great to be back in the Legislature here and to take questions from the opposition.

I can tell you, we got elected on fixing the health care system, taking care of the broken system that we call "hallway health care." We inherited a system that was on life support. We inherited a system where over 1,100 people were in the hallways of health care facilities across this province.

With our great Minister of Health, we're fixing this problem. We're making the changes. We're making sure that we consult with the front-line health care workers, putting teams of doctors together, teams of nurses together, and listening to the front-line health care people. They know better than all of us. They do the job day in and day out.

But I can tell you, we're going to fix the hallway health care system. We're making sure that we're going to have beds open and no one's going to be in a hallway in the next four years.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Supplementary.

Ms. Andrea Horwath: It's worrisome that I didn't get an answer to the question, Speaker.

According to documents from the Ministry of Health, the Ford cabinet has already approved a sweeping plan to

create a mega-bureaucracy, kill off health care agencies and open the door to unprecedented levels of for-profit health care.

When the Minister of Health was asked about this, she said that she hadn't even seen the documents, even though some had her signature on them. Now CTV News has obtained documents saying that the new agency will be created this week.

Can the Premier admit what his minister wouldn't: that this plan has been approved and will soon be impacting the care that people rely on?

Hon. Doug Ford: Minister of Health.

Hon. Christine Elliott: I can tell the opposition leader that the people of Ontario elected us to strengthen and further develop our public health care system, and that is exactly what we're going to do.

We know that we have a system that is not functioning properly. We have 30,000 people waiting for a long-term-care bed. We have 1,200 people every day in hospitals across Ontario being treated in hallways and storage rooms, which is not where they want to be and not where the health care professionals who are caring for them want to be taking care of them.

We also have thousands of people who are waiting for mental health and addictions treatment. I don't know about you, but when you speak to a parent who has been told that their child is having suicidal thoughts and that they have to wait a year to get service—that is totally unacceptable and cannot be dealt with.

What we are doing is centring the system around patients. We are transforming the system, but it's going to be done by way of strengthening our public health care system.

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

Ms. Andrea Horwath: I can guarantee the Premier and his minister that the people of Ontario didn't elect them to siphon profits out of our health care system and into the pockets of their friends.

The Premier is paying his friend and former PC Party president Rueben Devlin to devise a plan for health care, and he's diverting \$350,000 a year out of front-line care to ensure that Devlin is handsomely compensated for this work. Can the Premier explain why we're all paying Mr. Devlin to consult on a plan when he and his cabinet have already approved all of the details?

Hon. Christine Elliott: I'm not sure if the leader of the official opposition heard what I just said. I said that we are going to strengthen our publicly funded system of health care. People will pay for their health care services using their OHIP card, as they always have done, and no one is going to be able to skip ahead of anyone else in line because they have more money. That is not good-quality patient-centred care.

What we are working on is a system where people are going to have care that's coordinated so that when they leave hospital to go to home or long-term care they have that warm hand-off so that they know where they're going and that there are going to be services, and that they're going to receive those services in a timely manner. We don't have that across Ontario right now. That's what the

people of Ontario have told us they want, and that is what we are going to deliver for them.

HEALTH CARE

Ms. Andrea Horwath: My next question is also for the Premier. I do want to reiterate the fact that neither the Premier nor the minister has said that they will not go to for-profit delivery of health care in our province, which is the question that I've asked, and I'm going to ask it again.

According to the health ministry documents obtained by CTV News, the deal is already done, but the government's challenge now is political spin and selling it to the public. The documents indicate that the board is scheduled to be appointed as soon as tomorrow, and that the hunt for the mega-agency's CEO is already under way. Can the Premier tell us which of his friends will be getting these prized positions?

Hon. Doug Ford: Again, through you, Mr. Speaker: I've never met a group that spins more items than my official opposition. They come up here and they're disingenuous with the people—

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): I would ask the Premier to withdraw.

Hon. Doug Ford: Withdraw.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Put your answer, please.

Mr. Taras Natyshak: Two questions; one withdrawal.

Hon. Doug Ford: Oh, that's just the beginning, my friend.

I have to remind the public that the opposition was part of destroying the health care system. They voted with the previous government 98% of the time to destroy the health care system.

We're putting money back into the system. We're getting rid of 1,200 beds in the hallways. We're making sure we're consulting with the front-line doctors and front-line nurses. We're making sure we're going to fix the health care system. We've had announcements all over the province, putting money into infrastructure—

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

Ms. Andrea Horwath: His classic sticks-and-stones response, Speaker—I'm not buying any of it.

The memo was obtained by CTV, and it warns very clearly that stakeholders—which presumably means front-line health professionals like nurses—will target negative impact on health care delivery in their messaging. That's what this memo says.

1050

Can the Premier tell us what negative impacts patients can expect?

Hon. Doug Ford: Minister of Health.

Hon. Christine Elliott: Mr. Speaker, I think there are a few things that the Leader of the Opposition doesn't quite understand. One is that there are a number of documents that were obtained inappropriately, that were internal civil service documents, some of which I had never seen. It is their job to come forward with ideas with respect

to transformation, and that happens in every ministry. There's nothing unusual about that.

The other issue that I don't think she is aware of is the fact that there already is a large degree of private delivery of health care in our system: doctors, labs, dialysis units, the list goes on and on. But people pay for those services with their OHIP card and that is what is going to continue.

What we are focusing our transformation on is public delivery: on connecting people with services, letting them receive those services in a timely manner. Right now, there is a huge disconnect, and I'm sure you've all heard that from your constituents as well.

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

Ms. Andrea Horwath: What this minister and her Premier don't seem to understand is that families expect a health care system that works for them, not for well-connected, for-profit providers. Instead of listening to families about the challenges in health care, the Ford government has cooked up a scheme behind closed doors that's going to make things even worse for patients, and they've been denying that they were doing it the whole time.

Will the Premier come clean with Ontarians about his health care scheme?

Hon. Christine Elliott: What I would like to tell the people of Ontario is that we've been working very hard at transforming the system into one that is modern, convenient for them, centred around them and is connected for them, because very often, people feel when they are discharged from hospital that they are discharged from their health care system. It should not be that way.

They should be connected with home care immediately, or they should be transferred to long-term care. None of those things are happening right now. We are looking at what the patient needs, what every patient across Ontario needs. That is the focus of our work and that is what we're going to continue to focus on: What do people need in Ontario to have an excellent health care experience?

HEALTH CARE

Ms. Andrea Horwath: My next question is to the Premier. Can the Premier tell us whether it would be acceptable to him if the parent of a child coping with a physical disease like cancer was told that Ontario no longer covered all the treatments for the disease and instead was going to cover a fraction of the cost and leave families on their own?

Hon. Doug Ford: Again, through you, Mr. Speaker: I'm not too sure where the Leader of the Opposition is coming from. We're putting money back into the system. We're putting money back into the health care system, no matter if it's cancer or if it's long-term care. I have to remind everyone that we ended up opening 6,000 new long-term-care beds to make sure that we take the wait-list down. We're going to put in another 9,000 new beds over the next four years for a total of 15,000.

Again, my friends, we're putting money back into the system, making sure it runs more efficiently. Every single doctor, every single nurse I spoke to across the province said that the system is broken, that it needs to be fixed.

They gave us ideas. We're implementing the ideas to make sure we have the best health care system in Ontario.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Supplementary?

Ms. Andrea Horwath: I'm going to help the Premier out a little bit, because the scenario that I described is exactly what this government has done to children with autism and their parents.

It's bad enough that he betrayed his explicit, repeated promise that he would be there for families 1,000%, but his minister, who is supposed to be the voice for families at the cabinet table, threatened families and stakeholders who refused to praise her plan. If she will not resign, the Premier should show some leadership and remove her from that role. Will he do that or will he continue to defend their betrayal of parents and children?

Hon. Doug Ford: Minister of social services.

Hon. Lisa MacLeod: Thank you very much, Premier, and thank you very much to the member opposite for her question—but it is inaccurate, Speaker.

Let me be perfectly clear. As somebody who has been a champion for people with autism across this province for the past 15 years, who started the South Nepean Autism Centre, who has worked with the Minister of Health in this policy field for the past five mandates, I've got to tell you, when I assumed this position, I saw a bankrupt Ontario Autism Program where 23,000 children, or three out of four children in the province of Ontario, were denied service and support from their government. That was immoral, it was unconscionable, and the best thing for us to do is to double our investment into diagnostic hubs and empower—

Interjections.

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

Hon. Lisa MacLeod: —with funding so that they can get the services that they require.

Speaker, I will be unapologetic in making sure that 100% of the children that require support from their government when they have autism receive it.

AUTOMOTIVE INDUSTRY

Mr. Stephen Crawford: It's great to be back—

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Order. The Premier will come to order.

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): The Premier will come to order. The member for Waterloo will come to order. The member for Essex, come to order.

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): The clock is ticking. Come to order. The Premier will come to order. The member for Waterloo will come to order. The member for Essex will come to order.

The member for Oakville will place his question.

Mr. Stephen Crawford: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My question is for the Minister of Economic Development, Job Creation and Trade. Last week our government for the

people released Driving Prosperity: The Future of Ontario's Automotive Sector. Our government was elected on a promise to protect and bring good jobs to Ontario. A big part of that is ensuring the success of the auto sector.

Auto sector jobs help families put food on their table, put their kids through college and university, and invest in their futures. They are the economic lifeblood of so many communities across our province, including my own in Oakville, with the Oakville Ford assembly plant.

Can the minister inform the House how this plan will build on our government's commitment to the auto sector and create and protect good jobs in our communities in Ontario?

Hon. Todd Smith: I'd like to thank the member from Oakville, along with Ford Canada, for the question today—obviously a very, very important investment in our province's auto sector.

Let me set the stage for you, Speaker. When we became the government in June of last year, we had lost 300,000-plus manufacturing jobs, including some in the auto sector. It was time for us to turn that around so that there would be some stability for a very important OEM sector, our manufacturing auto sector, and we have done that very quickly.

We brought in the Making Ontario Open for Business Act, reducing the red tape that was so harmful—legislation that was brought in by the previous Liberal government that was driving jobs out of Ontario, that was driving investment out of Ontario. We quickly moved to our Restoring Ontario's Competitiveness Act, which again makes it more stable for businesses to invest in Ontario. Now we've brought forward our Driving Prosperity plan, investing in Ontario's auto sector, which is—

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

Mr. Stephen Crawford: Through you, Mr. Speaker: Thank you to the minister for the answer. Over 100,000 people go to work in our auto sector every day at OEMs and downstream parts suppliers. Building cars and the parts that go into them has driven so much of our province's prosperity over the last 100 years. It is crucial that our government support this important industry now and in the future—a future that is changing rapidly.

The shift of auto production into the US and Mexico, the uncertain North American trade environment and technological disruption have all weighed on the industry. Can the minister inform the House how our government's plan in the auto sector will overcome these challenges?

Hon. Todd Smith: Since 2009, Ontario has only attracted 6% of new auto sector investment in North America thanks to the damage that was done by the previous Liberal government, driving up electricity costs and piling up red tape on the auto sector. It was time to turn that around.

That's why we brought in Driving Prosperity, focused on building Ontario's auto sector, making sure that those five manufacturers that are currently doing business in Ontario and those in the supply chain can be competitive. That's why Driving Prosperity is focused on three key

pillars: competitiveness, innovation and talent. We're investing in all three of those pillars in our plan that was unveiled last week with the Premier at Woodbridge Group up in Vaughan.

1100

It's very important to send that signal to this sector, that Ontario is open for business and Ontario is open for jobs. That's why we're revved up, Mr. Speaker. We're driving prosperity in Ontario's auto sector.

AUTISM TREATMENT

Miss Monique Taylor: My question is to the Minister of Children, Community and Social Services. Since the minister's disastrous autism program announcement, families have taken to the streets in protest. They're angry that services are being ripped away from their children, and now the media has reported that the minister and her staff forced endorsements and bullied their opposition into silence.

Parents, advocates and service providers are all calling for the same thing: the minister's resignation. Will the minister listen to thousands of people and parents across this province, restore the integrity of the ministry and resign immediately?

Hon. Lisa MacLeod: I want to start by congratulating the member opposite for being a grandmother today. Then I'm going to the second by saying no, I'm not resigning. I'm incredibly proud of this plan. This is a plan that the government has put forward. It is data-driven, it is evidence-based and it is the most fair and equitable approach that we can take to—

Interjections.

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

Hon. Lisa MacLeod: —23,000 children languishing on an endless wait-list to get them the services that they so desperately need. This is a government that is driven by making sure that we support early intervention, which I'm sure the member opposite would agree is important. It is driven by a desire to empower parents so that they can make the best choices for their families.

I ask the member opposite, why does she think it's okay for 23,000 children, or three out of four children in the province of Ontario, to be denied support from their government? I don't agree with that.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Supplementary?

Miss Monique Taylor: I don't agree with anything this minister just had to say. First of all, it's not evidence-based. Only 25%? Now you're giving 100% nothing. It doesn't make sense, Minister.

Speaker, the minister has sent a chilling message to communities that she is supposed to serve. The message is, "If you don't agree with us, then the Conservative government will threaten you and bully you into submission."

Children with autism and their families deserve so much better. The families have spoken. We need a true investment in an autism program that meets children's needs. The ministry must go back to the drawing board on this Ontario Autism Program, but this time with a new

minister. Will the minister do the right thing and resign so that work can move forward on the autism program?

Hon. Lisa MacLeod: I appreciate the passion which the member opposite brings. This is a gut-wrenching issue, and when I inherited this portfolio, I inherited an almost bankrupt Ontario Autism Program that required \$100 million of emergency funding just to service 25% of the children. That was wrong. It was unfair, it was inequitable and it was unsustainable.

Speaker, as the minister responsible for this program, I'm doing what is in the best interests of all children. We're going to invest in early intervention. We are going to clear the wait-list, we are going to double investments into diagnostic hubs and we're going to pass the money directly to parents so that they can choose between behavioural therapy or diagnostic supports or technological aids or respite care or caregiver training.

Let me be perfectly clear: This government believes in this plan, this government will implement this plan and I will be the minister that does this.

AUTOMOTIVE INDUSTRY

Mrs. Belinda Karahalios: My question is for the Minister of Training, Colleges and Universities. I know that the auto sector will be a key part of ensuring that Ontario returns to being the driving force behind Canada's economy. This sector already employs thousands of people across the province, and I know that our government, under the leadership of Premier Ford, is working to create more good jobs for the people of Ontario.

I understand that our government recently released the Driving Prosperity plan, and that a key part of that plan is ensuring that Ontario has the talent we need to work in the auto sector of the future.

Can the minister tell us what our government is doing to support Ontario's auto sector?

Hon. Merrilee Fullerton: Thank you to the member from Cambridge for that important question. The member is absolutely right about the importance of ensuring that our government is working as a partner with industries like the auto sector to create good jobs for the people of Ontario. That is why I am proud to take immediate actions to develop talent, such as:

—cutting thousands of new—creating thousands of new internship and training opportunities;

Interjections.

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

Hon. Merrilee Fullerton: —supporting online industry-led training to aid in the upskilling of workers;

—providing target support for laid-off and other unemployed Ontarians from the auto sector to get back to work quickly; and

—developing a talent road map and skills inventory to help identify current and future skills needs to support sector competitiveness.

Speaker, these are concrete actions that are going to help the people of Ontario gain the skills they need to find high-quality jobs in the auto sector.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Supplementary?

Mrs. Belinda Karahalios: Thank you to the minister for those details. I am proud that our government is not just paying lip service but actually doing something to create jobs and ensure that Ontario is ready to lead in auto manufacturing for years to come.

I think it's important to remember that the auto sector is more than just the assembly plants of specific car manufacturers. These facilities are also supported by a supply chain including 700 part firms and over 500 tool, die and mould makers. With an industry that size, it's important that the government is taking steps not only to bring new people into the industry but to ensure laid-off employees can upskill to continue to have high-quality employment.

Can the minister tell us what specific steps the government is taking to help laid-off workers in the auto manufacturing sector?

Hon. Merrilee Fullerton: Speaker, the member is right to point out the thousands of businesses and individuals who are part of the automotive supply chain.

Ensuring that they have the skills and that laid-off workers can quickly return to, or join, the industry is crucial not only to those workers and their families, but to the health of Ontario's economy. That is why I am proud of our government being committed to working with automotive partners to quicken the retraining and upskilling of workers across the industry.

Our government is creating a micro-credential pilot. We will partner with the automotive industry and work together to create this new and innovative way to certify talent in Ontario. This will allow the highly skilled individuals working or recently laid off avoid new and time-consuming apprenticeships or retraining by focusing on the training actually needed for new employment.

Speaker, we are delivering on our promise to the people of Ontario to deliver good jobs and make Ontario—

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

POST-SECONDARY EDUCATION

Ms. Andrea Horwath: My question is for the Premier. The Premier has announced an attack on post-secondary students that includes higher student debt, scrapping grants, and attacks on student organizations. It's a change that only helps students from Ontario's wealthiest families. To quote an expert, "Any policy which leaves students from the top 5% of families better off and everyone else worse off is—if you ask me—difficult to describe as fair."

Will the Premier put a halt to this, reverse the decision, and support, rather than attack, students?

Hon. Doug Ford: Through you, Mr. Speaker: We know that students and families across this province—a lot of them—struggle to put their children through university. What we're doing for the first time in Ontario's history is lowering tuition fees. We're lowering tuition fees by 10%.

Hon. Victor Fedeli: That's what they asked for; they asked for that.

Hon. Doug Ford: Absolutely.

The students, when we criss-cross the province and talk to them, are tired of paying high tuition fees. The opposition down here argued for years about lowering tuition fees, so we should be on the same page.

Not only that; we gave the students an option—do you believe this?—an actual option to opt out on fees—over a thousand dollars in some cases—that go to student fees that a lot of them don't even want to be part of. So they're going to have that option.

1110

To give you an example, a student at Carleton University can save over—

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

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Thank you. The Premier will take his seat. Stop the clock.

Interjections.

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

Restart the clock. Supplementary?

Ms. Andrea Horwath: It's really true: Those top-earning families are going to be able to pay upfront with their tuition fees, and so they're going to benefit from that 10%. Every other student, though, is going to have to take out more student loans because they are getting rid of the grants. That's what is happening. Families are going to be worse off. They're going to be worse off.

The parents and students and faculty who are going to be outside today, and in colleges and universities across the province—

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Stop the clock. I apologize to the member who had the floor. The government side must come to order. I can't hear the Leader of the Opposition.

Restart the clock. The member can conclude her question.

Ms. Andrea Horwath: Those students who are going to be on the lawns today and young people in colleges and universities across the province are not crazy Marxists, Speaker. They're trying to make ends meet while they are getting the education that they need. Student organizations provide valuable support for students, from providing—

Interruption.

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

I would ask our visitors to refrain from this activity or you'll be removed.

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Order.

We'll restart the clock. I'll allow the member to conclude her question.

Ms. Andrea Horwath: Look, Speaker, it's true that student organizations do a lot of good work and provide a lot of valuable supports for students, providing health care plans and all kinds of other support programs for kids who are in crisis on campus. Some former student union leaders, in fact, are sitting in the PC benches right now.

Will the Premier call off his attack on the democratically elected student organizations and support the important work that they do?

Hon. Doug Ford: Through you, Mr. Speaker: Here's an example of indoctrination, what we just saw up there. This is part of the opposition benches—that's how they train our kids, with a filthy mouth. They should have their mouths washed out with soap. That's what they should have, because that's embarrassing.

I just want to remind the Leader of the Opposition that, actually, the grants have gone up under our administration, from 76% up to 82%. So they're going to be getting—82%—grants for anyone earning under \$50,000. The actual people that need it are going to be able to go to school and get a grant—82%. That's what people are looking for.

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Stop the clock. Order. The government side will come to order. The opposition side will come to order.

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): The Premier will come to order. The member for Essex will come to order. The member for Windsor West will come to order.

Interjection.

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

Start the clock. Next question.

AUTISM TREATMENT

Mr. John Fraser: My question is for the minister of children and youth services. Speaker, through you to the minister: Families have been calling my office concerned about how the changes to the Ontario Autism Program will affect their child's development. They are concerned too about their family finances. They're genuinely distressed and concerned and anxious.

On the families' behalf, I would ask the minister to do these two things: First, disclose to the parents the financial details of the plan, especially the income testing, so they can plan and so they know what the future holds for them. Secondly, I would ask the minister to come back to the table, listen to these families, hear their concerns and work with them.

Speaker, through you to the minister: Can the minister commit to doing these two things?

Hon. Lisa MacLeod: On the announcement day, I did make the commitment that this would be a \$321-million investment into families with autism, which is much more than the \$256 million the previous Liberal administration had offered. In addition, with respect to income testing, we were very clear that it is for those who make over \$250,000 per year.

But let me be perfectly clear: I have met with parents of autistic children throughout my career. In fact, the first protest I ever attended was with Families for Autism in front of his office when he worked for Dalton McGuinty, after the previous Liberal administration took families with children with autism to court.

I have been steadfast in my resolve in trying to support all of the families, but it was unconscionable that the previous Liberal government left 23,000 children on an endless wait-list, with no hope in sight for support from their Ontario government. So I will stand here; I will defend our plan. It is fair, it is equitable and, most of all, Speaker, it is sustainable for now and well into the future.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Supplementary?

Mr. John Fraser: Speaker, that's not the answer that I expected.

Here's what I know: In 2016, when our plan came up short and 2,200 families were going to fall between the cracks, my colleagues and I listened to those families and we came back with a plan that required more money.

Every one of us can agree here that this is about children and their families. It's not a partisan issue. What we need to have happen here are two things: to disclose the financial details—it's simple, it's straightforward, they need to know about the income testing—and to sit down with these families to work with them. I know this is a challenging issue in here. I've been on the other side of it. It's very challenging. But where it's more challenging is in the everyday lives of these families. We need to walk a mile in these parents' shoes.

Can the minister commit to doing these two simple things?

Hon. Lisa MacLeod: I just answered the question: \$321 million—which is a lot more than the \$256 million that they offered—we are offering to ensure that we clear the wait-list of 23,000 children. It was unconscionable to deny three out of four children in this province—23,000 children—service from their Ontario government. We're going to make it fair. We're going to make it equitable. We're going to make it sustainable. We are doubling the investment into diagnostic hubs. We are going to empower parents with direct funding.

What is wrong, though, Speaker, is when that government, the previous Liberal government, left office, they were morally, ethically and ideas bankrupt. They left the province almost bankrupt. On June 27, I inherited an Ontario Autism Program that was bankrupt. Shame on them.

TUITION

Ms. Goldie Ghamari: My question is for the Minister of Training, Colleges and Universities. Students in my riding of Carleton have consistently said to me that the cost of post-secondary education skyrocketed under the previous government. Mr. Speaker, I'm a personal example of that myself.

Since 2006, undergraduate tuition for Ontarians, such as myself, has risen from an average of \$5,000 to almost \$9,000. Students and families are frustrated that the previous Liberal government, propped up by the NDP, allowed tuition fees to increase, making university and college more unaffordable for families and students.

1120

Can the minister please tell us what steps our government is taking to provide students and their families with relief?

Hon. Merrilee Fullerton: Thank you to the member from Carleton for the question.

Our government has taken the unprecedented step of reducing tuition across the board by 10%. This is the first across-the-board reduction for all programs in Ontario's history. This will mean a total of \$450 million in tuition relief for families and students.

On top of this historic reduction, our government has created the Student Choice Initiative. This will treat students like adults and give them the choice whether to support optional fees. Just like tuition fees, under the previous Liberal government, propped up by the NDP, ancillary fees skyrocketed.

These steps will provide the relief to Ontario students that they need and end the Liberal legacy of skyrocketing costs to post-secondary education.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Supplementary.

Ms. Goldie Ghamari: Thank you, Minister, for that answer.

Mr. Speaker, through you: Honestly, I cannot even begin to think about the hundreds—almost thousands—of dollars that I wasted in my 10 years of university paying these unnecessary fees for things that I never, ever used.

I am proud that our government is taking action to clean up the 15 years of increasing costs for students and families. I understand that Ontario has the highest tuition fees in Canada. I'm still paying off my OSAP myself. I'm shocked that the previous Liberal government, propped up by the NDP, took no action to stop this.

Can the minister tell us what savings students in my riding will see because of this historic reduction in tuition fees?

Hon. Merrilee Fullerton: As the member notes, our government's unprecedented reduction in tuition will mean real savings for Ontario students. That is why I'm shocked that the NDP and the Liberals have refused to endorse our plan. While the NDP are more concerned about the bottom line of institutions, we are proud to be putting more money back into the pockets of the people of Ontario.

In the member's riding, a student at Carleton University studying computer science will save \$970 next year. Meanwhile, a student at Algonquin College studying for a bachelor of interior design will save \$860 next year. These are real savings for students and their families across Ontario.

CANCER TREATMENT

M^{me} France Gélinas: Ma question et pour la ministre de la Santé et des Soins de longue durée.

Last year, over 90,000 Ontarians received a cancer diagnosis. Cancer Care Ontario, a world-renowned leader in providing cancer treatment and support, was there with them every step of the way as they battled their cancer. Last month, we learned that the government planned to get rid of Cancer Care Ontario and that it will be absorbed into a super agency. Instead of fixing what's broken in our health care system, the Ford government is interfering with what works very well.

What is the minister doing to ensure that patient care is not disrupted as the government carves up our health care system?

Hon. Christine Elliott: I would like to assure the member opposite, as well as the people of Ontario, that cancer care will continue in the excellent way that it is. It will not be diminished or abated in any way as more structural changes may be made. It is really important that we look to Cancer Care Ontario as an excellent model for dealing with other diseases that may be considered more chronic, perhaps, than cancer—for diabetes and for mental health and addictions, for example.

It's still going to continue. People will still receive the essential and excellent care that they're receiving. Despite anything else that might happen in the system, cancer care functions will continue and people will continue to receive care. They do not need to be concerned about that in any way, shape or form.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Supplementary.

M^{me} France Gélinas: You see, Speaker, British Columbia tried to impose a super agency and it failed. Instead of having one of the best cancer agencies in the country, all that British Columbia saw was increased wait times and not much else. Alberta tried it also; it also failed. In Alberta they suffered 10 years of administrative challenges that took away resources that were meant for patient care. Right now in Ontario, most of Ontario's health organizations, front-line health care providers like nurses, have not been consulted on those sweeping changes to patient care.

Can the minister explain to Ontarians that the changes she's been working on with little public consultation will not disrupt cancer patients receiving chemotherapy and will not increase the wait times for people waiting for cancer treatment?

Hon. Christine Elliott: Through you, Mr. Speaker: I can assure the member that consultations have been ongoing about health care for people in Ontario with all sorts of different health groups. That's been since I was sworn in as Minister of Health. I've heard from health care providers but also the people of Ontario. I've heard from them, as many of you have, about the concerns they have about the gaps in our system, the way things are working well, but, then, the way things aren't working very well. That's what we're focusing our attention on to make sure we have a comprehensive and connected health care system, including the mental health system that we're studying now.

The consultations are continuing. We're still having discussions with provider groups as well as with patients and patient groups, people with lived experience. I can also say that the NDP have been making suppositions based on bits and pieces of information that were inappropriately leaked, and that is not—

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

INDIGENOUS PROGRAMS AND SERVICES

M^{me} Nathalie Des Rosiers: Ma question est pour le ministre des Affaires autochtones. This year is the International Year of Indigenous Languages, and it's particularly

important that we demonstrate and maintain our commitment to Indigenous culture in the spirit of reconciliation.

Last weekend I had the opportunity to meet with some Anishinaabe leaders and elders, and we talked about the future of Indigenous languages and culture. I was concerned that the Indigenous Culture Fund has been cut in half, because it was specifically designed to help with the revitalization of Indigenous languages and it's a small fund. Indeed, Speaker, Jesse Wenté described the cancellation of this fund as a "gross attack on reconciliation."

I understand that the minister has decided to fight in court Indigenous communities and that he has also decided to postpone the promised revenue-sharing. I want to ask, does the minister believe in reconciliation?

Hon. Greg Rickford: We certainly are committed to reconciliation, and we're renewing our efforts by making sure that communities have the tools they need to engage in economic activities which will bring prosperity and strengthen their communities.

We know that language and the ability to celebrate their culture is strengthened when people are working, when their social and economic conditions have improved. That's what we're committed to and that's what we're going to continue to focus on moving forward.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Supplementary?

M^{me} Nathalie Des Rosiers: Back to the minister: The postponement of revenue-sharing is hardly conducive to improving prosperity.

I think we have to remember that the Indigenous Culture Fund was created in 2017 specifically as a response to and as a need of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission's Calls to Action. Why is this program being cut? And please, Mr. Speaker, to the minister: Can he commit today to actually restore the funding and continue to support it?

Hon. Greg Rickford: I can commit to working on economic prosperity for those communities, something sadly neglected. As somebody under the previous government, as somebody who has spent most of their professional life in some way, shape or form living and working particularly in isolated and remote First Nation communities in northern Ontario—nothing was accomplished to dramatically, even remotely, improve the social and economic conditions from that government.

1130

We're working on a plan that will see resource revenue-sharing for all of our northern communities—municipalities and Indigenous communities—capturing some of that wealth and keeping it in northern Ontario. I know that's important for our strong northern Ontario caucus. We're looking forward to making sure that every community in northern Ontario has an opportunity for prosperity.

TUITION

Mr. Vijay Thanigasalam: My question is for the Minister of Training, Colleges and Universities. I know from my conversations with students and families during the campaign and since the election that the rising costs of tuition fees are becoming a real burden and a barrier to

post-secondary education in Ontario. I heard countless times that tuition fees in Ontario are the highest in Canada.

Mr. Speaker, our government was elected on a promise to put more money back into people's pockets. I'm proud of the action we have already taken to deliver on this promise. Our government has cut gas prices, frozen licence fees, cancelled the Drive Clean program, ended the cap-and-trade carbon tax and introduced LIFT, the Low-income Individuals and Families Tax Credit.

Can the minister tell us what steps our government is taking to make post-secondary education more affordable for families and students?

Hon. Merrilee Fullerton: Thank you to the member from Scarborough—Rouge Park for the question.

Speaker, we have listened to students and their families who have been clear that the skyrocketing fees for university and college under the previous Liberal government, propped up by the NDP, were unaffordable. That is why we have taken the unprecedented and historic step of reducing tuition by 10% across the board.

Many people recognize that we are taking the right step, including members of the official opposition. The NDP members from Brampton Centre and Timmins both called the reduction in tuition a "good start." Meanwhile, Gyllian Phillips, president of the Ontario Confederation of University Faculty Associations said, "Reducing tuition fees is good public policy for increasing access to post-secondary education."

Speaker, I'm proud that our government has delivered the first across-the-board reduction in tuition fees in Ontario—

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

Interjections.

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

Mr. Vijay Thanigasalam: Thank you, Minister, for that answer.

I'm proud that our government is putting students first by providing them with real relief on tuition fees. I know that for years students and families have been saying that they need relief from increasing tuition fees that were allowed to skyrocket under the previous Liberal government.

Mr. Speaker, it seems that the opposition are speaking out of both sides of their mouth. In one breath, they are saying they want the tuition relief for students, and, in the next, they are saying they are more concerned about the bottom line of institutions. Despite the opposition rhetoric, I know the minister has clarified that the 10% reduction in tuition will only—

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

Interjection.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Just to make it clear, when the Speaker stands up, whoever has got the floor has to sit down.

I'm asking the member to withdraw his unparliamentary remark.

Mr. Vijay Thanigasalam: Withdraw.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Response?

Hon. Merrilee Fullerton: For years, the NDP have campaigned on a tuition freeze. Only now that they aren't the ones to do it are they criticizing real relief for students. The NDP are more concerned about the ability of institutions to handle a 3% reduction in funding than supporting \$450 million in tuition relief for students and families. It is clear that the NDP are not for the students.

However, Speaker, here are some responses from institutions across Ontario. John Fairley from St. Clair College says, "We will be functioning as normal. [There are] no discussions that we will be decreasing services"—

Interjection.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): The member for Hamilton East—I apologize.

I'm going to ask the member for Hamilton East—Stoney Creek to withdraw his unparliamentary remark. I would ask the member for Hamilton East—

Mr. Paul Miller: I withdraw. I don't know why, but okay.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): The member knows full well you have to withdraw without qualification or editorial comment.

Mr. Paul Miller: Speaker, I've used it 25 times in here. All of a sudden, it doesn't count?

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

Mr. Paul Miller: I withdraw.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): I'll allow the minister to complete her remarks.

Hon. Merrilee Fullerton: John Fairley from St. Clair College: "We will be functioning as normal. [There are] no discussions that we will be decreasing services or amenities to our college or increasing their fees ... that is not on the table."

John Tibbits of Conestoga College says, "We'll manage. We have to look for efficiencies, but the students will not notice it ... we will not be laying anyone off."

Speaker, it is time—

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

Next question.

AUTISM TREATMENT

Ms. Rima Berns-McGown: My question is to the Minister of Children, Community and Social Services. Last Thursday, I met Michele, whose five-year-old son, Elliot, is on the wait-list for autism services. The family had to cash in their RRSPs and borrow to afford his nine hours a week of ABA therapy. Before he got the therapy, Elliot was completely non-verbal, but now he is speaking and developing important social skills.

The funding that Elliot would get under the government's new autism program will not be close to enough to continue the amount of therapy he needs. Michele says, "Most parents would say the wait-list is better" than the proposed changes—"at least there was a light at the end of the tunnel."

Why is this government digging in and continuing to move forward with these changes against all the evidence and the advice of parents and service providers?

Hon. Lisa MacLeod: I want to say to the member opposite that that was a really good question. Let me provide some context for you. Six months ago, when I inherited this program, it was near-bankrupt. Some 8,400 children were receiving service in the province of Ontario while 23,000 were on a wait-list. The data we have means that Elliot would probably age out of the program before he would be off the wait-list.

We had to make a decision. I went to Treasury Board twice, securing over \$102 million so that we could keep the program that the Liberals left me intact for five months. We then invested an additional amount of money from the previous government: \$256 million, now worth \$321 million.

Here's what we're doing with the money: We're going to double our investment in diagnosis and service so that we can support families quicker, and then we are going to clear the wait-list in 18 months so Elliot will finally, for the first time in his life, receive support from the province of Ontario.

Interjections.

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

Start the clock. Supplementary?

Ms. Rima Berns-McGown: I would suggest that the pie needs to be bigger so that each child can get what they need.

I also met with Kristen, whose five-year-old son, Ryan, has severe autism. The family currently spends \$1,000 a week on the four hours daily of therapy that Ryan needs. Their family had already burned through their line of credit before they received funding. The therapy has been critical. It has taught Ryan basic life skills, and he is now able to communicate using a program on an iPad, which has been a huge step for him to be able to concretely express himself. They have a contract until June, after which everything—including Ryan's development—will go on pause. The amount of therapy he will receive under the new regime is effectively useless.

Why is this government moving ahead with a one-size-fits-all approach to autism funding that will only make life worse for children with autism and for their families?

Hon. Lisa MacLeod: I feel like there's a fundamental misunderstanding of this plan by the New Democrats and the Liberals, and I fear that that's going to create false hope for families that are out there in suggesting that there was light at the end of the tunnel on the diagnostic and service lists. That's not true, Speaker. What we inherited was heartbreaking.

I have met children like Elliot and I've met children like Ryan, and one thing that our plan will do is allow Ryan's family to invest in technological aids when we provide them with direct funding, so we're empowering them. I don't think the member opposite knows that and I think it's extremely unhelpful for the opposition to try and whip up parents without the facts. The facts are these: We have

one in four children in Ontario receiving support from the Ontario government. I could not, in good conscience, allow that to continue to happen. We need to support all children with autism in the province of Ontario, and that's what this government—

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

Next question.

1140

PUBLIC TRANSIT

Ms. Christine Hogarth: My question is for the Minister of Transportation. Our government for the people made an election promise to upload the subway. The upload will turn priorities into projects, and we're going to finish those projects years before the previous government had even planned to.

I was recently at a town hall, last week in Marina Del Rey in my riding of Etobicoke–Lakeshore, and we all agreed that our communities and our province are facing gridlock problems that create daily frustrations for commuters on roads and highways and for those who are taking public transit.

Our government for the people was clear during the election that we were going to reduce gridlock and that transit is essential to cutting that gridlock. Everyone's time is valuable, and it should be spent with family, friends and—

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

Interjection.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Will the member please take her seat.

The Minister of Transportation to respond.

Hon. Jeff Yurek: Thank you very much to the member for Etobicoke–Lakeshore for that question on the importance of transit, not only in Toronto but across the region and across the province.

Let me inform the House on what occurred last week. We came to terms of reference with the city of Toronto and the TTC on uploading the subway system to the province. The terms of reference, at their core, are showing shared objectives and principles to guide a discussion about how the two levels of government can work together to achieve our chief goal and build a new partnership with the city of Toronto.

The province is acting now because past governments chose not to take the necessary steps and bold action that were required. Maintenance investment on the subway system has been put off for far too long, and people in Toronto and the region as a whole have been waiting far too long for subway expansion.

We are looking forward to working with the city of Toronto. I'm going to share more in the supplementary.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Supplementary?

Ms. Christine Hogarth: Thank you to the minister. I am pleased to hear that our government for the people reached an agreement with the city of Toronto on the joint terms of reference, which will start the uploading process. I know our government will work with Ontarians and the

people of Toronto to make transit better for everyone in the GTHA and across this province.

As we all know, new subway construction has been stuck in red tape for years. It is time to take action and speed things up. It is time to get people moving. We are improving how transit is built by building a world-class transit system that everybody—everybody—in Ontario can be proud of.

Can the Minister of Transportation share more about the joint terms of reference and what they mean for the upload of the subway?

Hon. Jeff Yurek: Thanks again to the member for Etobicoke–Lakeshore for that question. You’re doing a wonderful job of advocating for your constituents. I’m going to be more than pleased to talk more about the terms of reference and what that means for commuters, the city of Toronto and the TTC.

We have committed to a deliberate, fact-based conversation with the city on our upload plan. These terms of reference will guide our next steps and steer the consultation process with the city and the TTC on uploading the subway infrastructure from the city of Toronto, including the building and maintenance of new and existing subway lines. With the new partnership, our government can cut through the red tape and start new projects and finish construction faster.

We are committed to getting the people of Ontario moving, and we’re doing just that by starting with the upload of the subway and delivering on our projects right on schedule. I’m proud to be a part of this government that’s going to get Ontario moving and open it up for business.

HEALTH CARE

Ms. Teresa J. Armstrong: My question is to the Minister of Health and Long-Term Care. As the minister well knows, too many people who need quality home care services aren’t getting these critical services and therefore are stuck in expensive hospital beds. In a recent opinion piece in the *Toronto Star*, Bob Bell, the former Deputy Minister of Health, said that he’s worried the government’s secret plans will open the floodgates for private, for-profit home care operators to have their way with little regulation or oversight.

Can the minister tell us what role private, for-profit players will play in the new health scheme, or is she still pretending not to know about the plans cabinet has approved?

Hon. Christine Elliott: Mr. Speaker, I think it’s very interesting that a lot of people are writing columns on something they don’t really know anything about, other than some stray pieces of paper that have been inappropriately leaked to the public.

But I can tell the member what we’ve heard from the people of Ontario: that they want to feel connected to their health care system. That means that when they’re being discharged from the hospital, they expect that home care is going to be there for them—

Interjections.

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

Hon. Christine Elliott: —in a reasonable time, so they don’t get readmitted back into hospital. That’s what we’re working on. We are working on connecting our public health care system to make sure that people, when they need health care, will pay for it with their OHIP card, and that nobody else is going to be able to jump in line ahead of them just if they have money. It’s going to be on the same basis that we’ve had, that people pay with their OHIP card. And we are going to coordinate home care so that people will know by the time they’re discharged from hospital that they will have the appropriate home care—

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

Ms. Teresa J. Armstrong: Personal support workers are the backbone of home care, but this work is increasingly precarious, with short shifts and low wages, especially from private, for-profit operators. They don’t have a voice at the table. But of the 11 members of the Premier’s council to improve health care and eliminate hallway medicine, two are CEOs of for-profit home care companies and a third is a former home care company board chair.

Dr. Bell warns that “the private companies that provide ... Ontario home care are going to be supervised more loosely, presumably by the bureaucratic Queen’s Park super agency.”

What is the minister’s plan to ensure that home care dollars go to the patients who need them and help at home, and not the companies seeking profit off our health care system?

Hon. Christine Elliott: I can certainly assure the member and the rest of the people of Ontario that home care is going to continue to play an important role in the health care of Ontarians, along with hospitals and long-term-care homes.

We know that there are many people who remain in hospital for longer periods of time than they need because there isn’t a long-term-care place for them or we don’t have adequate home care services. So we need to build them up. We need to make sure that when people come home, more and more people are able to come home with more complex medical conditions, because that’s where they want to be. We want people to go where they feel most comfortable. That is going to require an increase in home care services. We need to connect home care services with the hospitals, so that when they’re discharged, people who are providing the home care will be able to connect with the people in the hospital to make sure that it is a seamless transition. We are not getting that now, and that’s what our goal is.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): That concludes the time we have for question period today.

VISITORS

Ms. Mitzie Hunter: Point of order, Speaker.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Point of order.

Ms. Mitzie Hunter: I would like to welcome two students from Queen's University who are here in the members' gallery today—Samantha Hartmann and Hamid Mohamed—if we could welcome them.

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): We'll deal with the points of order afterwards.

SAFE AND SUPPORTIVE
CLASSROOMS ACT, 2019

LOI DE 2019 POUR DES ÉCOLES SÛRES
ET AXÉES SUR LE SOUTIEN

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): I have to inform the House that earlier this morning, a motion for closure on the motion for second reading of Bill 48, An Act to amend various Acts in relation to education and child care, was moved by Mr. Harris. The closure motion carried on a voice vote. The House then went on to deal with another item of business and then recessed before question period. This resulted in the motion for second reading of Bill 48 not having been dealt with.

When a motion for closure is carried, the main motion needs to be disposed of forthwith. It having not been done so at that time, I am therefore going to rectify this situation by putting the question now, this being the first available opportunity to do so.

Ms. Thompson has moved second reading of Bill 48, An Act to amend various Acts in relation to education and child care.

Interjection.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): We're in a vote.

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

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

All those opposed will please say "nay."

In my opinion, the ayes have it.

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

The division bells rang from 1148 to 1153.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Will the members please take their seats? It is time for the members to take their seats.

Ms. Thompson has moved second reading of Bill 48, An Act to amend various Acts in relation to education and child care.

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

Ayes

Anand, Deepak	Glover, Chris	Pang, Billy
Andrew, Jill	Gretzky, Lisa	Parsa, Michael
Armstrong, Teresa J.	Hardeman, Ernie	Pettapiece, Randy
Arthur, Ian	Harden, Joel	Phillips, Rod
Baber, Roman	Harris, Mike	Piccini, David
Babikian, Aris	Hassan, Faisal	Rakocevic, Tom
Bailey, Robert	Hatfield, Percy	Rickford, Greg
Barrett, Toby	Hillier, Randy	Roberts, Jeremy
Begum, Doly	Hogarth, Christine	Romano, Ross
Bell, Jessica	Horwath, Andrea	Sabawy, Sheref
Berns-McGown, Rima	Kanapathi, Logan	Sandhu, Amarjot

Bethlenfalvy, Peter	Karahalios, Belinda	Sattler, Peggy
Bisson, Gilles	Karpoche, Bhutilla	Schreiner, Mike
Bourgouin, Guy	Ke, Vincent	Scott, Laurie
Burch, Jeff	Kernaghan, Terence	Shaw, Sandy
Calandra, Paul	Khanjin, Andrea	Singh, Gurratan
Cho, Raymond Sung Joon	Kramp, Daryl	Singh, Sara
Clark, Steve	Kusendova, Natalia	Stelly, Donna
Coe, Lorne	Lecce, Stephen	Smith, Dave
Coteau, Michael	Lindo, Laura Mae	Smith, Todd
Crawford, Stephen	MacLeod, Lisa	Stevens, Jennifer (Jennie)
Cuzzetto, Rudy	Mamakwa, Sol	Stiles, Marit
Downey, Doug	Mantha, Michael	Surma, Kinga
Dunlop, Jill	Martin, Robin	Tabuns, Peter
Elliott, Christine	Martow, Gila	Tangri, Nina
Fedeli, Victor	McDonell, Jim	Taylor, Monique
Fee, Amy	McKenna, Jane	Thanigasalam, Vijay
Fife, Catherine	McNaughton, Monte	Thompson, Lisa M.
Ford, Doug	Miller, Norman	Tibollo, Michael A.
French, Jennifer K.	Miller, Paul	Vanhof, John
Fullerton, Merrilee	Monteith-Farrell, Judith	Wai, Daisy
Gates, Wayne	Morrison, Suze	Walker, Bill
Gélinas, France	Natyshak, Taras	West, Jamie
Ghamari, Goldie	Nicholls, Rick	Yakabuski, John
Gill, Parm	Oosterhoff, Sam	Yurek, Jeff

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

The Clerk of the Assembly (Mr. Todd Decker): The ayes are 105; the nays are 0.

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

Second reading agreed to.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Shall the bill be ordered for third reading or referred to a committee?

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Shall the bill be ordered for third reading?

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Minister of Education, is the bill going to committee or not?

Hon. Lisa M. Thompson: It can go to committee if need be. Social policy.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): So ordered. The bill has been referred to the social policy committee.

This House stands in recess—

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): I am going to say once again to the House, the Speaker cannot read your mind. If you have a point of order and you would like to present it to the House, please stand up and audibly yell out, "Point of order," and I'll be able to hear you and hopefully be able to recognize you.

Point of order?

Ms. Peggy Sattler: Point of order.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): The member from London West.

VISITORS

Ms. Peggy Sattler: I would like to welcome two students from the Fanshawe College law clerk program in London. Sarah Richardson and Mary Metcalfe are here

this morning, along with Mercedes Mitchell from the Toronto Film School. Welcome.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): A point of order? Is that what it is? The member from Mississauga–Malton.

Mr. Deepak Anand: Mr. Speaker, I would like to welcome Annie Liu and Daniel Oh, and my son Shreyansh Anand to Queen's Park, who is here during reading week and starting his first job tomorrow. Welcome to Queen's Park.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): The member for Mississauga–Streetsville.

Mrs. Nina Tangri: I would like to welcome my executive assistant for the first time here at the Legislative Assembly, Mehru Khan.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): This House stands in recess until 3 p.m.

The House recessed from 1159 to 1500.

INTRODUCTION OF VISITORS

Mrs. Robin Martin: I just wanted to introduce some people: from the Canadian Cancer Survivor Network, Jaymee Maaghop; Christina Sit from Lung Cancer Canada; and Anne Marie Cerato, lung cancer patient advocate. Thank you for coming today.

Hon. Sylvia Jones: I am pleased to welcome some distinguished guests from Ontario's policing community to the gallery today. From the Police Association of Ontario we have Bruce Chapman, president, and executive director Stephen Reid, as well as counsel Michael Duffy. From the Ontario Association of Chiefs of Police we have Chief Greenwood, president and chief of police of the Barrie police service, and the executive director, Jeff McGuire. From the Toronto Police Association we have Mike McCormack, the president, and from the Ontario Provincial Police Association, John Cerasuolo, the vice-president. Thank you, and welcome.

Mr. Robert Bailey: I'm not sure they're here in the gallery yet, but I've got friends—neighbours, actually—from back in Sarnia–Lambton: Mark and Christine Hollingsworth, who should be joining us later this afternoon from the great town of Petrolia, the hard oil town.

Mr. Kevin Yarde: I'd also like to welcome the distinguished gentlemen from our police services here today. Thank you for coming.

MEMBERS' STATEMENTS

AUTISM TREATMENT

Ms. Jill Andrew: Many people in Toronto–St. Paul's are feeling anxious because they just don't know what the Conservatives are cooking up next. Parents of children with autism are angry. Parents have seen their kids thrive with weekly intensive therapy only to learn their growth will be stunted because of inhumane, insufficient flat-rate funding that disregards children's individual clinical needs.

I received a letter from a local parent about the impact of the cuts. David's seven-year-old daughter, Kaley, receives 25 hours a week of therapy at a cost of \$66,000 a year, thanks to funding they've received through the current Ontario Autism Program. With the government changes to the program, David said he just won't have \$66,000 to put aside for his daughter. As he stated: "The changes you are making to this program means that I will not be able to continue my daughter in her program."

David and his family have even discussed leaving the province to find better options for Kaley because the new plan won't even fund more than two hours a week of therapy. David worries that, with the new changes, his daughter's progress will regress. He says, "The changes are disastrous."

The Minister of Children, Community and Social Services must resign. Strong-arming autism professionals is not the way to do it. Leaving families hopeless is not the way to help kids with autism.

From cuts to OSAP and post-secondary education to ending full-day kindergarten to above-guideline rent increases to privatizing health care, my community is worried about what will be cut next by this government. Ontarians deserve better.

KF AEROSPACE

Ms. Donna Skelly: Last Friday, I was pleased to attend a groundbreaking ceremony at KF Aerospace, located at the Hamilton international airport. KF Aerospace, the largest aircraft heavy maintenance company in Canada, provides services to a number of airlines and cargo carriers. I'm thrilled that KF is investing \$30 million in the Hamilton area to expand its facilities over the next four years, building two new hangars that will nearly triple its capacity and create 275 highly skilled, well-paying jobs.

As we have seen in the last few years, Hamilton international airport has been growing at a rapid pace, becoming Canada's busiest overnight cargo hub and nearly doubling its passenger traffic between 2016 and 2017. As home to over 3,000 jobs, the airport is one of the largest and most important employers in the Hamilton area. In fact, the Premier chose to visit Hamilton airport on one of his first tours outside of Queen's Park after the election, meeting with stakeholders and airport officials.

KF Aerospace's footprint in Hamilton also includes its joint aviation technician program with Mohawk College that provides students with hands-on experience in damage protection, structural repair and aircraft maintenance. This expansion will give these students a permanent place to practise their skills at the Hamilton airport.

Once again, I would like to congratulate KF Aerospace on the expansion of its operations at the Hamilton airport, creating hundreds of new jobs and helping us—this government—reinforce that Ontario truly is open for business and open for jobs.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): I need to inform the House that we're having some issues with the clock, so

I'm going to try to give members a 10-second warning when their time is almost up. If the clock is working, it's working, but at times it's not. We're trying to get it fixed.

LONDON COMMUNITY ORGANIZATIONS

Ms. Teresa J. Armstrong: Last week, I had the pleasure of attending a town hall meeting hosted by various London community organizations. The meeting was filled with lively debate, poignant questions and a general concern for the future of Ontario politics.

1510

Participants shared their concerns regarding policies, legislation and regulations this current government has implemented since taking office. While each person in that room could respect that there would be differing points of view and perhaps differing ideologies, what they could not respect is the one-sided delivery of decisions without proper consultations or consideration from their government. There was an appetite that they need to rise up and take action, to fight back so that the government doesn't bulldoze over the wishes of the people. Their message was loud and clear: They want their voices heard. They want transparency from this government with decisions that impact their daily lives.

The legacy of the current government is becoming one of imposing austerity on the most vulnerable. We have parents organizing rallies against this government's cuts to autism funding. We have students going to the media to defend their student unions and speak out against OSAP changes. We have hundreds of letters from people who are concerned about the government's scheme to privatize health care.

I am proud to use my time today to forward this request on behalf of my community. Ontario deserves better than it has received. Ontarians deserve a government that will listen, and that starts with working with all members in this Legislature and the people of Ontario.

ABILITIES CENTRE

Mr. Lorne Coe: I'm pleased to rise to speak about the Abilities Centre. The Abilities Centre has emerged as not only a source of pride for the Durham community but, perhaps more importantly, as a beacon of inclusivity. In the years since it opened in 2012, the Abilities Centre has been a vital touchstone for many Durham residents. The facility has blossomed over the past six years, from having only 100 members upon opening to enjoying a membership of about 4,500 from across Durham region.

Inclusiveness and a sense of belonging are not just concepts when it comes to the Abilities Centre, Speaker. They are seen concretely through its programming, including Thrive. The program is designed to meet the needs of adults with disabilities who are age 21 or over, and it offers specialized instruction in life skills, sports and fitness, and social recreation.

Thanks to the vision and community-mindedness of the late James Michael Flaherty and of Christine Elliott, the

Deputy Premier and Minister of Health and Long-Term Care, as well as the stewardship of former executive director Leo Plue, the Abilities Centre continues to be a resounding success that is helping many in Durham region lead their very best lives.

ALMA MATER SOCIETY OF QUEEN'S UNIVERSITY

Mr. Ian Arthur: I'd like to take a minute to talk about the Queen's alma mater society. It's the oldest student association in Canada. It was actually founded in 1858, so it's actually older than our country.

I know that members opposite and their staff attended Queen's University, and I would ask if any of them made use of the AMS's services. It's an exemplary student association, and about as far from a crazy Marxist nonsense organization as is humanly possible. The AMS ran an existing opt-out program. Their finances are audited yearly by KPMG. Budgets, financial reports and annual reports are all publicly posted, and they make their dollars go a long way.

AMS services include a food bank, a student-run coffee shop, a pub, a housing resource centre, a copy centre, a peer support centre, a walk-home program and the Tricolour Outlet, to name a few, and these services could disappear. They administer bursaries and grants for accessibility on campus and for those with financial need to access the activities that are available. These also may disappear.

Most importantly, though, the alma mater society provides jobs, jobs that work with students' schedules, to allow students to work to help cover the costs of their increasingly expensive university. Because of the Premier's cuts to student association fees, 300 of the 500 jobs provided by this society—

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Will the member conclude his statement?

Mr. Ian Arthur: —could be permanently lost.

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

MINISTER'S CONDUCT

Mr. Michael Coteau: Today I wrote the Integrity Commissioner calling for an investigation into alleged conduct by the Minister of Children, Community and Social Services. Threatening comments against the Ontario Association for Behaviour Analysis were alleged to be made by the minister in order to pressure the group into supporting her plans for autism funding.

Mr. Speaker, this is simply unacceptable. These are very troubling allegations. They undermine confidence in the integrity and fairness of the provincial government's decision-making.

These alleged comments give the appearance that the minister is using her position of influence to make not-for-profit organizations move on a pathway to support the government for her own benefit. This would contravene

the Members' Integrity Act. This conduct should be considered unacceptable, and I believe that an investigation of this matter is important to ensure continued public trust in decision-making by members of cabinet.

Families deserve better. Every child in this province should have a hope for a bright future. It's time for the government to bring families back to the table at Queen's Park so we can make sure we fix this issue. I'm willing to work with anyone, regardless of their political belief, and I think the government should do the same. It's time to fix the situation.

EDUCATION FUNDING

Ms. Effie J. Triantafilopoulos: Few things are more important than education, and I'm pleased to report that our government is making education better for students and families in my riding of Oakville North–Burlington.

Our government showed its commitment to my community when the education minister, the Honourable Lisa Thompson, approved the funding for a new public elementary school in the fast-growing northeast part of Oakville. Parents, educators, trustees and others had been working for years to secure funding for this much-needed school from the previous government. I would like to thank the minister for listening to the needs of our community.

The new \$20.7-million elementary school will be located at Sixth Line and Dundas Street, with space for 776 pupils and an additional 88 child care spaces. We're all looking forward to the school opening as soon as possible so that students can move in and start learning in an uncrowded, up-to-date facility.

Our community in Oakville North–Burlington is still growing, and I will continue to work with parents, families, school trustees and other local decision-makers to ensure that future needs are met without unnecessary delays. These are essential investments for our community and are key to ensuring our students succeed.

AUTISM TREATMENT

Ms. Catherine Fife: On February 6, the Conservative government announced major changes to the Ontario Autism Program. Since then, parents of children on the autism spectrum have been scrambling for answers to basic questions as to how this program will impact their children and their futures.

At first, the language used by the government revolved around clearing the wait-list and spreading the existing funding more thinly across families. We were told that this was the motivation. We heard a lot about equality—not so much about equity. Parents have made the compelling case that the Conservative autism plan, a one-size-fits-all, means-tested program, will fail most children in Ontario. In fact, thousands of families lost their funding overnight.

If you review the history of autism expenditures through public accounts, it is clear that the previous Lib-

eral government let funding stall, despite rapidly increasing needs. That's why autism families were here in 2016. But they will be back, because the PC plan is worse.

Parents are concerned that the Conservative changes will mean a drastic reduction in funding of between \$50 million and \$100 million. This is particularly worrying for families with dual income levels of \$55,000, because they will start to see their funding clawed back. Given the maximum expenditure for most age groups, families may only receive \$5,000 a year.

Parents have legitimate questions about the financing of this plan, and they deserve answers. And they deserve equity for their children in the province of Ontario.

PALLIATIVE CARE

Ms. Jill Dunlop: At the beginning of December, our government announced that they would be moving forward with their plans to build five new beds for Mariposa House Hospice, as well as five beds for Hospice Huronia. This was welcome news for my community, as I know there had been many of us involved, working hard to see this funding come to Simcoe North.

This important facility will be built in Severn township, and will provide end-of-life care to the residents of Simcoe North. To support this initiative, I participated in Severn Winterfest's polar bear dip at ODAS Park a few weeks ago. I was joined by co-founder of Mariposa House Hospice, Dr. Si Lowry; president and CEO of Orillia Soldiers' Memorial Hospital, Carmine Stumpo; and the mayor of Severn township, Mike Burkett, as well as many other wonderful volunteers and participants.

1520

I would also like to take a moment to recognize our youngest participant at the polar bear dip, Victor, who bravely jumped into "Lake ODAS" dressed as Spider-Man—a brave six-year-old. We were all thrilled to learn that, through our efforts at Severn Winterfest, we raised over \$6,000 in donations.

Mariposa House Hospice will provide compassionate palliative care to help honour every moment of life. It aims to give comfort, peace and dignity to its patients and to relieve the worries of their families by allowing them to be just that: family, not caregivers. I was moved by the kindness and dedication of Mariposa House supporters, and I commend them for their countless hours of hard work to make this event a success.

You can find some of Ontario's most kind-hearted community members in Simcoe North at fundraising events like these. They continue to show how hard we are all working together to make our communities great.

LUNG DISEASE

Mrs. Robin Martin: I rise today to bring to the awareness of this House a devastating cancer that kills over 20,000 Canadians each year—more than colorectal, breast and prostate cancers combined. I am, of course, referring to lung cancer.

According to Lung Cancer Canada, one in 12 men is expected to develop lung cancer during their lifetime, and one in 13 will die from it. One in 15 women is expected to develop lung cancer during their lifetime, and one in 17 will die from it.

While often linked to smoking, that is not the only cause of lung cancer. As many as 15% of lung cancer patients have never smoked a day in their lives, and many more have quit long before their diagnosis. But despite being one of the highest killers of Canadians, patient outcomes currently lag behind other forms of cancer. The five-year survival rate of lung cancer is just 17%. I assure you that many wish to change that number.

Advocates from the Canadian Cancer Survivor Network will be at Queen's Park tomorrow morning to meet with members of all parties. They will discuss the importance of destigmatizing lung cancer and the need to spread greater awareness to find better ways to detect and treat this challenging disease. The day begins with a breakfast reception at 8 a.m. in the legislative dining room, and I hope that many of my colleagues in this House will be able to make it.

REPORTS BY COMMITTEES

STANDING COMMITTEE ON GOVERNMENT AGENCIES

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): I beg to inform the House that today the Clerk received a report on intended appointments dated February 19, 2019, from the Standing Committee on Government Agencies. Pursuant to standing order 108(f)(9), the report is deemed to be adopted by the House.

Report deemed adopted.

STANDING COMMITTEE ON PUBLIC ACCOUNTS

Ms. Catherine Fife: I beg leave to present a report on Settlement and Integration Services for Newcomers, section 3.13, 2017 annual report of the Office of the Auditor General of Ontario, from the Standing Committee on Public Accounts, and move the adoption of its recommendations.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Ms. Fife presents the committee report and moves the adoption of its recommendations. Does the member wish to make a brief statement?

Ms. Catherine Fife: As Chair of the Standing Committee on Public Accounts—the best committee in the Legislature—I'm pleased to table the committee's report today, entitled Settlement and Integration Services for Newcomers, section 3.13, 2017 annual report of the Office of the Auditor General of Ontario.

I would like to take the opportunity to thank members Laura Mae Lindo and Kaleed Rasheed, who regularly

served as substitute members of the committee, as well as the permanent members of the committee: Ms. Sattler, who is Vice-Chair; Mr. Barrett; Ms. Ghamari; Mr. McDonnell; Mr. Norman Miller; Ms. Morrison; Mr. Parsa; and Ms. Surma.

The committee extends its appreciation to officials from Public Health Ontario and the Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care for their attendance at the hearings. The committee also acknowledges the assistance provided during the hearings and report-writing deliberations by the Office of the Auditor General, the Clerk of the Committee, and staff in legislative research.

I encourage all members to read this document. It's very informative. It indicates how hard this committee has worked on this particular issue.

With that, I move adjournment of the debate.

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

Debate adjourned.

INTRODUCTION OF BILLS

COMPREHENSIVE ONTARIO POLICE SERVICES ACT, 2019

LOI DE 2019 SUR LA REFORTE COMPLÈTE DES SERVICES DE POLICE DE L'ONTARIO

Ms. Jones moved first reading of the following bill:

Bill 68, An Act with respect to community safety and policing / Projet de loi 68, Loi portant sur la sécurité communautaire et les services policiers.

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

First reading agreed to.

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

Hon. Sylvia Jones: Thank you, Speaker. It is indeed a pleasure to rise in the House today to introduce the Comprehensive Ontario Police Services Act, 2019.

If passed, this legislation will strengthen community safety and ensure that the police have the support and confidence of a grateful province for years to come. If passed, the Comprehensive Ontario Police Services Act, 2019, will repeal and replace the Police Services Act, 2018; repeal and replace the Ontario Special Investigations Unit Act, 2018; repeal the Ontario Policing Discipline Tribunal Act, 2018; repeal the Policing Oversight Act, 2018; amend the Coroners Act; and amend the Mandatory Blood Testing Act.

By repealing these acts and amending the Coroners Act and the Mandatory Blood Testing Act, we have cleared the path to develop better and stronger policing legislation and oversight that works for both police officers and the people of Ontario.

This is what our government promised, Speaker. Ensuring the security of the people is the government's most fundamental responsibility. The proposed Comprehensive Ontario Police Services Act, 2019, is key—

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

GOLDEN GIRLS ACT, 2019

LOI DE 2019 SUR LES GOLDEN GIRLS

Ms. Park moved first reading of the following bill:

Bill 69, An Act to amend the Planning Act / Projet de loi 69, Loi modifiant la Loi sur l'aménagement du territoire.

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

First reading agreed to.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Would the member for Durham care to explain her bill briefly?

Ms. Lindsey Park: Thank you, Speaker. Currently, the Planning Act provides that the authority to pass bylaws under certain sections of the act does not include the authority to pass a bylaw that has the effect of distinguishing between persons who are related and persons who are unrelated in respect of the occupancy or use of a building or structure or part thereof, including the occupancy or use as a single housekeeping unit. The bill amends the act to provide that the rule applies, for greater certainty, in respect of unrelated seniors.

REGISTERED PROFESSIONAL PLANNERS ACT, 2019

LOI DE 2019 SUR LES URBANISTES CERTIFIÉS

Mr. Coe moved first reading of the following bill:

Bill 70, An Act respecting the regulation of Registered Professional Planners / Projet de loi 70, Loi concernant la réglementation des urbanistes certifiés.

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

First reading agreed to.

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

Mr. Lorne Coe: Thank you, Speaker. The bill presented repeals the Ontario Professional Planners Institute Act, 1994, and enacts the Registered Professional Planners Act, 2019.

1530

If passed, this act will safeguard the public interest by further strengthening the profession's strict practice requirements and further improving accountability of the institute and its members.

PETITIONS

AUTISM TREATMENT

Miss Monique Taylor: I have a petition from the Alliance Against the Ontario Autism Program and it is named "Autism Doesn't End at Ford.

"To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas the PC government of Ontario recently announced plans to overhaul the Ontario Autism Program, implementing a two-tiered age- and income-based funding model, and effectively removing funding for any significant duration of comprehensive applied behavioural analysis (ABA) from all children within the autism spectrum disorder (ASD); and

"Whereas in 2003 and again in 2016, previous age caps on comprehensive therapy were removed by former Liberal Premier Dalton McGuinty and former Liberal Premier Kathleen Wynne because the age cap was recognized to be unfair and discriminatory; and

"Whereas ABA is not a therapy, but a science, upon which interventions including comprehensive treatment is founded and duration and intensity of treatment are the key components in predicting outcomes—not age; and

"Whereas accredited peer-reviewed empirical evidence in the treatment of children with ASD has repeatedly shown that for some children with ASD, comprehensive ABA therapy is best practice and the only suitable intervention; and

"Whereas wait-lists for services have increased in length as a result of the 66% increase in costs to administer direct service compared to direct funding, as reported by the Auditor General in 2013, and with the direct service model being eliminated with the Ontario Autism Program reforms, the PC government has a chance to build a needs-based system that will help every child reach their full potential; and

"Whereas it is unacceptable for the Premier of Ontario or his government to drastically reduce essential supports for some of the province's most vulnerable children without consideration of their individualized needs;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to direct the government to immediately reassess the changes to the Ontario Autism Program and redesign the direct funding model to be administered with a needs-based approach in order to ensure that all children with ASD for whom continuous or comprehensive therapy has been prescribed by a qualified clinician are able to obtain these services in a timely manner regardless of their age or family income."

I agree with this petition. I'm going to affix my name to it and give it to page Alyssa to bring to the Clerk.

FISH AND WILDLIFE MANAGEMENT

Mr. Norman Miller: I have a petition to do with hunting and trapping. It reads:

"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 (MNRF), 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’ve signed this petition and support it, and I’ll give it to Vanessa.

ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION

Mr. Mike Schreiner: I’d like to read a petition that I know the government has responded to, but I want to honour the over 1,200 people who sent this to me in the last two weeks.

“To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“Whereas the Progressive Conservative government recently introduced Bill 66, and schedule 10 of the proposed legislation will allow municipalities to override significant pieces of existing environmental and planning legislation;

“Whereas schedule 10 also denies the requirement for public consultation and notice on development in one’s own community;

“Whereas schedule 10 threatens hard-fought and valued protections for clean water, the greenbelt, the Great Lakes, the Oak Ridges moraine and other environmentally sensitive areas;

“Whereas Ontario has one of the richest natural and environmental legacies in the world;

“Whereas we are currently facing a combined climate and biodiversity crisis with growing impacts on human health; and

“Whereas a failure to protect our farmland and wetlands will result in significant ecological damage and economic hardship;

“Therefore we, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to remove schedule 10 from Bill 66.”

I happily support this petition, will sign it and ask page Sophie to bring it to the table.

WEST LINCOLN MEMORIAL HOSPITAL

Mr. Sam Oosterhoff: I’m happy to say that this particular petition has been responded to very well by our government. It reads as follows—it’s a petition to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario.

“Whereas:

“—The West Lincoln Memorial Hospital has served West Niagara very well since it was first opened in 1948, but since then has become dated and in desperate need of upgrades and redevelopment to serve the growing health care needs of the region;

“—The former Liberal government called redevelopment of WLMH a priority, promising that construction

would begin by 2009, and after subsequent broken promises, the government’s 2012 budget cancelled the project entirely; and

“Whereas:

“—Hamilton Health Sciences has announced the temporary move of some important services from the West Lincoln Memorial Hospital;

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

“—Maintain all services in the West Lincoln Memorial Hospital;

“—Expedite the process of rebuilding the West Lincoln Memorial Hospital.”

Speaker, I’m proud to say that this is signed by over 20,000 of my constituents. I am very proud to add my name to it. I know the government is listening.

TUITION

Ms. Teresa J. Armstrong: Speaker, I have a petition from Nikita Bist of London. The petition reads:

“To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“Whereas Ontario has the highest tuition rates in Canada, the lowest per-student funding from the province and the highest rates of student debt. The Ontario government’s recent changes to OSAP funding are a major barrier to college and university students in Ontario;

“I, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to direct the Minister of Training, Colleges and Universities to reverse the recently announced OSAP cuts, protect the existing tuition grants and reinstate the six-month interest-free grace period after graduation for Ontario post-secondary students.”

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

FISH AND WILDLIFE MANAGEMENT

Mr. Dave Smith: I have a petition that reads:

“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’ve affixed my name to this petition. I support it fully and give it to page Julian.

LONG-TERM CARE

M^{me} France G elinas: I am really proud to introduce this petition, which was gathered by Mrs. Doris Labelle, who lives in the Elizabeth Centre, a long-term-care home in my riding and who is watching TV right now, so hello, Mrs. Labelle.

The petition reads as follows:

“Time to Care.

“To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

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

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

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

They petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to:

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

I fully support this petition, will affix my name to it, and ask my good page Alyssa to bring it to the Clerk. And thanks again, Mrs. Labelle.

1540

TUITION

Mr. Ian Arthur: Mr. Speaker, I’d like to read this petition entitled “Repeal of Changes Made to OSAP Funding.”

“To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“Whereas the Ontario government has repealed the program which granted free tuition to low-income students under the OSAP program in favour of the pre-2016 OSAP program. As well as removing the six-month grace period for loan repayment;

“Whereas the Ontario government has lowered the cost of tuition by 10% regardless of financial situation, which places a financial burden on post-secondary institutions; and

“Whereas the Ontario government has removed many mandatory fees for post-secondary students which go towards quality-of-life boosts for those students;

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

“That the Ontario government repeal the changes to the OSAP program and university tuition and fees made in January 2019, so as to enable low-income students to continue to access post-secondary education.”

I support this petition. I will affix my name to it and give it to page Vanessa to hand in.

TUITION

Ms. Laura Mae Lindo: I’d like to read this petition entitled “Support our Students: Stop Cuts to OSAP!

“To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“Whereas Ontario has the highest tuition rates in Canada, lowest per-student funding from the province and highest student debt, and the government’s changes will only make the situation worse;

“Whereas removing the interest-free six-month grace period means students will end up paying more, and are pressured to pay their loans even before finding a job or starting a career;

“Whereas the Conservatives’ decision to cancel grants and force students to take loans instead is another barrier to college and university;

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

“Direct the Minister of Training, Colleges and Universities to reverse the recently announced OSAP cuts, protect the existing tuition grants and reinstate the six-month interest-free grace period after graduation.”

I fully support this petition and will affix my name to it.

CHILD CARE WORKERS

Ms. Rima Berns-McGown: “Petition to Maintain the Provincial Wage Enhancement Grant for Registered Early Childhood Educators and Child Care Workers in Licensed Child Care.

“To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“Whereas the provincial Wage Enhancement Grant provides \$2 per hour in wage support to many registered early childhood educators and child care workers in licensed child care;

“Whereas the Provincial Wage Enhancement grant supports staff recruitment and retention in licensed child care, increases income security among registered early child care educators and child care workers, and begins to recognize their contributions to Ontario communities;

“Whereas the provincial Wage Enhancement Grant helps close the gender wage gap;

“Whereas the provincial Wage Enhancement Grant helps keep parents’ child care fees from rising;

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

“Maintain the \$2-per-hour provincial Wage Enhancement Grant for registered early childhood educators and child care workers in licensed child care.”

I completely agree with this petition, shall be affixing my signature to it and giving it to page Alyssa to take to the Clerk.

TUITION

Ms. Laura Mae Lindo: I would like to read the following petition: “Support our Students: Stop Cuts to OSAP!

“To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“Whereas Ontario has the highest tuition rates in Canada, lowest per-student funding from the province and highest student debt, and the government’s changes will only make the situation worse;

“Whereas removing the interest-free six-month grace period means students will end up paying more, and are pressured to pay their loans even before finding a job or starting a career;

“Whereas the Conservatives’ decision to cancel grants and force students to take loans instead is another barrier to college and university;

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

“Direct the Minister of Training, Colleges and Universities to reverse the recently announced OSAP cuts, protect the existing tuition grants and reinstate the six-month interest-free grace period after graduation.”

I fully support this petition and will affix my name to it—

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Percy Hatfield): Thank you. Further petitions?

ARTS AND CULTURAL FUNDING

Ms. Jill Andrew: This petition is called “Petition to Restore Arts Funding and the Indigenous Culture Fund at the Ontario Arts Council.

“To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“Whereas the Ontario government has cut its level of base funding to the Ontario Arts Council (OAC) by \$5 million for the 2018-19 fiscal year, from \$69.9 million to \$64.9 million;

“Whereas the Ontario government has also cut its funding to the Indigenous Culture Fund (ICF) at the OAC by \$2.25 million for the 2018-19 fiscal year from \$5 million to \$2.75 million;

“Whereas the ICF will not accept new grant applications this year while the program is under review, entailing the layoff of Indigenous staff in permanent positions;

“Whereas the arts are essential to the quality of life, cultural identity, social and community well-being, creativity, innovation, and economic prosperity of Ontario;

“Whereas the ICF was part of the Ontario government’s response to the Calls to Action of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada;

“Whereas the ICF supported traditional culture, languages, teachings, protocols, knowledge, youth and elderled and engaged community cultural projects;

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

“(a) Restore OAC’s funding to \$69.9 million this year and maintain this level moving forward;

“(b) Restore the ICF’s funding to \$5 million this year, retain all ICF staff positions, and commit to funding the ICF at this level in the years moving forward.”

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

ORDERS OF THE DAY

RESTORING ONTARIO’S COMPETITIVENESS ACT, 2019

LOI DE 2019 VISANT À RÉTABLIR LA COMPÉTITIVITÉ DE L’ONTARIO

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

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

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Percy Hatfield): I will return to the minister to speak to his bill.

Hon. Todd Smith: It is a pleasure to rise and speak to Bill 66, the Restoring Ontario’s Competitiveness Act. Just to put this into perspective, Mr. Speaker, we have thrown down the gauntlet, so to speak, as far as our ministry is concerned, and put a target out there to reduce burdensome red tape in the province by 25% by 2020. What we’ve done is to challenge all ministries to look within their ministries and find out where red tape is slowing things down, is causing duplication, is causing business, in particular, to grind to a halt. That’s one of the concerns that we want to address, and that’s why we’ve actually put an aggressive target on this. The bill is part of our government’s ongoing commitment to reduce red tape and burdensome regulation because cutting red tape helps create an environment in Ontario that supports good jobs.

Many members have heard me speak about my first portfolio in this House. When I was first elected back in October 2011, our leader at the time made me the critic of small business and red tape reduction. Now, there was no ministry of small business and red tape reduction, but for a new member of the Legislature it was a great introduction to what the province is responsible for, because I can tell you that red tape is in every single ministry in government. That’s why we’ve challenged all of our ministers to look deep within their ministries to find where we can eliminate that red tape.

I spent about two years in that role. I criss-crossed the province. I was with the member from Sarnia–Lambton. I recall a very memorable trip we made to Ottawa in the summer of 2012. We had a great time touring around and talking to different industries and stakeholders about the red tape in their businesses. I went to Brantford and I talked to hairstylists in Brantford; I particularly remember that. I talked to an agency store up in Navan, in the Ottawa area, and talked about how red tape was slowing things down there. And, of course, manufacturing has been absolutely buried in red tape across the province.

This was just about the time that electricity prices were starting to take that upward trend in Ontario as a result of the disastrous Green Energy Act that the Liberals had signed. Back then, we were just starting to hear about Ontario’s competitiveness problem, and there were a

couple of reasons for that. One was red tape, certainly, and the other was the rising cost of electricity.

We heard about thousands of out-of-control regulations that did nothing to protect workers' health and safety and took time away from small business owners' abilities to serve customers or get product out the door. I want to stress the impact on small business, because during the debate on Bill 47 late last year, we had members opposite, including the member from Guelph and the member from Sudbury, who suggested that only big business benefits from cutting regulations. Mr. Speaker, that's simply not the case. Those big businesses, those large corporations, have the ability to hire compliance officers and accountants to help them deal with just about any regulation that the previous Liberal government would throw their way. They have that kind of space built in where they can hire people solely to look after red tape, burdensome bureaucracy, duplicative reporting and those types of things.

1550

Small and medium-sized businesses, I would argue, don't have that ability. What we've heard in our travels across the province from those small and medium-sized businesses is that that shop owner, that hair stylist in Brantford, is actually spending a day a week dealing with burdensome red tape instead of cutting the hair of people like Bob Bailey—not that that would take a long time, Mr. Speaker, but you understand what I'm saying here. It would take time away from their business and making money. Every new regulation costs time and costs money. In fact, businesses in Ontario face the highest cost to comply with regulations of any province, at \$33,000 per company. That's much higher than the \$25,000 in most other provinces, and small businesses are hit the hardest, facing the highest cost to comply on a per-employee basis.

The members' comments also speak to a broader attitude that we've heard, which is the belief that just because a business can afford to comply with a regulation, the regulation is justified. It's exactly that kind of attitude that has led to the scattershot regulatory regime that our government has had to confront here in the opening months of our mandate. It's that kind of attitude that leads to the belief that just because there are three levels of government, there ought to be three levels of regulation. That simply doesn't make sense. What it does is it costs time and it costs money to comply with the different levels of regulation.

As we'll see when it comes to the wireless telecommunications sector and the Toxics Reduction Act, we're bringing Ontario in line with work being done at the federal level to avoid unnecessary duplication. That's an important approach because it encourages the rest of the country to do the same thing. If Ontario and the federal government have the same standard, there exists no reason for other provinces not to follow our lead. And in cases like the Toxics Reduction Act, we're taking steps that other provinces have actually already taken to avoid that duplication.

Now, reducing red tape isn't just about streamlining with other jurisdictions. It's about ensuring that we're

creating an environment where our job creators can do what they do best: create good jobs for the people of Ontario. Mr. Speaker, listen to this—you've heard this number before: Ontario lost over 300,000 manufacturing jobs from 2003 to 2009 and has experienced no net gain since that time in manufacturing. Doing the same thing and hoping for a different result was the strategy of the previous government. Under the previous government, families found it easier to fall behind and harder to get ahead. Our government knows that Ontarians can do better and be better, and that's why we're taking steps, like those through Bill 66, to make sure our kids have just as many opportunities as we did growing up.

I want to stress that we don't view Bill 66 as a final destination. It's one stop on the train; it's one stop on the rail line. We would say that Bill 47 was station number one, Bill 57 was the next station, and Bill 66 is the next station on that line. We've set these targets, so we're going to have important pieces of legislation to help us get there. We have to proceed step by step in making sure that we're restoring Ontario's competitiveness. As I've said before, and I meant it, you can't undo 15 years of bad decisions in just a couple of months. That's why we're biting off these pieces of regulation on a step-by-step-by-step basis.

I'd like to turn the attention of the House to specific measures in the bill, because I think there are people who hear "red tape" and then they try and traffic in misinformation, or they try and fearmonger or make people a little bit more worried than they should be. That's because regulation, while sometimes necessary, is always a tool for expanding government, and we have seen the size of government expand to extraordinary levels over the last 15 years in Ontario.

Now, if you're a politician who relies on the major public employee unions for infrastructure and support, that's probably not a bad thing for you. We saw an example of that attitude at the Bill 47 public hearings when a representative of one of those unions came to the committee and said that small businesses that couldn't deal with the new regulations imposed by the old Bill 148 shouldn't be in business. What everyone who makes an argument like that seems to forget is that you can't have public sector jobs without a thriving private sector to support them.

A lot of these red tape reductions are meant to get government off the backs of business in Ontario and, as the bill's title says, restore Ontario's competitiveness.

Let's start with the changes to farm registration. The bill allows the program to operate under electronic service delivery, simplify the process, change how the program is delivered and improve the timeliness of its decisions—all of which are meant to make it easier for good things to grow in Ontario by making it easier to own, register and operate a farm.

As Keith Currie, the president of the Ontario Federation of Agriculture, said, "The Ontario Federation of Agriculture is pleased with the province of Ontario's actions taken to reduce regulatory burdens for our members. Streamlining the Farm Business Registration process is another

way in which Minister of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs Ernie Hardeman and the Ford government are reducing onerous paperwork for our membership.”

This bill is also amending the ministry’s act to make it easier for provincial loan guarantees to be offered directly to farmers. This is what Joe Hill, the president of the Beef Farmers of Ontario, had to say. I always love it when the beef farmers come to Queen’s Park, Mr. Speaker, and I understand they are in town this week.

From Mr. Hill: “The Beef Farmers of Ontario greatly appreciate the work being done by Minister Hardeman to reduce red tape and make Ontario more open for business. The quick movement to include ‘entities’ in the wording of the Feeder Cattle Loan Guarantee Program, and to provide the minister with authority to make changes enabling the program to work better for our farmers means a lot to Ontario’s 19,000 beef farmers.”

Again, we look forward to seeing the beef farmers a little bit later on this week.

I should also say, those are two pieces of this bill that were brought forward by Minister Hardeman. He’s doing his part to get government off the backs of those who are working in the agriculture sector and I thank him for the work that he is doing to reduce red tape and make Ontario’s farmers and agriculture sector more competitive.

I want to turn to schedule 5 of the bill, which is the government’s intent to wind down the Toxics Reduction Act by the end of 2021. As it currently stands, the Toxics Reduction Act requires companies to report usage and identify ways of reducing their use. It’s one of the biggest paper tigers in government and it takes a lot of paper, Mr. Speaker.

The sole accomplishment of the act over its nine years as a statute has been to generate more paper and more people who process that paper. All this work is already being done through the federal Chemicals Management Plan. The only difference is that the federal government’s plan actually requires companies to do something about the usage of harmful chemicals. The federal plan is robust, it’s science-based, and every other province but Ontario relies on it. Creating unnecessary duplication does nothing to protect Ontario’s health or safety, or the economy.

This is the perfect example of what we’re looking for, and I’ve got to give credit to the Minister of Environment, Conservation and Parks for finding this little tidbit that’s not just saving businesses time and burdensome paperwork, but money as well, and making them more competitive. I want to congratulate the Minister of Environment, Rod Phillips, for the work that he’s been doing on this file. It’s a perfect example of how we’ve got a federal regulation that’s actually doing a great job, but for some reason—probably because it sounded good—the previous Liberal government decided that they were going to create their own, useless regulation that just created duplication, onerous costs and time—

Interjection.

Hon. Todd Smith: —and jobs, that’s right. It cost jobs and created more public sector jobs, probably, that we don’t need.

1600

So on to schedule 7: This proposed change is close to my heart for a couple of reasons, and not just because it was my first ministry in government. I came to this place in 2011 with Minister Walker—he’s a pretty good guy, without a shadow of a doubt, Mr. Speaker. Now he’s the minister responsible for government and consumer services, and hence, he’s responsible for those delegated administrative authorities. And he is the minister responsible for reducing the red tape in those delegated administrative authorities over at MGCS.

The auditor’s report at the end of the last session took square aim—and you will remember this—at the TSSA, the Technical Standards and Safety Authority, and the effectiveness of the job it was doing to protect Ontarians on everything from elevators to pressure valves and lots of other things. Reforming the TSSA to ensure effective and efficient regulation is a clear focus of the ministry and the government. To that end, we are enabling the TSSA to develop rules to achieve the legislative goals set out in the act. This will allow us to build a regulatory environment that’s better able to standardize its own best practices and create a practical regulatory environment. By removing upholstered and stuffed articles from the TSSA’s mandate, the government is also ensuring that TSSA inspectors are spending more time on important things like pipelines and less or no time on plush toys.

But the other part of schedule 7 that reflects the government’s commitment to regulatory reform is the repeal of the Wireless Services Agreements Act. I tell you, when I was the critic for red tape in 2012, the Wireless Services Agreements Act was the first government bill for which I ever received an opposition bill briefing. I know you’ve had several of them, Mr. Speaker, over the last number of years. It was the first time that I was ever brought over to a minister’s boardroom to deal with the civil service on a piece of government legislation. At that time, along with my colleague from Stormont–Dundas–South Glengarry, Mr. McDonnell, who was the consumer services critic at that time as well—even then, I couldn’t understand why the provincial government was deliberately intervening or getting involved in something that was clearly a federal issue, and the province didn’t need to stick its nose in there.

This gets back to two of the matters which I raised earlier. The first was the approach taken by the previous government around regulation. Regulations didn’t have to serve a practical economic purpose; they had to serve a practical public relations purpose first. They had to sound good; they didn’t actually have to do anything. But at the end of the day, what they did was create a lot of burdensome regulation. In the case of the Wireless Services Agreements Act, that practical public relations purpose was to make it appear as though the government was responding to public pressure and a couple of negative CBC stories, including one that was on *The Fifth Estate*. The bill was introduced in the middle of hearings that were being undertaken by the CRTC—federal—to develop a new wireless charter.

To avoid the federal government taking credit for a series of new consumer protection measures, just as the iPhone started ending up in everyone's pocket or purse, we ended up with a duplicative provincial regulatory law that really serves no purpose other than to create, or start to create, a patchwork across the country of different legislation from province to province to territory.

We're repealing it because it's completely unnecessary, because it's bad law and because the federal regulations actually do a lot more to protect wireless customers. It's important to remember that Ontario is a jurisdiction of 14 million people and Canada is a jurisdiction of 34 million. Where we can avoid the unnecessary duplication of regulations, we'll attract more businesses and we'll build more businesses. We want to build those businesses right here in Ontario. We aren't the only jurisdiction out there trying to attract these companies. We may be a marketplace, but we're also a part of a much larger one. If businesses think they can service Ontario from Michigan or Ohio or Pennsylvania or New York, then they will. That's why we have to make sure that we are as competitive a jurisdiction as we possibly can be, and that's why we're so focused on ensuring that we reduce that red tape, that overregulation that's burying businesses and costing them more to do business here. Unless we make Ontario more appealing than our cross-border competitors, then they will locate in other jurisdictions. This must be more than just a place to do business; it has to be the best place to do business. That's why we're striving to make it the best place to do business.

When our government says that we have a vision of Ontario that makes it the best place to live, work and raise a family, we actually mean it. This bill is part of the government's multi-year Open for Business action plan, which is tackling the red tape that is driving jobs and investment out of the province. The plan includes a target to reduce regulatory red tape affecting businesses, as I mentioned earlier, by 25% by 2020.

In the months and years ahead, we'll introduce a series of bills to further lower business costs and boost competitiveness. We'll continue to streamline and modernize regulations. We'll continue to put packages in the window like we did last week at Woodbridge Group in Vaughan.

Our Driving Prosperity plan for the auto sector: It's phase 1 of that plan, but that is going to make our auto sector one of the most competitive, if not the most competitive, in North America. We have to take these steps, and that's why we're so revved up, as I said this morning, about our Driving Prosperity plan for the auto sector.

I should point out, Mr. Speaker, that I will be sharing my time in the one-hour leadoff with the Minister of Education, who will speak after me, and also my parliamentary assistant, who has done such an outstanding job on the red tape file, Mr. Michael Parsa, from Aurora—Oak Ridges—Richmond Hill.

Before I wrap up here, I should say that both of my parliamentary assistants, Donna Skelly, from down near Hamilton—Flamborough—Glanbrook—and Mr. Parsa,

have been out there holding these red tape round tables in communities all across the province, much the way I did when I was a critic for red tape back in 2012 through to 2013, and hearing directly from those business owners. I can tell you that those business owners are thrilled that somebody is actually listening to them—and not just listening to them, but making action items, taking the suggestions from businesses and then bringing them to the floor of the Legislature, to make Ontario a more competitive place for them to do business.

We're going to maintain the rules that are effective and necessary to protect the people of Ontario. I want to stress that: Rules that are necessary and effective in protecting the people of Ontario will stay. But we're eliminating the burdensome regulations that don't clearly contribute to health, safety and the environment.

Our government is getting out of the way of job creators so that they can focus on growing their businesses with the speed and efficiency they need to compete locally and globally. Our plan to make it cheaper, faster and easier to do business will create prosperity across Ontario, because we believe Ontario's families deserve to have good jobs and good opportunities. Our government is truly making Ontario open for business and open for jobs.

Speaker, I'd like to cede the remainder of my time to my government colleagues, who are going to talk about how their teams are helping to reduce red tape and how this bill is going to help the people of Ontario and restore Ontario's competitiveness.

Thank you for your time, Speaker.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Percy Hatfield): The minister did say he was sharing his time. I recognize the Minister of Education.

Hon. Lisa M. Thompson: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. It's a pleasure to be back in the House and debating an important bill.

Bill 66, as Minister Smith has pointed out, is truly demonstrating how this government in Ontario is proving to be standing with business owners and making this province open for business and open for jobs. I'm very proud to be a part of that, Speaker.

I'm proud to stand in this House today to talk about how our government is also helping parents with young children. Speaker, I'm talking about Bill 66 and how proposed changes contained in this transformational bill will help the province's child care and early years sector and also make life easier for Ontario families.

Now that I have the honour of serving as Ontario's Minister of Education, it is especially gratifying when our government can do something to make a big difference for families and children right here, so that they have choice and flexibility close to home. This includes helping parents with more options, which any parent will tell you is important to them and the future success of their children. They need it to be accessible where they live and where they work.

That is why we're taking action with these proposed changes. They will make life easier for hard-working parents, and they will also allow parents to do what they

need to do so that they can earn a living and provide for their family.

1610

That's why I'm very pleased to be here today in our Legislature to speak specifically about how we are creating a climate to give parents access to more choice that fits their priorities. These are obviously real wins for families right across this province.

Since day one, our government has promised to make life easier in Ontario, and this legislation absolutely shows we're keeping that promise. In fact, we are receiving accolades from one end to the other in Ontario for making sure that our province is focused on being open for business and open for jobs and on respecting the priorities of parents. Earlier this year, the Honourable Doug Ford, Premier of this amazing province, received recognition from the Canadian Federation of Independent Business. This was because our government listened. We are pushing for job creation while lowering business costs and sending a clear message to the world that Ontario is open for business.

In December, my colleague the Honourable Todd Smith, Minister of Economic Development, Job Creation and Trade, stood in this very House and introduced Bill 66, the Restoring Ontario's Competitiveness Act, with the goal of reducing administrative burden for a variety of sectors across this province. As I mentioned, Speaker, one important sector, to all of us, is child care. In helping the child care sector and businesses across the province, we're not just helping our business owners but also helping employees—parents who need to get to work and have access to child care choices close to home. The proposed changes in Bill 66 are going to do just that: They will open up access to home-based child care providers as well as authorized recreational and skill-based programs, who have been telling us that parents are looking for this type of assistance. We've listened, and we're acting. If passed, this bill will also provide more solutions to what prove to be struggles when parents face accessibility and affordability when it comes to child care.

Let me outline how we're going to do just that and how we're going to help. These changes would positively impact organizations that offer authorized recreation and skill-building programs as before- and after-school-care programming. More children will be able to enrol in this type of programming. That's because, under these proposed changes, children as young as four years old would be allowed to participate in authorized recreational and skill-building programs before and after school.

In terms of helping the average family, the benefits are very clear. For instance, let's look at a family with two children, one in junior kindergarten and one in grade 2. Under today's rules, if you are one of the many parents who rely on before- or after-school programming, you may have to enrol your children in two separate programs, possibly at two separate locations. How does that make sense? What they're facing today is because the regulations that we have to live within right now do not allow any child under six years old to enrol in these kinds of

recreational and after-school programs. It's easy to understand how this could be very difficult, stressful and frustrating for a family. That could mean that, as a parent, you would have to make two stops on the way home instead of one. Again, it's a lot to ask of parents when they have very busy lives. This proposed change would allow parents the ability to enrol their children in one program at one location. Now that's what makes sense. Also, lowering the age limit would match the age of children who enter kindergarten and can participate in camps, ensuring consistency 365 days a year. Let's not forget the important business perspective: From an operator's viewpoint, it increases the ability to serve and provide programming for more children, to hire more staff, and to expand. That's what I mean: Ontario, under Doug Ford, is open for business and open for jobs.

I can tell you that there are few decisions in life that are as personal and as important to parents as the care of their child. It's simply one of the most important decisions any parent will make. This is an area where parents need the freedom to choose options that work for them in places that are convenient for their daily lives. That's why it's so important for parents to have options when looking at child care locations, the costs involved and the kind of programming that suits their family needs.

But there's more to it when it comes to the proposed changes in Bill 66. We have some important amendments that would also help home-based providers, who are an important part of our child care sector. Again, this is about increasing choice and flexibility close to home for parents, but it's also about helping business owners, who will see an increase in the number of young children that home-based providers can have in their care from two children under two years of age to three children under two years of age. This is important because we know that only 3% of licensed child care spaces are currently for infants. That means that choice for parents of infants is incredibly limited right now, today.

As a result of Bill 66, this change would increase a provider's ability to offer this urgently needed care. I can tell you that there are many home-based providers that thrive in offering infant care, but we need to make these changes to encourage more providers to offer services for infants. Clearly, there is a demand for more infant care, and I'm pleased to say that through this change in Bill 66, parents will see increased access.

But Speaker, there's still more. We're also proposing to align the age at which home-based child care providers must count their own children towards the maximum allowable number of children with the age at which most children attend school full-time, which is four years old. As it stands today, home-based child care providers are required to include their own children in their maximum allowable head counts if they are under the age of six, except in some very complex and burdensome exceptions. We're proposing, in Bill 66, amendments so that providers must only count their own children if they are under the age of four.

Here's how it would work. Say you were a home-based child care provider who offers services on weekdays,

including evenings and weekends. You also have two of your own children who are five and six years old and who attend kindergarten and grade 1. Under the current rules, if you provide licensed home care for the maximum allowable six children at a time, your six-year-old would not count towards the maximum allowable head count at any time. However, your five-year-old would count when they are at home from school on weekdays before 6 a.m. and after 7 p.m., on weekends, PD days and in the summer. That means that at that time, you must reduce the number of children in your care to five and leave one child care spot empty, or reduce the availability of care for other children and families during those times.

Adjusting the limit on the maximum allowable for the provider's own children would mean that providers would no longer be required to count their own children in their head counts at any time once they have turned four years old. This is important. This is about increasing access for child care that's flexible and close to home.

These proposed changes would give providers, as I said, more choice for parents during hours that are typically underserved, aligned with the age for full-day kindergarten. This change would also allow home-based child care providers to maximize spaces, expand their businesses and be more successful.

Finally, we will also remove the restriction that a parent must receive financial assistance before in-home child care services can be provided for their child. This means that families will be eligible for in-home care regardless of a family's income. This will be welcome news for parents who work shift work or irregular hours and require child care, since home-based providers typically do not offer services at that time.

Having in-home child care services helps ensure that children can maintain routines at home like bedtime and getting up in the morning. This also means that child care providers would have an opportunity to further expand their services. The changes will also make it easier for licensed home-based child care providers to care for more of our youngest children.

Clearly, these proposed changes are all big wins for parents and providers since they increase access options and parental choice, and allow businesses the flexibility to expand and thrive. But I have to stress the following: The proposed changes would give home-based child care providers and authorized recreational and skill-building programs additional flexibility, most importantly, while retaining the health and safety provisions of our current legislative framework. This includes the same progressive and robust approach to enforcement.

Even with these proposed changes, let me assure you, Speaker, that rigorous standards will continue to apply to the child care sector in Ontario. Any operators who contravene the Child Care and Early Years Act will be subject to the same enforcement measures that currently exist.

1620

Speaker, the proposed amendments will also keep Ontario in line with our provincial counterparts with respect

to the high standards of health and safety prescribed in our legislation. At the same time, the proposed changes would support child care professionals in focusing on what matters most: providing quality child care.

Having said that, the Ministry of Education will continue to have a range of enforcement tools to ensure strong oversight of the child care sector. To support compliance and the oversight of licensed and unlicensed child care, the ministry has in place an online, searchable registry of violations, and also an established and dedicated enforcement unit within the ministry's child care quality assurance and licensing branch. Furthermore, the ministry also follows up on all complaints against both licensed and unlicensed child care providers to ensure they are meeting requirements under the law. In addition, the ministry proactively conducts inspections that are not based on complaints. Moreover, Speaker, when licensed and unlicensed providers have not followed the rules, the ministry can take clear enforcement action such as issuing compliance orders, administrative monetary penalties and protection orders. Child care providers not following the rules may also be subject to restraining orders or charges under our child care legislation. Anyone who is found guilty of an offence is prohibited from ever providing child care in the future.

Therefore, it's clear that our proposed changes do not compromise the safety of Ontario's children. In fact, what they show is that we've listened to the people of Ontario and that we are honouring our commitment to make life easier for families. Without compromising the health and safety of our children, we are taking action to increase child care accessibility for families, and providing business owners with the opportunity to grow their business. Safety and health standards will remain in place, and in many cases we're aligning age-related rules for day camps and kindergarten, which simply makes sense.

Mr. Speaker, at the end of the day, we are offering families the flexibility and options we know they need, because we've been listening to them. We are giving them the freedom to pick the right kind of care that suits their family's needs with increased access and affordability. Simply put, this will give parents the choice that they've asked for and the choice that they deserve. And it gives providers the flexibility to offer more care that meets the needs of their communities, which in turn will allow their businesses to expand and prosper.

As I mentioned earlier, our government believes child care should not be handled in a one-size-fits-all approach. Look at what we inherited. What we believe in is options and opportunity. We believe in choice and flexibility and we believe in making life easier for Ontario families. We believe in making sure that Ontario is open for business and ultimately open for jobs.

Thank you, Speaker. It has been an honour to stand in this House today, and I look forward to hearing what MPP Parsa has to add to this debate.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Percy Hatfield): I recognize the member from Aurora–Oak Ridges–Richmond Hill.

Mr. Michael Parsa: Thank you very much, Speaker. I thank the minister for her speech, as well as Minister Smith. It was great to hear both and the work that they have done when it comes to this bill and reducing over-regulation and red tape.

It's a pleasure to be back in the House today. I hope all my colleagues enjoyed a relaxing and productive winter break. I'm pleased to rise as parliamentary assistant to the Minister of Economic Development, Job Creation and Trade, who is also the minister responsible for red tape and regulatory burden reduction.

I rise today to speak to the second reading of Bill 66, the Restoring Ontario's Competitiveness Act. Last year, as the minister, myself and many of my caucus colleagues criss-crossed the province to listen to the people, we continuously heard the same message over and over again: Ontario is currently a province that is overregulated with burdensome red tape. As such, our province is falling behind other North American jurisdictions in its ability to attract investment capital and create good jobs.

These problems have continuously gotten worse over the past 15 years. This is not rhetoric, Mr. Speaker; it's a fact. By all measures, Ontario has fallen behind. Let me just provide you with some stats.

Between 2003 and 2009, Ontario lost 320,000 manufacturing jobs, with no net new jobs in the sector since. These were good jobs that left Ontario because it was unattractive to do business here.

In terms of GDP per capita, we are currently ranked 46th out of 64 in North America. Between 2008 and 2016, 98.6% of net new jobs were created in Toronto and Ottawa, while other communities across our province have fallen behind. We often consider ourselves a top economy in North America, yet we rank 46th out of 64 North American jurisdictions in GDP per capita. How could this be, Speaker, and how is this even possible?

In their 2018 Ontario Economic Report, the Ontario Chamber of Commerce found that in 2017, 41% of businesses lacked confidence in the economy. In 2018, that number jumped to 48%. I repeat: In 2018, 48% of businesses simply lost confidence in our economy.

After touring the province and speaking to our business owners, our job creators and our workers, the problem was crystal clear: Ontario, under the previous government, had become good, if not great, at scaring businesses and investors away. Ontario's environment of overregulation, uncompetitive taxes, high electricity prices and restrictive labour regulations has made it one of the least attractive places to do business.

Companies in Ontario face the highest regulation compliance costs in Canada. On average, a company in Ontario pays about \$33,000 to comply with regulations, whereas in other provinces, companies are only paying an average of \$25,000 to \$27,000. This is a difference of about \$6,000 to \$8,000, and that's per company. That's money that businesses could be using to grow, expand and create more jobs for our economy. And the sad part is, that unnecessary extra cost hits small business the hardest—the same small businesses that account for 98% of private sector employment in our province.

Again, Mr. Speaker, we always hear that small businesses are the backbone of our economy and they do so much to contribute to our overall economy. But unfortunately, under the previous administration, none of them felt that. Every one of them that I talked to felt like they were neglected and they were forgotten about.

The cost of doing business in Ontario is one of the most burdensome barriers to any business wanting to set up shop here. Businesses that want to set up shop and create jobs here in Ontario often have to wait three to four years for permits they need to operate. In contrast, in jurisdictions south of the border, businesses can get these permits within six months. Three years versus six months, Speaker: I wonder which of these is more appealing to businesses and investors.

If Ontario is ever going to reclaim its place as the engine of Canada's economy, we have to make sure that we create an environment where businesses are given a chance to succeed. That is why our government has committed to cutting red tape by 25% by 2020, a full two years ahead of schedule.

We have already started looking across government, through every ministry, into ways in which we can reduce burdensome red tape. With the Restoring Ontario's Competitiveness Act, our government is going after unnecessary, repetitive and outdated red tape which only works to hurt and drive business costs up.

With this bill, our government has developed a package of over 30 actions to reduce the burden on job creators. If passed, the Restoring Ontario's Competitiveness Act will cut business costs, harmonize regulatory requirements with other jurisdictions, and end duplication and reduce barriers to investment.

Under this act, every ministry has worked together to make sure we are getting rid of burdensome regulations that are unnecessary and duplicative.

1630

For instance, with guidance from the Minister of Government and Consumer Services—a great guy—our government is proposing to repeal the Wireless Services Agreements Act and harmonize it with the federal government's national Wireless Code. By repealing this unnecessary provincial duplication, which has been superseded by the federal government's regulation that provides nearly identical protections for all Canadians, our government is making it easier for consumers and businesses to understand their wireless services and their rights.

Mr. Speaker, I just want to clarify: In the proposal I just mentioned, we're simply removing a piece of provincial legislation that the federal government already has in place. As the minister already stated, we're repealing it because it's unnecessary, because it's bad law and because the federal regulations are already there to protect wireless consumers.

Under Bill 66, we're proposing to restore fairness to our economic environment by removing unnecessary and burdensome barriers. As I toured the province and participated in over 40 small business round tables, the message I continuously heard from our business owners

was, “Give us a fair playing field and let us do the business of doing business.” In other words: “We know what we’re doing. Let us do what we know best. You do your part.” This message was echoed over and over again from all parts of the province, and my caucus colleagues and I have heard it loud and clear, time and time and time again. We’re working to get out of the way of businesses, and working hard to provide them with an economic climate that allows them to be more competitive.

It is due to reasons such as this that we are proposing to provide businesses with property tax certainty. As part of our red tape package, the Minister of Finance directed the Municipal Property Assessment Corp., MPAC, to assess and value employment lands based on permitted uses rather than speculative ones. This will protect businesses from steep tax increases resulting from new nearby residential developments, and it will ensure that businesses on industrial lands receive equitable treatment and certainty when it comes to property tax assessments.

You see, Mr. Speaker, anyone who operates a business will tell you that the foundations of a strong economy are based in certainty. As a government, we are working to remove barriers that cause uncertainty in businesses and in our economy.

Mr. Speaker, I have to tell you a story. As I toured the province and attended small business round tables, one specific encounter comes to mind in relation to this topic. I met a small business owner from the Peterborough area—one of my great colleagues here sitting in the back—

Interjection.

Mr. Michael Parsa: Absolutely.

He was looking to expand their warehouse and storage facilities. They had already expanded once, and because the demand for their products was so high, they were looking to expand again. The business owner told me that they had two issues that they were facing if they wanted to go ahead with this expansion. Firstly, they were facing a long and duplicative permit approval process that they had to go through again, just because they were seeking to expand. Secondly, they were facing an uncertainty in relation to what their tax assessment and liabilities would be if they expanded to the size they wanted to.

Because of these two barriers and the high degree of uncertainty, the business owner decided not to go through with the expansion. He said that it will result in a loss of business, as they could not meet consumers’ demands, but he had no choice; he simply did not want to risk taking financial loss because of government-created uncertainty. This small business owner is losing out on business opportunity, and the people of Ontario are losing out on jobs that they could be provided with through businesses.

Ontarians and Ontario business owners should not have to jump through hoops when they are attempting to grow their business and help our province prosper. We promised the good people of Ontario that we would make life easier for them, and we promised to make Ontario open for business. That’s exactly what we’re doing, Mr. Speaker, and we’ll continue to do so with this administration.

Ontario is positioned as a global leader in science and innovation, yet many of our industry leaders are handcuffed by regulatory burdens. These regulatory barriers have worked to limit their abilities to advance the testing of technologies that will benefit Canadians and people around the world. Our government has made it a priority to make sure Ontario continues to grow and positions itself as the centre for innovation and science.

Through schedule 12 of this bill, our government is taking active steps to open the door for expanded testing related to connected and autonomous vehicles in Ontario. By expanding the automatic vehicle—AV—pilot and through our driving for prosperity auto plan, we’re also helping the auto sector to grow and thrive.

Through changes to Ontario’s Automated Vehicle Pilot Program, we will be opening the doors to new CV/AV testing, research and development opportunities. We’re taking actions to support the work of the 200 companies working on AV technologies. This will help the Canadian CV/AV sector reduce barriers to innovation and research, which, in turn, will lead to immediate and long-term economic gains for Ontario.

The auto sector agrees with our plan. In fact, the president of the Automotive Parts Manufacturers’ Association said that our plan is a strong indication that this government understands the planning, training and investment cycle of the automotive manufacturing sector. We look forward to continuing to work with the sector and industry leaders to strengthen our auto sector.

Now, I have to talk about some of the key features and actions that our government is proposing to take under Bill 66; however, I would like to take a moment to talk about the real impact that our government is making with our red tape reduction commitment. For the first time in Ontario’s history, we have received an A-minus for our business red tape reduction commitment.

Interjections.

Mr. Michael Parsa: Yes. I have to emphasize that this is the highest grade Ontario has ever received, and it is in stark contrast to the sad C-plus that the previous government received in 2017. After only seven months in office, our government has drastically improved the economic and business environment in this province. We’ve set out an aggressive target to reduce regulatory red tape affecting businesses by 25% by 2020. This will lower the cost of doing business in Ontario and help create jobs.

We’re making it easier and faster for companies to do business with the government. But I have to reiterate, because sometimes this message gets lost in translation: We’re cutting regulations that are burdensome, inefficient and inflexible, while maintaining the standards to keep Ontario workers and families safe and healthy. These are huge and necessary steps that we’re taking towards building prosperity and making Ontario open for business.

I would like to end by telling you a short story that I’ve shared in this House before. When I was campaigning—it was a hot day. I approached a door to introduce myself and to talk about why I was running. This lady that was sitting on the ground, chopping wood—I approached her. She

said, “Before you come any further, I want to know. If you’re selling anything, don’t come close to me. Leave. I have no money to buy anything.” I said to her, “No, I’m not selling anything. I simply just want to introduce myself. I am Michael,” and so on, “I’m running for the PC Party in the upcoming election and I would like to have a chat with you.”

She allowed me to go in and we had a few minutes of conversation. It ended up being almost an hour—about 45 minutes or so. It was a hot day, and this individual was on the ground, chopping wood. Later in the conversation, I asked her. I said, “Why are you chopping wood? It’s hot.” She said to me that the reason she is doing that is not because she needs it for heating, because it’s clearly not needed at that point. She can no longer afford the high prices. She’s on a pension; she can no longer afford the high prices. She’s on a pension; she can no longer afford to use her electric stove so she’s going down to the basement to use her wood oven stove to cook every single day for herself.

1640

There’s a reason why I share that, Speaker. It’s because it’s a reminder to many of us who come in and have the honour of serving in this House. It’s the little stories that we leave with when we meet people and they tell us why we’re here, and that should be a reminder to us every single day.

I show up to work every day thinking of that encounter and how I could help make life easier and more affordable for her and people like her. Bill 66 does just that. It seeks to make life easier and more affordable for Ontarians and for Ontario businesses. That’s why I’m in this chamber today as the parliamentary assistant to the minister who introduced this bill.

Mr. Speaker, the last administration gave up on our manufacturers. We will not. We will work hard for our manufacturers. We will make sure that they continue to produce goods in Ontario and to create jobs, and we will do our part to make sure they do it in an environment that is competitive and that is healthy for them.

They gave up on many small businesses and many SMEs. We lost many jobs as a result of bad policies. We said that we were going to change that. When we formed a government, we made a commitment—and that started directly with the Premier right down to our ministries as well as every MPP—to remember those who are making sacrifices every day going to work to create those jobs for everybody. We made a promise to the people that we were going to do everything we could to make sure that they are in an environment and that they have a government that is going to support them every day through every policy, and that’s what we’re doing.

I’m proud to be working with Minister Smith and, of course, my incredible colleague the parliamentary assistant, Donna Skelly, who—

Interjections.

Mr. Michael Parsa: —yes, absolutely deserves a round.

We criss-crossed the province and we went to talk directly to the businesses. Many of these businesses have

maybe had larger associations that have represented them in the past. Perhaps with previous administrations, they’ve talked to who they wanted to talk to to get the answers they wanted to put in the policies they wanted to put in place. We wanted to do things differently. We wanted to travel and meet with those business owners. We wanted to talk directly to the job creators and ask them why and how: “What can we do to improve the environment for you to create jobs, for you not only be able to stay”—because a lot of them were simply telling us, Speaker, that at this point, it had gotten to a point where they were simply getting by. That’s not good enough. Ontario was always recognized and we took pride in the fact that we were the engine of Canada’s economy. We weren’t that anymore. We lost that. Businesses lost confidence in us. We had to change that.

It started with us being very clear with our business owners and job creators that we are going to take this very seriously, and we’re going to make sure we do everything we can, put every step and every policy in place that supports that. A lot of it had to do with removing red tape. As they said time and time again, “You do your work. Don’t do it for us. We’re really good at doing what we do. Just stay out of our way. Just have government stay out of our way, and we will create jobs. We will prosper.” We’ve got some very smart people in this province who are more than capable of doing the work—in fact, some of the best in their own industries. We have the stats to prove it.

Once again, to all the businesses that are out there, thank you for making the sacrifices. Thank you for your commitment. Thank you for the work that you’re doing to create jobs. You now have a government that you can depend on. We’ll be there every step of the way to make sure we do everything we can to open the doors for you and create an environment for you to grow, prosper and create better-paying jobs.

I want to thank all my colleagues who did travel the province, because we did ask everyone to do that, every ministry and every caucus member here. Thank you.

MPP Norm Miller held a great round table in his riding when I went down, and we heard nothing but challenging stories from business owners who were hurt by over-regulation. They simply needed their government to get out of their way. We took their stories, wrote them down, came back, shared them with our ministry, and many of them are going to be addressed, and will continue to be addressed.

As the minister said, this was a 15-year disaster, quite frankly, and it’s not going to be fixed overnight. It’s going to take steps. Unlike the previous administration, we’re going to do what’s right for the people, and we’re going to do what people want and businesses want. That’s going to take time for us to listen to them and then bring that over and implement it.

Another colleague of mine I’d like to thank is Minister MacLeod, for hosting that round table in Ottawa where we went in and heard stories there about how their businesses were hurting from overregulation.

Thank you very much, Speaker. It has been an honour. I really appreciate the time, and I thank all my colleagues.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Percy Hatfield): Questions and comments?

Ms. Jessica Bell: Like many of you, I firmly believe that the public—all Ontarians—have a right to turn on their tap and know that the water coming out of it is clean. They have a right to walk down the street and know that the air they're breathing is healthy. And they have a right, when they eat lunch or dinner or provide food for their kids, that what they're eating is as healthy as possible as well.

That's why I'm very concerned about the enabling of the repealing of the Toxics Reduction Act—schedule 5 in Bill 66—which currently requires industry to report on its emissions and to also come up with a plan to reduce its use of toxic emissions. Is this rule great? No, but what we should be doing is strengthening toxics regulation, not making it worse by eliminating the requirement for industry to report on their toxics use at all.

What that means is, when we no longer require industry to report on the toxics that they're using, it creates situations where a company could set up, and could be releasing toxins into the groundwater, creating a cancer cluster, and neighbours nearby don't even know.

It could create situations like what happened in Grassy Narrows, where a company released tonnes and tonnes of mercury into the water, which has affected the community for decades, including children who weren't even born then. Children born now in Grassy Narrows have long-term health effects as a result of that toxic release of effluent into the river.

Those kinds of things shouldn't happen. When we reduce and eliminate the requirement to report on toxics, it increases the chances of these things happening.

I will be fighting for clean air, clean water and clean food, and I encourage you to do the same.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Percy Hatfield): Questions and comments?

Ms. Donna Skelly: It is my pleasure to rise this afternoon to speak to Bill 66, which of course I'm very much supportive of.

As the parliamentary assistant for economic development, job creation, trade, and red tape reduction, I have travelled right across Ontario, speaking to hundreds of stakeholders. Regardless of the region, regardless of the sector, these business owners and operators identified red tape as a significant barrier to job growth and economic growth. Bill 66 addresses that.

Ontario under the previous Liberal government was drowning in red tape—unnecessary, duplicative, burdensome regulations—380,000, to be exact, almost double our nearest province of BC, which has 200,000.

We believe that business owners should be spending more time growing their company and less time filling out paperwork. This is why we are committed to cutting red tape by 25%. We are targeting red tape that is unnecessary, that is duplicative or simply outdated.

I want to stress a point that was raised by my minister, Minister Smith: These regulations that we will eliminate will in no way impact the health or safety of Ontarians. We

will—and I stress—maintain rules that protect workers, that protect consumers.

1650

Many business owners I spoke with said that after 15 years of the Liberal government they had simply had enough. The cost of operating in Ontario was simply too high. These companies were not reinvesting in this province. They were moving to other, more competitive jurisdictions. But that era has come to an end. This government, through Bill 66, is putting Ontario back on track, restoring Ontario to its rightful place as the economic engine of our fine country.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Percy Hatfield): Questions and comments?

Ms. Rima Berns-McGown: I have sat here and listened to the word “burdensome” get used over and over and over ad nauseam. Everybody here is in favour of small business. My dad had a small business. I worked for a while in the federal government doing reports on what would grow small business. Small business is great. Small business matters. But the reason that Ontarians don't trust their government on this question is that Ontarians do not trust that what is in this huge omnibus bill is actually going to keep them safe.

During the election, the Premier said he was going to open the greenbelt. He had to back down from that. The first version of this—the version that still exists, in fact—allows the greenbelt to be developed. In fact, until we actually see that change, we are not going to believe that it's real, despite the Premier walking that back.

Similarly, with things like schedule 3, are you guys going to seriously sit and tell the parents of Eva Ravikovich that you're comfortable with the safety of kids in daycare? In case you've forgotten already, she was the two-year-old who died in 2013 in an overly populated daycare. Are you going to sit and talk to the 2,000 people who were sickened and who are still sick with the toxic water in Walkerton and tell them that the regulations are no longer needed to keep water safe? Are you going to talk to the families of the six people who died in Walkerton and tell them, “Yes, don't worry about it. We're taking away the regulations that kept water safe,” but they should not fret at all? Are you going to talk to the folks in Grassy Narrows and tell them that the deaths that they have experienced are of no interest to you?

The fact is, there's a lot wrong with this bill, and you need to take health and safety much more seriously.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Percy Hatfield): Questions and comments?

Mr. Robert Bailey: It's a privilege to rise and comment on Bill 66, following the Minister of Economic Development, two PAs and some others who have made some comments. I was listening to the minister very intently, and the PAs as well, as they recapped about the 380,000-plus regulations.

Minister Smith talked about the three levels of government and how numerous times there's a number of reports done. I remember when I first came here, back in 2007. We had a reception upstairs. There was a mill operator

who owned a mill up in the north. He talked about how he had one person on staff who did nothing but fill out reports. He said, "I do a federal one on timber footage and things like that. The province shows up about a week later and they've got about the same report, but of course the columns and all of the pages don't line up, so that individual has to do that report again. Then municipally, I have to do a similar report." That's 12 years ago. I imagine that has done nothing but increase in that time.

As the minister said, we have these three levels of regulations that we're going to look at. He went on to capture about the Ontario Federation of Agriculture, the agricultural community, which supports the changes about the provincial loan guarantees for the beef farmers.

There are many other useless regulations as well. The Minister of Education spoke about how we're going to make some major improvements and changes to child care so that people can have choice and also better options for their children—how important that is—and also the before- and after-school programs that will be changed and allow parents to have choice with their young people.

I'm looking forward to Bill 66 going to committee and having a chance to debate it there as well.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Percy Hatfield): We'll return to the member from Aurora–Oak Ridges–Richmond Hill for his two-minute summation.

Mr. Michael Parsa: Thank you very much, Speaker. I want to start by thanking my colleagues from University–Rosedale, Flamborough–Glanbrook—an articulate, wonderful speaker—Beaches–East York and Sarnia–Lambton for their input on this bill. Thank you very much.

Speaker, I do want to point out one quick note that is very important. This bill is a first step to open Ontario up for business. It removes unnecessary regulations while maintaining strong protections for workers. That's very important, and I would like to point that out. We're talking about removing unnecessary regulations that hurt businesses. This government will stand up and support those who need it every single day, but what we're talking about are the policies and regulations that are hurting business owners and, as a result, employees. Those are the ones that we will be fighting for.

I'm very proud of our minister for the work that he has done on this. I'm very proud of all my colleagues for all the input and the contributions that they've made on this bill. I look forward to working with them to continue on this, so that we can show, once again, our business owners and our job creators that we're listening to them, we're here to help them and we are here to make sure that an environment is created for them to grow, prosper and attract more employment back to this province.

As my colleague said, yes, Ontario used to be known as Canada's engine of the economy. We will regain that title very soon under this administration, with this caucus.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Percy Hatfield): Just before I call for further debate, I beg to inform the House that, pursuant to standing order 98(c), changes have been made to the order of precedence on the ballot list for private members' public business such that Mr. Baber

assumes ballot item number 59, Ms. Khanjin assumes ballot item number 77, Mr. Sandhu assumes ballot item number 87, Mr. Thanigasalam assumes ballot item number 72, Mr. Calandra assumes ballot item number 90, Ms. Kusendova assumes ballot item number 71, Mr. Parsa assumes ballot item number 102 and Ms. Triantafilopoulos assumes ballot item number 56.

Further debate?

Ms. Catherine Fife: It is good to be back, in some ways, but not in all ways, I have to say. Before I do my one-hour lead on Bill 66, I wanted to just say a couple of words about Paul Dewar. We lost Paul Dewar recently. Paul Dewar, as many of you know, was the NDP MP in Ottawa. He had a brave battle with brain cancer, the same cancer that Gord Downie had. He left us with this last statement about that journey. He said, "Accepting death is the first step of turning into life." He was the epitome of that, and so I just wanted to put that out there.

Applause.

Ms. Catherine Fife: He taught me a lot about politics. So I'm going to try to transfer some of that good, positive energy into this debate, although I have to tell you it's a little difficult.

Bill 66 is a piece of legislation which was tabled back on December 6, right before Christmas. It caught a lot of people by surprise. I was surprised to see such a very large, omnibus piece of legislation dropped in the House at that time, especially given the fact that my PC counterparts for years—I'm in my seventh year here—railed against the Liberal government. When you bring an omnibus piece of legislation in, it has all sorts of pieces that sometimes don't go together. This is a perfect case in point. People soon realized that this so-called open-for-business bill gave the government sweeping powers to do things like open up the greenbelt and other protected lands, and ignore laws put in place to protect our water, our environment and indeed our children, all in the name of economic development.

1700

It was really interesting to listen to the Minister of Economic Development earlier talk about red tape, red tape, red tape. One of the things that this bill now will remove is the onus on the employer, under the Employment Standards Act, to take a little piece of Scotch tape and put a notice up on a wall that says, "These are your rights as a worker." So, forget the red tape; you've cut it right down to the Scotch tape. Employers don't even have to notify their employees anymore.

Really, this is called a burden. I feel like language is so important when we're talking about this piece of legislation because we are in a whole new era of rhetoric, slogans and chants, and I think when you get right down to it, you have to read this piece of legislation and you have to look at it through a lens of the public service and what will keep the citizens of this province safe while also stimulating the economy.

There are some serious gaps in this piece of legislation, and I'm going to start with schedule 10 because schedule 10 is actually still part of this legislation, Mr. Speaker. I guess I should start off by just saying thank you to this

government because they created a whole new generation of activists across the province. Once schedule 10 was fully explored and reviewed by various groups, be they health coalition folks, environmentalists or farmers, people came together. In Waterloo region there's a whole new group of 42 organizations, so you really brought all the activists together. I guess I should thank you for that.

Schedule 10, of course, would allow municipalities to pass the open-for-business zoning bylaws that would circumvent fundamental protections for drinking water, farmland, natural heritage and health. These protections exist to protect, and they're there for a reason. These protections exist for a reason. They are not simply so that the government could come in and get rid of them. That's not what the laws are there for, but for government this seems to be the new culture here at Queen's Park.

Here's what schedule 10 would have let municipalities bypass. It would have bypassed the provincial policy statements and growth plans under the Planning Act; it would have bypassed the requirement that public works confirm with municipal official plans; section 37 of the Planning Act, including the community benefits in exchange for a density piece; it would have bypassed source protection plans to protect drinking water under the Clean Water Act.

Of course, the Clean Water Act was enacted as a result of the last Conservative government which left the community of Walkerton without the proper oversight on water quality, without the standards put in place and actually without a plan to address a weakness in the strategy when it actually happened.

The people of Walkerton stood up and spoke out, and I personally want to thank them for that because it re-traumatized them, Mr. Speaker, because there are still many people who are victims of the Walkerton water issue. They have long-standing health issues. There were a lot of voices that had thought it was done, thought that the province had learned, and yet here they were looking at a piece of legislation which really opened it up again.

Schedule 10 would have bypassed initiatives to protect the Great Lakes St. Lawrence River Basin, the Greenbelt Plan, the Lake Simcoe Protection Plan—even transportation plans—the Oak Ridges Moraine Conservation Plan, and the list goes on. I want to be really clear about this because there's still this possibility that these plans are on the books, not only just in the legislation. Recently, the GTA conservation authority elected a former PC staffer to be the chair of the Toronto and Region Conservation Authority. It was a vote by 10 to 11.

I want to thank David Rider, who is city hall bureau chief. He did a very extensive investigation into how this came to be because, clearly, the person who chairs this committee has a lot of power, and if that power is not necessarily to the true mandate of the committee, then it's another way to actually undermine environmental protections.

You'll remember that the TRCA made news back in 2012 when it refused to let then-Toronto Mayor Rob Ford buy parkland behind his house. So there's history here,

Mr. Speaker. I put that in the Hansard because it's of genuine concern to the people of this region when you have people whose principles and values don't necessarily align with the mandate of that committee.

“Jim Karygiannis, a Toronto councillor, said he was surprised to get a call from his provincial counterpart, Scarborough–Agincourt PC MPP Aris Babikian, ‘wanting me to vote for Innis.’” So an MPP of this Legislature weighed in on the vote at the GTA conservation authority. This should be of great concern to all of us. Certainly I'm very happy that David Rider was able to get this concern on the books.

I raise that because the concern that we heard from across the province was genuine fear that this government was going to carve up the greenbelt, open up a big chunk of the greenbelt—you'll remember, Mr. Speaker, that this was the language that the Premier used during the election, and then walked that back. Then this piece of legislation was introduced and walked back, but we still have avenues where developers have the ear of the government in a way that I think we have not seen before—or haven't seen for a little while, like six months ago or maybe seven months ago.

These are pretty sweeping powers, but it's interesting that no municipality actually asked for this. I know that all of the PC MPPs also heard from their municipal counterparts, because there was no municipality banging on the door of the Premier, saying, “I want an open-for-business bylaw.” It was just not happening. It was not happening.

Mr. Robert Bailey: It happened in my riding.

Ms. Catherine Fife: No, Bailey, there's no way it was happening in your riding. During the ministerial briefing, we were told that no municipality had asked for the special zoning bylaw—nobody.

So, then, what exactly was it for? Well, this is interesting, and I do want to thank the staff. When you get a briefing of 12 ministries and you have one hour to get all the information, it's quite a task for the ministry staff. They're scrambling, and they've got new language—“open for business,” “red tape”—and this is happening in real time in that one hour. This is how it was explained to us—and I know the member from Niagara West is going to be interested in this, because he's already on the record with the Niagara regional council, saying that the minister already had all these powers, which I would challenge, I have to say. This is the way that the open-for-business bylaw was going to work: Municipalities must first request for the minister's approval by council resolution, and then pass another resolution to enact the actual bylaw. So they have to bring it to their council one time. The act does not specify what level of detail must be included in the initial request to the minister. Conditions may be opposed on the OFB bylaw, the open-for-business bylaw. The bylaw cannot be appealed to the OMB or the LPAT. No public notice, consultation or hearing is required prior to enacting the open-for-business bylaw. It's like the Wild West out here, Mr. Speaker.

Municipalities must notify the minister within three days of passing the bylaw and must notify the public

within 30 days. Well, that sounds just so democratic, doesn't it, Mr. Speaker? Three days and 30 days. The bylaw comes into force 20 days after passage, meaning that the municipality need not notify the public of the bylaw until 10 days after it passes and it's already in force. The minister may revoke or modify the bylaw at any time. That gives this minister a lot of power. Any modifications by the minister do not need to be approved by the municipality, which theoretically could wind up with a bylaw that was much different than the one it passed.

Municipalities saw this for what it was, and thank goodness that they spoke up. In 2019, it does strike you—well, it strikes me—as so strange that I have to stand in the Legislature and remind the government that really, going back to the first Mike Harris years—

Mr. Mike Harris: That's twice today.

Ms. Catherine Fife: Twice today? Maybe I'll do it three times, Junior—that this actually happened for a reason. These regulations, these laws, were brought in for a reason. We shouldn't forget that, because you can't solve a problem until you acknowledge that the problem is there. Municipalities, God love them, spoke up, but it is incredible that I actually have to remind a government, of any stripe, in 2019 of the importance of environmental protections.

1710

I'm particularly proud of Waterloo region because they took the lead and I think they acknowledged that we have enough sprawl in the province of Ontario. We have a countryside line in our region that is a hard line, which is a progressive planning tool that, for the most part, all the council supports. We're growing up and not out, and we get to maintain our farmland. It's actually a win-win. Not W-Y-N-N-E; it's a real win. Win-win-win. In fact, there are 1,374 farms in Waterloo region that generate \$500 million in revenue annually.

So what was the whole goal? Why did the Ford government want to open this up? We can speculate, but there is clearly a pattern here which causes us, as New Democrats, to have serious concerns. Thank goodness, as I said, Bill 66 received much criticism, much-deserved criticism, particularly on schedule 10. Municipalities cited health and safety as their primary concern.

There were some leaders here. Sudbury mayor Brian Bigger said, "The proposed framework to formulate and approve an open for business bylaw appears inconsistent with city council's approach to community engagement."

In Aurora, Mayor Tom Mrakas said, "I am greatly concerned about the implications of the new 'open for business' legislation, in particular as it speaks to potential impacts to the integrity of the greenbelt. I personally would not be in favour of entering discussions with the province regarding the potential removal of any town lands that are currently protected."

Barrie mayor Jeff Lehman said there's "no justification for some of the exemptions they're including in this bill ... it goes way, way, way too far."

Burlington: Marianne Meed Ward said, "We will not be compromising their safety or quality of life for speed. I do not see Burlington using this legislation, if it is passed."

Collingwood: Simcoe county councillor Deb Doherty said, "I am deeply concerned about the implications of schedule 10."

Oakville, my seatmate here: Mayor Rob Burton said, "This bill is bad for municipalities and bad for constituents. As local representatives, we know that managing development is one of the top responsibilities our residents task us with. It is not in their interest, or ours, to see 'open for business' zoning put in place."

It goes on to Kingston and Hamilton and Toronto; Toronto weighed in as well.

It wasn't just municipalities, but environmental organizations as well. In Waterloo region, we had Hold the Line, which worked to raise concerns and advocate against schedule 10. The Ontario Greenbelt Alliance also did great work, bringing together over 150 community groups and individuals to speak out about the changes. They actually had some good stats, and perhaps this is a good lesson for the Ford government to take into account. They cited a Nanos poll that showed that 90% of Ontarians want protections in place to protect our environment, our air, our water. They also pointed out the flawed logic of this aspect of the bill, that the province has enough land for development to last until 2041. Most municipalities already have a surplus of employment lands. So in their view, it is unclear what the rationale is for allowing the creation of employment lands and possibly retail, commercial and residential designations within lands currently off limits already.

They pointed out as well that if Ontario were to grow into lands that are currently off limits, it would require more infrastructure, and infrastructure costs money. There's not even a strong economic plan. To plan irresponsibly in this manner—it's actually bad for business to plan irresponsibly.

This runs contrary to everything this government is supposed to be about: the lower taxes and more money in your pocket and having your choice. Short-sighted decisions like this lead to more money out of people's pockets, ultimately, and this case was made by various organizations.

I also want to point out that the Ontario Greenbelt Alliance also talked about the threat to our food supply system. The province already loses 175 acres of farmland daily. That's huge. Schedule 10 would have made this worse. We need to think about our farmers and feeding our families not only for the next few years but for the next 10, 20 or 30 years. We can't do it if we keep losing farmland.

By putting business interests ahead of the public interest, Bill 66 undermines the fundamentals of building healthy communities that support jobs by balancing the public interest among competing interests, including the environment, public health and economic.

Ultimately, the greenbelt is worth fighting for. That's the theme that we want to bring to this Legislature as New Democrats. It's something that we are committed to doing. It was disturbing when my colleague from Welland also heard various PC members saying, "Don't worry about schedule 10"—you know, the "trust us" scenario. "The

minister already has these powers. We're only putting this in legislation." Well, I have to say, I think that's a big stretch. We don't give unfettered powers to the Minister of Economic Development. He doesn't get to override the interests of the people of this province, be it around water quality or air quality. There are very good reasons why that exists in this province.

The greenbelt, which we did support as a party, the development of the greenbelt—we saw it as an investment in the long-term health of this province. Public opinion polls show that Ontario's greenbelt is valued by 89% of Ontarians—89%. The 11% who think that it's not valued shouldn't trump the 89% of Ontarians who do.

According to the Ontario Greenbelt Alliance, the greenbelt generates significant economic activity and employment in agriculture and agri-food, recreation and tourism and other resource-based activities, supporting over 160,000 jobs and contributing over \$9.1 billion annually to the economy. So it was never worth being compromised. That's the point here. I'm looking to the Minister of the Environment. The greenbelt should never be for sale. It is an investment for future generations, it must be protected, and there is economic value in holding the line on that.

The market value of assets and employment within the greenbelt is \$13.2 billion, and farms in the greenbelt produce an average of \$1,975 in revenue per acre. So every time we lose valuable farmland in the province of Ontario, we also have to think about the cost of that.

The case for protecting the greenbelt is sound. It should never have been embedded in this legislation. The voices and the noise raised against schedule 10 were sound. They were evidence-based. On January 23, the Minister of Municipal Affairs put out a tweet—because that's how we find out about government policy these days—saying that the “government brought forward Bill 66 which amongst other things proposed changes” to the issues that I just mentioned, municipal issues. “The use of this tool would never be approved at the expense of the greenbelt”—and yet it allowed it. “However, our government for the people”—and I just want to say that any government that has to keep saying that they're for the people may be in the wrong sector. I just want to put it out there. It really doesn't instill trust. It's like I'm for the people who breathe—yes, that's right. That's what the minister put out. I think it must be embarrassing for some people, but I just want to leave it right there. He says that they've “listened to the concerns raised by MPPs, municipalities and stakeholders with regards to schedule 10 of Bill 66 and when the Legislature returns in February, we will not proceed....”

I did walk across the aisle and have a conversation—because that can still happen, but it's only day one—and the minister assured me that during the committee work, this schedule will be withdrawn.

I also just want to point out for future reference, though, that if you had done the consultation before you crafted the legislation, then we might not be here. On the other hand, we wouldn't have thousands more activists who have put you on the radar. So once again, I'd just like to say thank you for that.

There are, of course, 12 schedules, so now I have to move really quickly. Schedule 2 repeals the Pawnbrokers Act. It was interesting in the briefing. This act has not been updated, I think, since 1924, so clearly modernizing this act was needed. However, it is unfortunate that once again, the government did not consult with the people who actually have to deal with pawnbroker stores and retailers.

This is what the Ontario Association of Chiefs of Police say. While they were “pushing for changes ... to the outdated legislation, they say the government should have a plan in place to replace it.

1720

“Simply repealing it isn't frankly going to help us that much,” said OACP spokesperson Joe Couto.

“Our concern is the message that it will send out. Without clear, consistent rules that are 21st-century solutions, that's the wrong message to send out to people that would steal stuff.”

“Couto added a province-wide database is needed in order for Ontario police services to more effectively track stolen goods.”

This makes a lot of sense, Mr. Speaker. You see lots of commercials—you want to sell the gold, you want to sell the silver, you have the family jewellery. There needs to be a system in place, at the very least, that makes sure that those items for sale in those pawnbroker establishments are not stolen. Right now, if Bill 66 passes as it is, there will be no system in place. I would argue, respectfully, that that's not really good for business either.

Not having a provincial strategy in place is kind of another download to municipalities, because municipalities are going to have to have some kind of a bylaw, unless we're just going to throw up our hands and call it a day and declare all pawnbroker shops like the Wild West—you take your chance; you can sell your grandma's jewellery and be done with it. But I think there's a more responsible option here, and I think that the government dropped the ball on this.

Schedule 3 is very close to my heart and, I know, to the members of our caucus, because child care in the province of Ontario is in a state of crisis, and it has been for many years. We did push the Liberals again and again to bring in a system of care. I had a private member's bill which asked that all funding that goes into early learning and care be in the not-for-profit sector, because you would create more spaces by doing so, by ensuring, in an evidence-based policy manner—which is really how legislation should be passed and created—that all the funding goes into the primary, ECE, the teachers, the caregivers, because there's a direct correlation between the valuing and training of the people who care for children and the quality of that care. We have seen cases that are, quite honestly, heartbreaking in the province of Ontario.

Any parent who has children and tries to get on a wait-list for a not-for-profit or a licensed child care situation knows that it is like winning the lottery in the province of Ontario if you can find a spot—and if you can afford the spot. When the Minister of Education was doing her spiel on schedule 3 of this legislation, I had to sit back a little

bit, because it was like she was selling a new set of frying pans on The Shopping Channel: “Call now and you’ll get a spot for \$9.99. If you call right now, you’ll get a discount.” This is not the way you value early learning and care. These are our children, usually all under the age of five.

Consulting with home care providers, for instance: We’ve heard from home care providers who say that if you increase—right now they can have two children under the age of two, but now they’re going to be able to have three under the age of two, potentially a three-month-old, a four-month-old and a five-month-old, plus the other three children, plus perhaps their own children. This is creating, with intention, an unsafe learning and care environment. It is doing child care on the cheap. It is drawing down the benchmark for quality and for care to the lowest common denominator. We’ve heard that from home care providers; I want to be really clear about that. It does nothing for the affordability of that care, as well.

Quite honestly, Ontario has some of the highest child care rates in the country. This was part of an editorial that was done just a week and a half ago: Child care fees for infants in the city of Toronto are \$1,685 a month; over \$20,000 a year. A study released this past week from the Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives reported that the cost of infant care in the city tops over \$20,000. That’s nearly 10 times more than the median fees in Montreal.

When other provinces look at what Ontario is doing, the criticism is real, and it’s a competitive loss for us. I need the government to understand this, because investing in early learning and care—for every dollar invested, you get a \$7 return on that investment. It’s an economic driver for women. Right now, 28% of the women in the province only work part-time because they can only find part-time care. Think of the lost potential, the lost productivity and the lost revenue to the tax base. The cases are there.

This criticism comes from a Toronto Star editorial. It says, “Not only is Ontario not following the evidence, never mind the lead of other provinces, it’s taking a step backwards” with this change. “Instead of progressively investing in child care, the Ford government has promised to spend \$389 million on a child-care fee tax rebate that will do anything but offer parents ‘choices’ ...”

This is the huge myth: that putting more money in people’s pockets will allow them to find child care. If that child care does not exist, how can they find child care? Plus, the amount is so little that it will do nothing to make child care more affordable for families. In fact, parents who use private centres pay fees that are two or three times higher than in the not-for-profit sector.

So not only are you doubling down with these changes on schedule 3 of Bill 66; you’re doubling down on watering down quality standards and watering down safety standards, because this will create essentially what will be an underground economy for child care. That’s where we are in the province of Ontario. You can’t have the level of inspectors going to every basement in every subdivision, looking for mould and inspecting food quality and ensuring that the toys—ironically, this piece of legislation

removes the onus on inspecting of stuffed animals. I don’t know what this government has against teddy bears, but it’s a pretty sad state of affairs. There are standards for putting clean stuffing in children’s toys. How is it worth bringing in a piece of legislation and removing that onus on safety and on quality and on health, just so that you can say you’re reducing red tape? Where is the reduction, really, and where are the savings? How much money is it going to save? You’ve done no evidence-testing whatsoever on this bill. You’ve just decided that teddy bears don’t need to be inspected anymore.

It’s things that I just never thought I would say in this Legislature, I have to tell you.

Not only that, but most importantly, tax rebates don’t create new daycare spaces any more than tax rebates for transit fares will build subways. Isn’t that the truth? We’re not going to build any subways by doing that, I tell you.

So here we are. I know that this government thinks that commercial child care will change the face of the province of Ontario. I have to say, if you look at Australia and the model that they—because they really brought in the big commercial operators. It’s like child care factories, right? People turned away from that model because they were genuinely worried about their children. Their high fees were not going to the quality of the educational resources; they weren’t going to the meals that the children were eating; they weren’t going to the training of the staff—and there was high staff turnover. The most important person in that scenario is the early childhood educator, because it’s the most consistent person. It’s not the parent. The parent is the most important, but the second-most in that instance is the quality of that educator. When you pay them low wages and you treat them poorly, and you put so many children in a classroom, they leave. It’s harmful as a policy for children.

Here we have a government that has refused to embrace the economic importance of child care. If they truly were open for business, child care and early learning and care investment would have been at the top of the budget. What have they got here? They’ve got a watered-down child care program on the cheap. That speaks volumes about where this government is going. It is a lost opportunity; I can’t emphasize that enough.

It was one thing for me to fight with the Liberals, who really had opened up the back door for privatization of early learning and care. They were happy for that for so long, until that election year, as you know. For them to say that child care, early learning care, is not a public service truly, I think, showed their true colours on this issue, that everything was for sale. Privatization, of course, was the theme of that government. The sad thing is that we’re all going to pay for it.

1730

Ms. Teresa J. Armstrong: In more ways than one.

Ms. Catherine Fife: In more ways than one. There’s no doubt about that.

So now you’re going to have unlicensed child care spaces. You’re going to have three children under the age of two—as I said, potentially nine months, six months, 12

months. We've listened to the home care providers. We've said this is a lot. They've said that it's going to affect their ability to do their job.

The other things that this has done is the provision which provides financial assistance has been removed. They've lowered the age restriction for kids in an authorized recreation program from six to four. There were a number of issues with the Liberal government cracking down on these programs in Leslieville in 2017, and I don't think that this government has learned from that.

These changes create a lot of issues, and it is impossible to address the lack of regulations in child care and not talk about young Eva. I have to say that I remember being in this Legislature and I remember PC members supporting the investigation and calling out the Liberals on lax rules around inspections on unlicensed centres. I remember the emotion in this House when that little girl died under the care of this child care provider in Vaughan. That child care provider was Olena Panfilova, and this case did spur on the Star investigation into the lax child care inspections and prompted changes to provincial daycare laws. The laws that exist today came about because of the death of this little girl.

At the time, this child care operator, Panfilova, had 35 children in her daycare that day, despite the five-child care limit mandated by the province for unlicensed child care. Parents were led to believe that she was taking care of 15 children at the most.

What came about from this investigation is also how desperate parents were for child care. Imagine being at that point where you have to go to work, you can't afford to not work, there are no child care options except for a woman who has 35 children and leaving your child there. They felt completely trapped. There was a lot of judgment at the time against the parents. The operator clearly had been inspected, had been warned, but there was no follow-up. The message, really, to these underground operators of child care is that you're going to get warned, but there's no big penalty; the fees are low.

At the time, the conditions in this particular daycare were in question even before Eva's death. She'd received an explicit warning from the Ministry of Education that the facility was illegally crowded. Despite this, she never applied for or obtained the required licence to run a daycare with more than five children.

The law that was in place at the time of Eva's death has since been replaced, of course, by the Child Care and Early Years Act. The law increases penalties for overcrowding and unlicensed daycares. What Bill 66 does with schedule 3, though, is that it ups the ante on the danger level in those situations, and it doesn't solve, ultimately, the larger issue that is before us: that only one in eight families can find quality, affordable child care in the province of Ontario. What's shameful, Mr. Speaker, is that it has been this way for years—15 years under the Liberals; 15 years where access to quality child care spaces was not improved. And it's even more difficult for children with special needs.

We have a lot of work to do on this file, but the solution that has been put forward by this government is certainly

not the answer, and it will not address the shortages. I want to make that point very clearly. And I want to make the point that safety is an issue, access to quality care and also reaching our economic potential because, as I said, women are missing out on an opportunity to be part of the workforce and go to school, so there definitely is an aspect here around gender equality. I know that when I start to speak about gender equality, there's a bit of glossing over in some respects, but I think that we need to think around if Ontario really is open for business, then it should be open for business for women as well, and women should be able to reach their economic potential in the province of Ontario.

Parents in the GTA and the entire province pay some of the highest fees for child care in the country. We know this to be true. We know that, on average, it's around \$20,000 a year, sometimes higher than people's mortgages. Investing responsibly in child care is of course the right thing to do. This is not an argument that wins the day. The economic argument, though, should have some weight with this government. If they are serious about not following down the same path as the Liberal government before them for 15 years, finding little band-aids and then rolling out a free program in the last dying days of the government which really didn't instill a lot of confidence—in some respects, it was very cynical—then investing in early learning care is actually one of the ways that everyone in the province can benefit economically.

Most other provinces, to be truthful around the fees as well, have capped their child care fees. They've partnered with the child care sector and said, "Do you know what? We know that it is expensive to deliver quality early learning care. We want to partner with you in this regard." And so they capped the fees, and they make up the difference. There was a time and a place, I think, where this was potentially an option, but there is always this stigma against ECEs—which is also predominantly a female-dominated profession, just like the PSWs in the province of Ontario. For some reason, they get short-changed time and time again.

We do not support doing child care on the cheap in the province of Ontario. This is a schedule that we will bring many amendments to when it gets to committee, and we will fight it. The way that Bill 66 has been crafted, with the lack of consultation, the lack of evidence, the lack of research, it's essentially impossible for us to support this legislation, but we are certainly going to try to make it better at committee, because that's our job as Her Majesty's official opposition.

I've made the economic argument for child care, and I think I'm going to move on to schedule 4 very quickly right now, because schedule 4 basically addresses sub-metering for tender organizations. We actually received a lot of feedback on this issue, but I will quote from the Advocacy Centre for Tenants Ontario, where they have to say, "There was no mention of how this repeal would impact the customers of USMPs," the sub-metering systems. "ACTO believes this is a significant omission in view of the ongoing affordable housing crisis for low-

income renters in our province. We believe that it will mean higher electricity costs for them.”

Now, Mr. Speaker, every MPP in this Legislature has heard about the impact of high electricity costs. Why would this government bring in a measure under schedule 4 which would result in higher costs for tenants? Right now, tenants are already seeing a lift on rent control, for instance. There's already a huge shortage of accessing affordable rental units. There's the whole issue of reno-
eviction—

Mr. Terence Kernaghan: Renovation.

Ms. Catherine Fife: Renovation, where tenants are essentially evicted because the owner wants to make more money. Without housing, without shelter—shelter is an economic driver. It provides stability for the economy because people obviously cannot work when they do not have shelter and when they do not have housing. Making life more unaffordable for renters in the province of Ontario by giving your buddies who have sub-metering businesses a pass doesn't seem like it's in the best interests—it certainly doesn't seem like it's for the people, so we will be bringing these concerns, of course, to the committee as well.

1740

As I'm running out of time, I do want to move on to schedule 5. Schedule 5 has taken greater prominence now that the government has promised to remove schedule 10. Schedule 5 is the repeal of the Toxics Reduction Act. The general rationale, I guess you would say, behind this is that the federal government has got this covered, so we don't have to worry about it. It does surprise me that this particular government would just leave it up to Justin Trudeau and say, “Listen, Justin Trudeau has got this toxics reduction issue in hand.”

Hon. Lisa MacLeod: I would have loved to have been in his cabinet meeting today.

Ms. Catherine Fife: Yes, I know. He's dealing with a toxic environment right now, I'm pretty sure. That's my segue into the Toxics Reduction Act.

The Toxics Reduction Act requires large industries to develop plans to reduce their generation or use of toxic substances and to publicly report on the generation and use. Has this been an effective policy fully? I would have to say that the potential of this particular act has not been fully realized. However, getting rid of it altogether and not trying to make it better does feel like the laziest way that you can actually deal with legislation in the province of Ontario. The government is claiming that the TRA is duplicative of the federal legislation, but the Canadian Environmental Law Association has written to the government asking that they not repeal schedule 5. They claim that the government is basing its repeal on two assumptions, both of which are not correct, so obviously we're listening to this association.

The first assumption is that the TRA and its reporting requirements are duplicative; they say “not true.” The second assumption is that getting rid of reporting requirements will save industry money but still result in protecting human health and the environment. This is a

direct quote from their submission: “The concept at the heart of TRA of mandatory preparation, but voluntary implementation, of toxics reduction plans has a record of demonstrated success in jurisdictions such as Massachusetts that have had such a law in place for approximately three decades. The TRA has only really been fully in effect since 2013.”

I think it's important to actually bring the voices of individuals who live in our ridings to this because people care about this. I know that you know that they care about this, because I know that you know that you heard from them. This one is from Susan Koswan, who wrote about Bill 66. She says, “Of great concern is that Bill 66 puts the Toxics Reduction Act (2009) on the chopping block. This act requires companies to keep track of the quantity of toxic substances ... develop plans to reduce their use and creation, and provide a public report.” So there's actually an accountability component.

It's true that the Liberals under that regime weren't so big on the accountability piece. But that doesn't mean that this government couldn't be.

The Canadian public health inspectors' 2013 report on the toxics reduction program said, “Ontario has the highest releases of toxics in Canada and one of the highest in North America. Toxics cause significant human health and environmental damage. Ontario industries release the fourth-largest amount of recognized developmental and reproductive toxicants in North America.” Since a rule of business is that if you can't measure it, you can't manage it, they call this red tape that businesses need.

We are of the opinion, to be clear, that having a plan in place to reduce toxins is actually smart. It's an intelligent move to make. It should not be regarded as red tape, in that it will actually prevent us from having to deal with pollutants in our environment. Some of those pollutants of note, once they are released into the environment, have to go somewhere. Most of them make their way to the water table. We have enough examples of seeing how poorly this plays itself out.

That's where we are on schedule 5. We're going to try to make schedule 5 better. We'll try to make some changes. I'll give them this: They're very good at creating chaos, this government. You're excelling—I give you A-plus on the chaos front—and you're making us work very hard. We personally feel like we're up for the challenge of it, but there are easier ways to actually get things done in the province of Ontario. This mantra that all regulations are not in the best interests of the public is just not true. There's definitely a happy medium.

When the Liberals brought in their red tape challenge, they set the bar really low, so we would agree with that. But anything to do with health, safety and the well-being of workers, for instance, or children in child care centres needs to be reviewed very carefully.

On the Toxics Reduction Act: The purpose of the TRA obviously was to prevent pollution and protect human health and the environment by reducing the use and creation of toxic substances and informing Ontarians about toxic substances. I think that the people of this province

want to know more about what's going out into the environment. I don't think that they want to know less. And I think that the smart investment is on having plans and strategies in place that would prevent spills or accidents. They say that accidents can be prevented, but you have to actually be trying to do so in that.

We've had a number of organizations contact us about the Toxics Reduction Act, basically and essentially saying that it needs to be improved, not abandoned. The need for these improvements dwarfs any concerns with alleged red tape under the program. In fact, they highlight a number of programs under the TRA that have yet to even be proclaimed into law. This is an interesting part, Mr. Speaker. In section 11, the substance-of-concern report, the Liberals never put together a list of substances of concern despite having access to reputable lists of toxins in Ontario. They had this act, but they didn't do anything about it.

It's really hard to imagine a government of record that was really good about talking about stuff but not implementing those strategies and putting, really, legislation and even the regulations into action. It didn't do that on the inspection of vehicles, the warrantless search, the use of tracking devices, of administrative penalties, or even toxic substances in products. This section allows the government to set targets to reduce toxic substances in the atmosphere. The Liberals never did anything about that.

We can see why the Ford government might say, "You know what? The Liberals weren't doing it anyway, so we'll just get rid of it." That doesn't actually make it right. There is a call from environmentalists, from citizens of this province and from future generations who want to make sure that businesses are not part of the problem. Certainly the businesses I've met want to be part of the solution, particularly in Waterloo region, where there are a number of start-ups that are already way ahead of government on a number of issues, I must say.

Schedule 7: changes to the Technical Standards and Safety Act so that it no longer applies to upholstered or stuffed articles. Schedule 7—I've already referenced it, that this is the state of affairs. I think that the TSSA actually needs to be reviewed. If you read the last public accounts, the Auditor General's report, even the inspections around elevators, those initial inspections have a shockingly high rate of failure. In fact, I stopped getting on the elevator here in Queen's Park because of that report, and I would like to encourage MPPs to have a look at it.

To not be inspecting things like teddy bears or mattresses or down-filled clothing, which are currently required to be properly labelled and, for instance, free of mould—it seems counterproductive, Mr. Speaker, to actually water down those inspections until something bad happens. And something bad will happen. Reducing this oversight through the TSSA doesn't seem like a good idea.

Schedule 7 also repeals the Wireless Services Agreements Act. According to OpenMedia—OpenMedia contacted us—"Repealing the WSAA will strip the people of Ontario of important protections and narrow the avenues for complaints when it comes to unfair and predatory

practices by wireless service providers." Due to an extreme lack of competition and the low customer confidence in the industry, people have no choice but to keep buying plans from the same wireless service providers.

1750

I want to tell you, Mr. Speaker, that I got over 4,000 emails on this issue, around consumer protection, and I have two words for you why I got so many of those calls—"Rogers" and "Bell"—if you've ever been on the phone trying to get clear language on your cellphone contract and have been negotiating with only two options, primarily, in the province of Ontario.

OpenMedia contacted us. They have said that they want to "work toward informed and participatory digital policy by engaging hundreds of thousands of people in protecting our online rights." This may be—I'm not sure—potentially an unintended consequence of this piece of legislation, but there are reasons why the WSAA was passed in 2013 in Ontario: to protect consumers from predatory wireless contracts and misleading advertising from telecommunications companies.

I want to tell you that seniors were some of the most vocal people on schedule 7 for me. The WSAA stipulates that contracts must have plain language, a description of the limits and restrictions the plan may have, and a description of the extra fees and how they are calculated. The act also prevents wireless providers from changing the terms of contracts without the user's consent and caps cancellation fees at \$50. The CRTC passed a wireless code of conduct around the same time, but it does not include the same kind of enforcement mechanisms as the WSAA.

To have this government meddling around in this issue obviously causes great concern for consumers. As you know, access to wireless plans through technology, through the Internet, through our phones, is actually now a serious issue around accessibility and accommodation for many people. In fact, many people do most of their banking and work as employees or as employers with this. So why would you reduce the protections for consumers in this way? Why would that ever be considered good for business? I have to say, schedule 7—I'm sure everyone has heard from people in their riding, and if they haven't, I'll make sure that you do. That's my duty to you as the official opposition: to make sure that you've heard from them.

Schedule 8—I only have five minutes left; it's such a huge piece of legislation—is the long-term-care changes. I know that our critics will probably address the lack of oversight and inspection on some of our most vulnerable. I really always equate long-term care and early learning and care in the same way. I see vulnerable people in our long-term-care system who don't have the voices and don't have the advocates to actually protect them, and that is why they need the inspections to be consistent, the inspections to not be privatized, as was promoted in the leaked documents that we saw. The integrity of those inspections must be in the public interest. That's what I'm trying to say.

And so, we have some concerns for schedule 8. We don't consider inspecting long-term-care homes to be—in

any way, shape or form—red tape. We believe that it's about quality control. It's about integrity of our seniors in those homes, and it's about, ultimately, their safety, just as we would argue the same for children in our child care system.

Schedule 9 is an interesting piece of this legislation. It's sort of just thrown in there, to put a bit of a labour twist. Schedule 9 deals with two issues, primarily the so-called “fair and open tendering,” which means that it could allow private contractors to swap in cheaper unskilled labour into jobs that require skilled workers. It ultimately will mean more profits for those private contractors. I'm not sure, and the chair of our region has said that she's not sure, if there is any cost savings for municipalities or school boards, because those contractors rarely also pass on those savings to their workers, if profit is the driver. The good news, though, is that it doesn't tie the hands of school boards or municipalities, who can still make informed decisions to support their local unions. We believe in strong union jobs—they are well-paying, they are safer and they are well trained—and we're not going to back down from that, Mr. Speaker. The fact that this government has embedded this piece in this legislation is a further indicator that this government isn't for all the people; it really is just for some of the people.

The other part of schedule 9 which is of great concern is reducing the rights of employees to get their overtime and the negotiation between the employer and the employee around disclosure around what the overtime compensation is and what the rules of that overtime are. If people are working overtime, they should get paid for it. We think it's good for business if they're working overtime. The fact that it was embedded in schedule 9 as well leaves us with more questions about the motivation behind this legislation.

Finally, I have to say, we have an ask of this legislation. We feel strongly that this bill should travel. Let people give feedback. It's never too late to right a wrong. It's sometimes way too late to go right; it's never too late to go left. I think that we should bring this bill to Walkerton, to Bruce-Grey-Owen Sound. The MPP, I'm sure, would welcome it there. Bring the bill to Vaughan to hear from the family who lost a child in unregulated child care. Bring the bill to Aurora-Oak Ridges-Richmond Hill, where we can hear about the importance of supporting the Oak Ridges moraine and building responsibly and ethically around that. Bring the bill to Elmira, to Kitchener-Conestoga, MPP Mike Harris Jr.'s riding, to hear from them about what happens when their source water is contaminated. We're still paying for that in Elmira. Bring the bill to Aamjiwnaang in Sarnia-Lambton—right there, Mr. Bailey. We'll bring it to Ojibway territory, where the Toxics Reduction Act can make a big difference to the health and well-being of thousands of people—those thousands of people who we all work for, because we're all supposed to be working for the people of this province.

So we're going to try to get this bill to travel. Clearly, this government—there's some hope. They pulled back schedule 10. I think that's going to give a lot of hope to

the parents who are reeling from your autism announcement last week. You backed off on some of the sex ed stuff. You backed off on some of the ancillary fees. You pulled schedule 10. So you're learning that you need to consult first before writing legislation; you need to listen to the very people it will directly affect. The fact that you pulled schedule 10 out certainly doesn't make Bill 66 a better bill entirely, but at least now we don't have to stay focused on that; we can stay focused on the child care component—where you can get your child care spot for \$9.99—and we can focus on the Toxics Reduction Act, which means that all communities should have the right to live in a clean environment and drink clean water. Those are our commitments.

I will say that it has been a pleasure to address some of our concerns on Bill 66 for the last hour. I look forward to further debate. Let's get it to committee and let's see if we can make it a good piece of legislation.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Percy Hatfield): I have good news and I have bad news. There will be no time for questions and comments this afternoon. They will be continued the next time this motion is debated. However, for those of you who like to hang around here, we do have a late show this afternoon.

Second reading debate deemed adjourned.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Percy Hatfield): Pursuant to standing order 38, the question that this House do now adjourn is deemed to have been made.

ADJOURNMENT DEBATE

GOVERNMENT ACCOUNTABILITY

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Percy Hatfield): The member for Ottawa South has given notice of his dissatisfaction with the answer to a question given by the Minister of Finance. The member will have up to five minutes to debate the matter, and the parliamentary assistant for the minister—the member from Barrie-Springwater-Oro-Medonte—will have up to five minutes to respond.

I turn now to the member from Ottawa South.

Mr. John Fraser: It's really great to be back here with all of you. I didn't know that there would be so many people here when I asked for this late show some three months ago. I'm really glad that the PA is here—the member from Barrie-Springwater-Oro-Medonte—and I want to let him know that I'm still dissatisfied with the answer. I haven't heard anything in the interim that would alleviate my dissatisfaction.

Essentially, the issue that I was raising with the minister was that the signature of the controller, who is the government's accountant, is not on this year's public accounts. It has been there for 20 years. There's a reason we take that advice: That's our accountant. To not have that signature there is a glaring omission.

I don't understand why there is not a government's accountant signature on there, why the controller's signature is not on that document. I essentially believe that it's because the former controller, Cindy Veinot, disagreed

with the government's accounting treatments as per pension accounting. I do have to point out that the government's own commission said that the pension accounting should be negotiated with the Auditor General; that in fact the Auditor General's position is not really correct, the controller's position is actually correct, and that should be negotiated. But the government is still using in their public accounts that accounting for pension accounting, which is, of course, increasing the deficit.

The second piece is that the government is using tax-base accounting for the Fair Hydro Plan. The question about that is whether you put it on the rate base, where it belongs, or on the tax base. The government has put it on the tax base. It has increased the deficit number, which I believe the government is increasing as a context for cuts.

Having said that, the former controller was the first out of 70,000 CPAs in all of North America on her accounting exam. She is a recognized expert. So the challenge then becomes: Whose numbers? Does it belong on the tax base or the rate base? I believe it belongs on the rate base. The ratepayers pay for electricity. There's some question as to how the government is going to do an additional 12% now that it has accepted this application or treatment of it. I think it's going to put the government in a bit of a hole to get that 12%, because if you're applying the same logic, you're going to have to put that 12% on the tax base as well.

I think Ontarians need to know why that signature is not there, why the government is saying, "Well, we're going to take this treatment of pension accounting, even though we know we're going to negotiate it, but we're going to put that into our deficit number so the deficit numbers are larger"—or in the cases where the government has cut expenditures but not included that in the public accounts because it increases that number.

People need to have confidence in that number. They need the controller's signature there.

I want to thank again the member from Barrie–Springwater–Oro–Medonte for being here to respond to me, and all of you for staying here. It's really quite surprising that there's anybody in here except the two of us. Welcome back, everybody.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Percy Hatfield): I will turn to the parliamentary assistant, the member for Barrie–Springwater–Oro–Medonte.

Mr. Doug Downey: Thank you to the member for that question. I know he's a good member who works hard for his constituents in Ottawa South. That being said, I don't envy him, Mr. Speaker. The member has to stand up in this House every day and defend the legacy of the previous government. Although Ontarians still live with the mismanagement of the previous government, they can

have faith in knowing they now have a government that puts the people first, a government that is focused on restoring trust and transparency and cleaning up the mess left behind by the member opposite's party.

I'm delighted to share with him that the numbers are no longer in question, as the Auditor General signed off on last year's public accounts. As that member knows, this is the first time the Auditor General signed off on the books in three years. This is the same Auditor General who repeatedly questioned the numbers of the previous government and relentlessly pursued the truth when the Liberals deliberately took the costs off-book. I was going to say something else, but I'm not going to say it. They took them off-book. Their mismanagement on the public's behalf is known by the public. They can tell.

Mr. Speaker, I want the public to know that those dark days are over. We can now know the true cost of that waste, scandal and mismanagement. We received the work of the independent financial commission, the commission of inquiry. It got to the bottom of the Liberal financial mess. What they found was truly shocking. Every day, the Liberals were spending \$40 million more than they were bringing in—\$40 million every day. As a result of their actions, every man, woman and child in this great province now owes \$24,000 towards that debt. This is disgraceful, and just last June the people of Ontario said that they had had enough. After 15 years of reckless and out-of-touch Liberal government, the people of Ontario demanded real leadership and real action, and that's what they got.

For eight months, our government has been hard at work, focused on keeping promises we made to the people, and that work all started with restoring the people of Ontario's trust in government.

During the fall economic statement, our government announced that we had reduced the deficit by \$500 million, driving more than \$3.2 billion in efficiencies and returning \$2.7 billion back into the pockets of ordinary Ontarians.

Since the release of the fall economic statement, we've seen stronger-than-expected growth, which has led to a further decrease in the deficit that we see here today.

The Minister of Finance announced last week that the deficit now stands at \$13.5 billion. There's still a lot of work to do, Mr. Speaker, but this work will allow us to put the province on a sustainable path and protect the services we all can rely on.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Percy Hatfield): I thank you both.

There being no further matter to debate, I deem the motion to adjourn to be carried. This House stands adjourned until 9 a.m. tomorrow.

The House adjourned at 1804.

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF ONTARIO
ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE DE L'ONTARIO

Lieutenant Governor / Lieutenant-gouverneure: Hon. / L'hon. Elizabeth Dowdeswell, OC, OOnt.

Speaker / Président: Hon. / L'hon. Ted Arnott

Clerk / Greffier: Todd Decker

Deputy Clerk / Sous-greffier: Trevor Day

Clerks-at-the-Table / Greffiers parlementaires: Tonia Grannum, Valerie Quioic Lim, William Short

Sergeant-at-Arms / Sergente d'armes: Jacquelyn Gordon

Member and Party / Député(e) et parti	Constituency / Circonscription	Other responsibilities / Autres responsabilités
Anand, Deepak (PC)	Mississauga—Malton	
Andrew, Jill (NDP)	Toronto—St. Paul's	
Armstrong, Teresa J. (NDP)	London—Fanshawe	Deputy Opposition House Leader / Leader parlementaire adjointe de l'opposition officielle
Arnott, Hon. / L'hon. Ted (PC)	Wellington—Halton Hills	Speaker / Président de l'Assemblée législative
Arthur, Ian (NDP)	Kingston and the Islands / Kingston et les Îles	
Baber, Roman (PC)	York Centre / York-Centre	
Babikian, Aris (PC)	Scarborough—Agincourt	
Bailey, Robert (PC)	Sarnia—Lambton	
Barrett, Toby (PC)	Haldimand—Norfolk	
Begum, Doly (NDP)	Scarborough Southwest / Scarborough-Sud-Ouest	
Bell, Jessica (NDP)	University—Rosedale	
Berns-McGown, Rima (NDP)	Beaches—East York / Beaches—East York	
Bethlenfalvy, Hon. / L'hon. Peter (PC)	Pickering—Uxbridge	President of the Treasury Board / Président du Conseil du Trésor
Bisson, Gilles (NDP)	Timmins	Opposition House Leader / Leader parlementaire de l'opposition officielle
Bouma, Will (PC)	Brantford—Brant	
Bourgouin, Guy (NDP)	Mushkegowuk—James Bay / Mushkegowuk—Baie James	
Burch, Jeff (NDP)	Niagara Centre / Niagara-Centre	
Calandra, Paul (PC)	Markham—Stouffville	
Cho, Hon. / L'hon. Raymond Sung Joon (PC)	Scarborough North / Scarborough-Nord	Minister for Seniors and Accessibility / Ministre des Services aux aînés et de l'Accessibilité
Cho, Stan (PC)	Willowdale	
Clark, Hon. / L'hon. Steve (PC)	Leeds—Grenville—Thousand Islands and Rideau Lakes / Leeds—Grenville—Thousand Islands et Rideau Lakes	Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing / Ministre des Affaires municipales et du Logement
Coe, Lorne (PC)	Whitby	
Coteau, Michael (LIB)	Don Valley East / Don Valley-Est	
Crawford, Stephen (PC)	Oakville	
Cuzzetto, Rudy (PC)	Mississauga—Lakeshore	
Des Rosiers, Nathalie (LIB)	Ottawa—Vanier	
Downey, Doug (PC)	Barrie—Springwater—Oro-Medonte	
Dunlop, Jill (PC)	Simcoe North / Simcoe-Nord	
Elliott, Hon. / L'hon. Christine (PC)	Newmarket—Aurora	Deputy Premier / Vice-première ministre Minister of Health and Long-Term Care / Ministre de la Santé et des Soins de longue durée
Fedeli, Hon. / L'hon. Victor (PC)	Nipissing	Chair of Cabinet / Président du Conseil des ministres Minister of Finance / Ministre des Finances
Fee, Amy (PC)	Kitchener South—Hespeler / Kitchener-Sud—Hespeler	
Fife, Catherine (NDP)	Waterloo	
Ford, Hon. / L'hon. Doug (PC)	Etobicoke North / Etobicoke-Nord	Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs / Ministre des Affaires intergouvernementales Premier / Premier ministre
Fraser, John (LIB)	Ottawa South / Ottawa-Sud	
French, Jennifer K. (NDP)	Oshawa	Third Deputy Chair of the Committee of the Whole House / Troisième vice-présidente du comité plénier de l'Assemblée législative

Member and Party / Député(e) et parti	Constituency / Circonscription	Other responsibilities / Autres responsabilités
Fullerton, Hon. / L'hon. Merrilee (PC)	Kanata—Carleton	Minister of Training, Colleges and Universities / Ministre de la Formation et des Collèges et Universités
Gates, Wayne (NDP)	Niagara Falls	
Gélinas, France (NDP)	Nickel Belt	
Ghamari, Goldie (PC)	Carleton	
Gill, Parm (PC)	Milton	
Glover, Chris (NDP)	Spadina—Fort York	
Gravelle, Michael (LIB)	Thunder Bay—Superior North / Thunder Bay—Supérieur-Nord	
Gretzky, Lisa (NDP)	Windsor West / Windsor-Ouest	First Deputy Chair of the Committee of the Whole House / Première vice-présidente du comité plénier de l'Assemblée
Hardeman, Hon. / L'hon. Ernie (PC)	Oxford	Minister of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs / Ministre de l'Agriculture, de l'Alimentation et des Affaires rurales
Harden, Joel (NDP)	Ottawa Centre / Ottawa-Centre	
Harris, Mike (PC)	Kitchener—Conestoga	
Hassan, Faisal (NDP)	York South—Weston / York-Sud— Weston	
Hatfield, Percy (NDP)	Windsor—Tecumseh	Second Deputy Chair of the Committee of the Whole House / Deuxième vice-président du comité plénier de l'Assemblée législative
Hillier, Randy (PC)	Lanark—Frontenac—Kingston	
Hogarth, Christine (PC)	Etobicoke—Lakeshore	
Horwath, Andrea (NDP)	Hamilton Centre / Hamilton-Centre	Leader, Official Opposition / Chef de l'opposition officielle
Hunter, Mitzie (LIB)	Scarborough—Guildwood	
Jones, Hon. / L'hon. Sylvia (PC)	Dufferin—Caledon	Minister of Community Safety and Correctional Services / Ministre de la Sécurité communautaire et des Services correctionnels
Kanapathi, Logan (PC)	Markham—Thornhill	
Karahalios, Belinda (PC)	Cambridge	
Karpoche, Bhutilla (NDP)	Parkdale—High Park	
Ke, Vincent (PC)	Don Valley North / Don Valley-Nord	
Kernaghan, Terence (NDP)	London North Centre / London- Centre-Nord	
Khanjin, Andrea (PC)	Barrie—Innisfil	
Kramp, Daryl (PC)	Hastings—Lennox and Addington	
Kusendova, Natalia (PC)	Mississauga Centre / Mississauga- Centre	
Lalonde, Marie-France (LIB)	Orléans	
Lecce, Stephen (PC)	King—Vaughan	Deputy Government House Leader / Leader parlementaire adjoint du gouvernement
Lindo, Laura Mae (NDP)	Kitchener Centre / Kitchener-Centre	
MacLeod, Hon. / L'hon. Lisa (PC)	Nepean	Minister of Children, Community and Social Services / Ministre des Services à l'enfance et des Services sociaux et communautaires Minister Responsible for Women's Issues / Ministre déléguée à la Condition féminine
Mamakwa, Sol (NDP)	Kiiwetinoong	
Mantha, Michael (NDP)	Algoma—Manitoulin	
Martin, Robin (PC)	Eglinton—Lawrence	
Martow, Gila (PC)	Thornhill	
McDonell, Jim (PC)	Stormont—Dundas—South Glengarry	
McKenna, Jane (PC)	Burlington	
McNaughton, Hon. / L'hon. Monte (PC)	Lambton—Kent—Middlesex	Minister of Infrastructure / Ministre de l'Infrastructure
Miller, Norman (PC)	Parry Sound—Muskoka	
Miller, Paul (NDP)	Hamilton East—Stoney Creek / Hamilton-Est—Stoney Creek	
Mitas, Christina Maria (PC)	Scarborough Centre / Scarborough- Centre	
Monteith-Farrell, Judith (NDP)	Thunder Bay—Atikokan	
Morrison, Suze (NDP)	Toronto Centre / Toronto-Centre	
Mulroney, Hon. / L'hon. Caroline (PC)	York—Simcoe	Attorney General / Procureure générale Minister of Francophone Affairs / Ministre des Affaires francophones
Natyshak, Taras (NDP)	Essex	
Nicholls, Rick (PC)	Chatham-Kent—Leamington	Chair of the Committee of the Whole House / Président du comité plénier de l'Assemblée Deputy Speaker / Vice-président

Member and Party / Député(e) et parti	Constituency / Circonscription	Other responsibilities / Autres responsabilités
Oosterhoff, Sam (PC)	Niagara West / Niagara-Ouest	
Pang, Billy (PC)	Markham—Unionville	
Park, Lindsey (PC)	Durham	
Parsa, Michael (PC)	Aurora—Oak Ridges—Richmond Hill	
Pettapiece, Randy (PC)	Perth—Wellington	
Phillips, Hon. / L'hon. Rod (PC)	Ajax	Minister of the Environment, Conservation and Parks / Ministre de l'Environnement, de la Protection de la nature et des Parcs
Piccini, David (PC)	Northumberland—Peterborough South / Northumberland—Peterborough-Sud	
Rakocevic, Tom (NDP)	Humber River—Black Creek	
Rasheed, Kaleed (PC)	Mississauga East—Cooksville / Mississauga-Est—Cooksville	
Rickford, Hon. / L'hon. Greg (PC)	Kenora—Rainy River	Minister of Energy, Northern Development and Mines / Ministre de l'Énergie, du Développement du Nord et des Mines Minister of Indigenous Affairs / Ministre des Affaires autochtones
Roberts, Jeremy (PC)	Ottawa West—Nepean / Ottawa- Ouest—Nepean	
Romano, Ross (PC)	Sault Ste. Marie	
Sabawy, Sheref (PC)	Mississauga—Erin Mills	
Sandhu, Amarjot (PC)	Brampton West / Brampton-Ouest	
Sarkaria, Prabmeet Singh (PC)	Brampton South / Brampton-Sud	
Sattler, Peggy (NDP)	London West / London-Ouest	
Schreiner, Mike (GRN)	Guelph	
Scott, Hon. / L'hon. Laurie (PC)	Haliburton—Kawartha Lakes—Brock	Minister of Labour / Ministre du Travail
Shaw, Sandy (NDP)	Hamilton West—Ancaster—Dundas / Hamilton-Ouest—Ancaster—Dundas	
Simard, Amanda (IND)	Glengarry—Prescott—Russell	
Singh, Gurratan (NDP)	Brampton East / Brampton-Est	
Singh, Sara (NDP)	Brampton Centre / Brampton-Centre	Deputy Leader, Official Opposition / Chef adjointe de l'opposition officielle
Skelly, Donna (PC)	Flamborough—Glanbrook	
Smith, Dave (PC)	Peterborough—Kawartha	
Smith, Hon. / L'hon. Todd (PC)	Bay of Quinte / Baie de Quinte	Minister of Economic Development, Job Creation and Trade / Ministre du Développement économique, de la Création d'emplois et du Commerce Government House Leader / Leader parlementaire du gouvernement
Stevens, Jennifer (Jennie) (NDP)	St. Catharines	
Stiles, Marit (NDP)	Davenport	
Surma, Kinga (PC)	Etobicoke Centre / Etobicoke-Centre	
Tabuns, Peter (NDP)	Toronto—Danforth	
Tangri, Nina (PC)	Mississauga—Streetsville	
Taylor, Monique (NDP)	Hamilton Mountain	
Thanigasalam, Vijay (PC)	Scarborough—Rouge Park	
Thompson, Hon. / L'hon. Lisa M. (PC)	Huron—Bruce	Minister of Education / Ministre de l'Éducation
Tibollo, Hon. / L'hon. Michael A. (PC)	Vaughan—Woodbridge	Minister of Tourism, Culture and Sport / Ministre du Tourisme, de la Culture et du Sport
Triantafilopoulos, Effie J. (PC)	Oakville North—Burlington / Oakville-Nord—Burlington	
Vanthof, John (NDP)	Timiskaming—Cochrane	Deputy Leader, Official Opposition / Chef adjoint de l'opposition officielle
Wai, Daisy (PC)	Richmond Hill	
Walker, Hon. / L'hon. Bill (PC)	Bruce—Grey—Owen Sound	Minister of Government and Consumer Services / Ministre des Services gouvernementaux et des Services aux consommateurs
West, Jamie (NDP)	Sudbury	
Wilson, Jim (IND)	Simcoe—Grey	
Wynne, Kathleen O. (LIB)	Don Valley West / Don Valley-Ouest	
Yakubski, Hon. / L'hon. John (PC)	Renfrew—Nipissing—Pembroke	Minister of Natural Resources and Forestry / Ministre des Richesses naturelles et des Forêts
Yarde, Kevin (NDP)	Brampton North / Brampton-Nord	
Yurek, Hon. / L'hon. Jeff (PC)	Elgin—Middlesex—London	Minister of Transportation / Ministre des Transports

**STANDING AND SELECT COMMITTEES OF THE LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY
COMITÉS PERMANENTS ET SPÉCIAUX DE L'ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE**

Standing Committee on Estimates / Comité permanent des budgets des dépenses

Chair / Président: Peter Tabuns
Vice-Chair / Vice-président: Wayne Gates
Stan Cho, Jill Dunlop
John Fraser, Wayne Gates
Stephen Lecce, Gila Martow
Jane McKenna, Judith Monteith-Farrell
Lindsey Park, Randy Pettapiece
Peter Tabuns
Committee Clerk / Greffier: Timothy Bryan

**Standing Committee on Finance and Economic Affairs /
Comité permanent des finances et des affaires économiques**

Chair / Président: Stephen Crawford
Vice-Chair / Vice-président: Jeremy Roberts
Ian Arthur, Stan Cho
Stephen Crawford, Doug Downey
Sol Mamakwa, David Piccini
Jeremy Roberts, Sandy Shaw
Donna Skelly
Committee Clerk / Greffier: Timothy Bryan

**Standing Committee on General Government / Comité
permanent des affaires gouvernementales**

Chair / Président: Dave Smith
Vice-Chair / Vice-président: Natalia Kusendova
Jessica Bell, Chris Glover
Christine Hogarth, Logan Kanapathi
Daryl Kramp, Natalia Kusendova
Amarjot Sandhu, Mike Schreiner
Dave Smith, Jennifer (Jennie) Stevens
Daisy Wai
Clerk / Greffier: Vacant

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

Chair / Président: John Vanthof
Vice-Chair / Vice-président: Taras Natyshak
Roman Baber, Rudy Cuzzetto
Amy Fee, Vincent Ke
Andrea Khanjin, Marie-France Lalonde
Taras Natyshak, Rick Nicholls
Jeremy Roberts, Marit Stiles
John Vanthof
Committee Clerk / Greffière: Jocelyn McCauley

**Standing Committee on Justice Policy / Comité permanent de
la justice**

Chair / Président: Parm Gill
Vice-Chair / Vice-président: Aris Babikian
Roman Baber, Aris Babikian
Nathalie Des Rosiers, Jill Dunlop
Parm Gill, Lindsey Park
Ross Romano, Prabmeet Singh Sarkaria
Sara Singh, Monique Taylor
Kevin Yarde
Committee Clerk / Greffière: Jocelyn McCauley

**Standing Committee on the Legislative Assembly / Comité
permanent de l'Assemblée législative**

Chair / Présidente: Jane McKenna
Vice-Chair / Vice-président: Vijay Thanigasalam
Robert Bailey, Rima Berns-McGown
Lorne Coe, Michael Coteau
Mike Harris, Faisal Hassan
Jane McKenna, Christina Maria Mitas
Sam Oosterhoff, Gurratan Singh
Vijay Thanigasalam
Committee Clerk / Greffière: Valerie Quioc Lim

**Standing Committee on Public Accounts / Comité permanent
des comptes publics**

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

**Standing Committee on Regulations and Private Bills / Comité
permanent des règlements et des projets de loi d'intérêt privé**

Chair / Président: Randy Hillier
Vice-Chair / Vice-président: Kaleed Rasheed
Will Bouma, Paul Calandra
Lorne Coe, Randy Hillier
Mitzie Hunter, Laura Mae Lindo
Paul Miller, Billy Pang
Kaleed Rasheed, Amarjot Sandhu
Jamie West
Committee Clerk / Greffier: Eric Rennie

**Standing Committee on Social Policy / Comité permanent de
la politique sociale**

Chair / Présidente: Nina Tangri
Vice-Chair / Vice-président: Deepak Anand
Deepak Anand, Doly Begum
Jeff Burch, Amy Fee
Michael Gravelle, Joel Harden
Belinda Karahalios, Robin Martin
Sheref Sabawy, Nina Tangri
Effie J. Triantafilopoulos
Committee Clerk / Greffier: Eric Rennie

**Select Committee on Financial Transparency / Comité spécial
de la transparence financière**

Chair / Président: Prabmeet Singh Sarkaria
Vice-Chair / Vice-président: Doug Downey
Roman Baber, Doug Downey
Catherine Fife, Robin Martin
Lindsey Park, Ross Romano
Prabmeet Singh Sarkaria, Sandy Shaw
John Vanthof
Committee Clerk / Greffière: Valerie Quioc Lim