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Clerk: Todd Decker

Président : L'honorable Ted Arnott
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LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY
OF ONTARIO

Wednesday 20 February 2019

ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE
DE L'ONTARIO

Mercredi 20 février 2019

The House met at 0900.

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

ORDERS OF THE DAY

NOTICE OF REASONED AMENDMENT

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): I beg to inform the House that, pursuant to standing order 71(b), the member for Timmins has notified the Clerk of his intention to file notice of a reasoned amendment to the motion for second reading of Bill 68, An Act with respect to community safety and policing. The order for second reading of Bill 68 may therefore not be called today.

TIME ALLOCATION

Hon. Todd Smith: I move that, pursuant to standing order 47 and notwithstanding any other standing order or special order of the House relating to Bill 48, An Act to amend various Acts in relation to education and child care, that the Standing Committee on Social Policy be authorized to meet on Monday, February 25, 2019, from 2 p.m. to 6 p.m. and Tuesday, February 26, 2019, from 9 a.m. to 10 a.m. and 3 p.m. to 6 p.m. for public hearings on the bill; and

That the Clerk of the Committee, in consultation with the committee Chair, be authorized to arrange the following with regard to Bill 48:

—That the deadline for requests to appear be 5 p.m. on Thursday, February 21, 2019; and

—That the Clerk of the Committee provide a list of all interested presenters to each member of the subcommittee and their designate following the deadline for requests to appear by 6 p.m. on Thursday, February 21, 2019; and

—That each member of the subcommittee or their designate provide the Clerk of the Committee with a prioritized list of presenters to be scheduled, chosen from the list of all interested presenters received by the Clerk, by 12 p.m. on Friday, February 22, 2019; and

—That each witness will receive up to six minutes for their presentation followed by 14 minutes divided equally amongst the recognized parties for questioning; and

That the deadline for filing written submissions be 6 p.m. on Tuesday, February 26, 2019; and

That the deadline for filing amendments to the bill with the Clerk of the Committee shall be 12 p.m. on Thursday, February 28, 2019; and

That the Standing Committee on Social Policy shall be authorized to meet on Monday, March 4, 2018, from

9 a.m. to 10:15 a.m. and 2 p.m. to 6 p.m. and Tuesday, March 5, 2019, from 9 a.m. to 10:15 a.m. and from 3 p.m. to 8 p.m. for clause-by-clause consideration of the bill; and

That on Tuesday, March 5, 2019, at 5:30 p.m., those amendments which have not yet been moved shall be deemed to have been moved, and the Chair of the Committee shall interrupt the proceedings and shall, without further debate or amendment, put every question necessary to dispose of all remaining sections of the bill and any amendments thereto. At this time, the Chair shall allow one 20-minute waiting period pursuant to standing order 129(a); and

That the committee shall report the bill to the House no later than Wednesday, March 6, 2019. In the event that the committee fails to report the bill on that day, the bill shall be deemed to be passed by the committee and shall be deemed to be reported to and received by the House; and

That, upon receiving the report of the Standing Committee on Social Policy, the Speaker shall put the question for adoption of the report forthwith, and at such time the bill shall be ordered for third reading, which order may be called that same day; and

That, notwithstanding standing order 81(c), the bill may be called for third reading more than once in the same sessional day; and

That, except in the case of a division arising from deferred votes, any division relating to any proceedings on the bill, the division bell shall be limited to 20 minutes.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): I just want to clarify with the minister that he is suggesting that all this activity will take place in the year 2019; I think at one point he said 2018.

Hon. Todd Smith: I think that's a safe assumption.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): That's what we assumed, but we thought we'd clarify.

Mr. Smith, Bay of Quinte, has moved government notice of motion number 30. Further debate. Does the minister care to lead it off? No?

Further debate. Member for Timmins.

Mr. Gilles Bisson: Man, the government is not getting up to talk about its own time allocation motion, other than reading it.

There are a couple of things I'd like to touch on, and I know our deputy House leader wants to get in on the procedural part, as well.

First of all, we're time-allocating a bill, Mr. Speaker, that the House voted unanimously to pass yesterday. Isn't that kind of passing strange? Every member in this House, on both sides, voted for this bill at second reading, and the government feels the necessity to be able to time-allocate

the bill because somehow there's some wild opposition going on here.

When I saw the time allocation motion, I was a little bit surprised because the bill—as you know, when we finally got to vote on the second reading of the bill yesterday, it was referred to committee. It normally holds true that if a bill is supported by all sides of the House and the bill goes to the committee, there's no intent to hold up the bill. Unless the government plans to filibuster its own bill in committee, there's no need to have time allocation because the opposition has already indicated by its vote at second reading that we're in favour of the bill and "Let's move through the process in a regular way." But the government is so used to using time allocation now, by reaction they time-allocate. I guess they don't trust their own members. You must think on the other side of the House that the Tories are going to filibuster their own bill, because we're not going to filibuster it on this side. So what is the point here?

I know to some people here in the House who just got here—and that's the nature of this place: You think that time allocation is a normal thing and it's the way all legislation should work. But this is really a good example of how bad time allocation can be, when a government decides it needs to time-allocate a bill that everybody agrees with; after they call the question on the second reading vote and everybody voted in favour, the government sends it off to committee and then time-allocates the bill. I want to say at the beginning that this is very passing strange in regard to that point.

Then, if you look at the mechanism of the time allocation motion itself—everybody should understand what we're doing here. Today is Wednesday. I want you to look at the calendar on the table. It says it's Wednesday, February 20. By tomorrow, at 5 o'clock, you have to have your name in the committee with the Clerk in order to be selected to present at committee Monday or Tuesday during public hearings. We're giving people less than 24 hours. All of Ontario is watching the Legislature right now, I guess the government thinks, because they've got nothing else to do, and everybody who's interested in this bill is riveted to this debate and they're watching really close and they're right now writing out their requests to appear before the committee in regard to what their thoughts on this bill are. But that's not the reality. The reality is, the only people who are going to be at committee are the people the government calls or the opposition calls. There are going to be very few people who are going to find out naturally that they have an opportunity to present to this bill. Parents and educators and school board trustees and all of the people interested in education are going to find out about this because they're going to read about it in the weekend paper—because how do you put an ad in the paper to let people know that they can come and present to the committee when this time allocation motion will be passed today? Even if the Clerks are super, super good—which we know they are all the time—you are going to get this before the Toronto Star and the Globe and Mail or Le Droit in Ottawa, and people are going to automatically find out about it after the paper will be printed.

0910

Mr. John Vanthof: It's definitely not committee for the people.

Mr. Gilles Bisson: It's not committee for the people.

Think about it: Even if we send a notice to the media tomorrow—or today, when you can, after this thing is passed—it won't get printed until tomorrow, which means to say that most people don't get home and look at the paper or watch the evening news until 6 o'clock at night, at which point the timeline to apply before the committee is going to be expired.

What is the government up to here? There's a real hurry to pass this bill? The reality is that we're at the beginning of the spring session. There are many sessional days left between now and June, when this House rises. So if the government had to wait an extra week in order to be able to allow this bill to go through the process at committee and to advertise effectively so that anybody who wants to present can come here and present, that's what it should have done. I think the government would have been well advised if they would not have used time allocation and understood that the opposition voted for the bill and that was an indication that we supported the bill—that's normally why we vote in favour—and that in committee, we have no interest in slowing a bill down which we're in support of. So why does the government time-allocate it, and why give it such a short timeline?

You could have said, "Okay, let's get the subcommittee together today"—or you could even have done it yesterday, if you had wanted, and figured out, "Okay, we're going to advertise in the following papers or radio stations" or whatever, and then give the public at least a week to be able to get this information to decide, "Hey, I would like to present," and submit their name to be on the list of presenters. Then we could have actually started hearing the deputants sometime the week after that. In the grand scheme of things, what would that have done to harm the government? It would have meant more people would have gotten a chance to understand that there's a bill before committee that they may be interested in presenting to. It wouldn't have stopped you from getting your bill.

The government says, and I listened to the Premier I don't know how many times say, "Work with us. We need you to work with us." "Work with us"? You hit us with a hammer every chance you get. What's the point? Is this working with you, that you have to time-allocate a bill that everybody voted for? It's beyond bizarre that you're doing this.

The least the government House leader could do is have a conversation with myself and say, "What's your intent at committee?" I would have told you what our intent at committee was. Then we could have marched the bill forward in a normal kind of way. Instead, we have to time-allocate.

I think time allocation is a problem not just for us, the opposition; it's also a problem for the government. Because if things don't go the way that they think it should in committee, they would be forced to come back to the House to move yet another motion in order to amend whatever it is they need amended to fix whatever was a

problem at committee. So it's not to the government's advantage on a bill that everybody agrees on to time-allocate. It further restricts the ability of the government to adjust if it needs to adjust along the way.

The more important point is the public—you know, “we, the people”—

Ms. Sandy Shaw: For the people.

Mr. Gilles Bisson: —the “for the people” that the government talks about? They're the ones that pay the bills, remember, Speaker? They're the ones that vote for us in order to put us in office or to take us out. They're the bosses. We're not the bosses; they're the bosses—the voters. We need to make sure that we respect the voters, and this is not respecting the voters. What you're doing is saying to the voters out there that you know best, and “I don't care what you have to say, and if you don't make it, that's okay by me.” I just think that it's very disrespectful to the people of Ontario.

A government, I understand, at times has good-news bills and at times has bad-news bills, but it always has a responsibility to provide clarity on what it's doing, and doing it in a transparent way. Time allocation isn't about transparency. Time allocation, in my view, is an attempt on the part of the government to limit the participation of the public, and when you limit the participation of the public, you're not doing anything when it comes to transparency.

What would have happened—and this is just a what-if—if, let's say, we would have put this bill out in committee, as we did yesterday, and then we would have said, “Okay, we're going to give people a week in order to be able to apply”? What would happen if we had more people than we could fit in two days apply? We'd have to say to those people, “No, you're not important. You can't come to committee.” Well, why would the government put itself in that position? Because, in the end, the people who want to present to the committee, they're our bosses, they're the public. They're the ones who are responsible for paying the bill and for putting us in office or taking us out, as I said. So the government is being disrespectful to the public when it comes to how it uses time allocation.

I think this time allocation motion kind of takes a new—it's a new low. They have taken time allocation to new heights by making it a new low, because we're time-allocating a bill that everybody agrees with and that the opposition has already indicated that we're fine with and we don't have any intent of holding up.

So I just say to my good friends across the way, especially those who sat in opposition with me when we had the 15 long years of the Liberal regime, that we're all glad is over—we would rather us be on that side of the House, but that's a whole other story. But I look to the Minister of Municipal Affairs, I look at the member from Sault Ste. Marie, and others, who were there before, and the member from Whitby, who, by the way, represents my grandchildren—you better take care of them, or else—

Interjection.

Mr. Gilles Bisson: Or I'm else I'm going to send them over with little placards.

My point is, those members, while in opposition, used to rail in this House when it came to time allocation. I think that adds to the cynicism of politics that you say one thing when you're in the opposition and then you say quite another thing when you're in government.

I think, on the question of time allocation, some of the best speeches given in this House were by the member from Nipissing—

Mr. John Vanthof: Renfrew–Nipissing–Pembroke.

Mr. Gilles Bisson: Mr. Yakabuski—whatever riding it is. I want to apologize.

Interjection: Minister of Natural Resources.

Mr. Gilles Bisson: Minister of Natural Resources. He used to get up and he used to rail at the Wynne Liberals and the Dalton McGuinty Liberals before that for their use of time allocation, and I would agree with him. I thought the Liberals were bad. They were time-allocating most everything. Not everything, but most everything was being time-allocated. You guys are worse. You time-allocate everything. Even those things that we agree with—

Mr. Taras Natyshak: Can't take yes for an answer.

Mr. Gilles Bisson: Exactly. They can't take yes for an answer. Very good point.

I don't want to laugh, but you kind of have to because, if not, you would cry. It's so ridiculous. So I hope that the government changes its mind, which I very much doubt they will, and vote down this time allocation motion and trust that the House will do the right thing.

The institution of Parliament is very old. It has been around for a long time. If you go look at the history of use of rules in all Parliaments across the world—and there are quite a few of them, as we all know—the House works very well without time allocation, because it does what it was designed to do: that is that the government is in control of the agenda, the government is the one who calls what's going to be debated in the House, and the government is in control of what happens at a committee. The government's role is to propose and to try to suggest how they approach a particular policy item by way of legislation, and our job as the opposition is to look at that and agree with you when we need to and it makes sense, as we did on this bill at second reading, and, where we think there needs to be some changes, propose changes. If you allow the system to work, what you end up with is much better legislation at the end and, I think, a greater respect on the part of the public, who would then look at this place and say, “Look at that. These guys are actually working together trying to make something happen.”

Instead, the government of the people is saying, “We don't want to listen to the people, only some of the people.” Then, the other thing is, they say, “We want the opposition to work with us. Why, why will the opposition not work with us?” Well, here's an opportunity where you could have proven that you meant what you said, in that we voted for the bill at second reading, have no intention of holding it up, and you guys are time-allocating a bill that doesn't need to be time-allocated. I just hope that the government, in the end, decides that the right thing to do

would be to vote against this time allocation motion and allow this bill to go the regular way of the process.

0920

There was another point on the time allocation motion that, before I finish, I just wanted to make. What's interesting is that the government, in the time allocation motion, is allowing the bill to come back at third reading. By the looks of the read, we could hold this thing up for a couple of days in the House if we chose to. I think this particular section of the time allocation motion has been put there exactly for us to do it, in the sense that they know we support the bill and they know that the opposition New Democrats are going to be upset about the use of time allocation. They're putting this in as a bit of a red flag or a little bit of bait. It's almost as if you're not happy just time-allocating. It's like going into the bullring with the red flag and trying to look for a little bit of a fight here.

Come on. This is not the way Parliaments are supposed to work. The beauty of the British parliamentary system is that we have designed, over the years—and in all Parliaments across the world—a really good system that works. It allows the government to govern with the feedback of the opposition, but more importantly, with the feedback of the public by way of its committee structure. When the government pulls off these kinds of stunts, this is just game-playing on the part of the government. This is the government saying, “Oh, let's put that in there, just to see if we can raise the opposition to the task.” I think that this is just bad politics. It's cynical. It reinforces all the negatives that people see in politicians. It reinforces that this is not about doing what's right for the people, but rather doing what's right for the government.

We have people here in the gallery and some of them may be the parents of children with autism who are so affected by what this government has done. It's kind of the same thing. The government is doing something not to help the people, but to help themselves and, more importantly, to help their ideology. We're going from a system that was, yes, broken and needed to be fixed. The Liberals really messed up the autism file. We'll both agree on that. Yes, it's true, there were waiting lists. As you do, Mr. Speaker, I've got people who have been waiting for two, three, four years for their children to finally get into IBI or ABA treatment.

But now what we've done is that we're going to move people off those lists to where they're going to have, essentially, no support, hardly, to be able to pay for the services their children need. You go from a service that could be \$60,000, \$70,000 a year paid by Ontario, to one that will only be \$5,000 to \$20,000 a year, depending on the age of your child and severity, to pay for services that are far more expensive.

It's the same kind of thing as what we see in Bill 48. It's the same concept. It is the link that I'm trying to make here, and that is, the government is trying to be self-serving in writing this time allocation motion. They're not, in fact, doing what's right for the public when it comes to allowing the public to do its due diligence on this bill by coming before it and doing what needs to be done when it

comes to comment. The government is using time allocation in a way that, quite frankly, isn't necessary.

I know, with that, Mr. Speaker, other people want to speak to this and I look forward to hearing the comments from our deputy House leader.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): Further debate? I recognize the member from Kitchener South—Hespeler.

Mrs. Amy Fee: Good morning, Mr. Speaker. Given that we do have the time allocation this morning, I wanted to use my time to highlight why I worked so closely with Minister Thompson on this bill.

First off, this bill will create zero tolerance for teachers and ECEs who are found guilty of any sexual abuse of a student or a child. It will require that the discipline committees of the Ontario College of Teachers and the College of Early Childhood Educators revoke an educator's certificate if they are found guilty of such acts. This bill will also give the Lieutenant Governor the authority to prescribe other acts of a sexual nature prohibited under the Criminal Code that would result in the mandatory revocation of an educator's certificate.

These proposed changes, to me, are critical to ensuring that we no longer have a grey area—like we had under the previous Liberal government—around situations like what we learned about in the Toronto Star about a year ago. A teacher who had sexually harassed a colleague was just moved quietly to another school. Then that same teacher started a highly inappropriate relationship with a student. His teacher's licence, though, was not revoked, even though he pleaded guilty to psychological and sexual abuse of that student. As quoted in the Star, the student received messages, sometimes until 2 o'clock in the morning, messages like, “Please don't leave me,” and “If I lose you, I'll die.” He was also pleading with her not to tell school board administrators what had gone on between them.

When this incident happened, the law here in Ontario stated that the only time licences could be mandatorily revoked was if the sexual abuse was on a predetermined list. This list, Mr. Speaker, didn't go far enough. Unbelievably, activities such as groping and making sexual comments were not on it.

Bill 48 aims to ensure that teachers who are found guilty of behaviours like this can't just be quietly moved to another school. We need to ensure that we are protecting our students and that educators who are found guilty can never work in a classroom again.

Our government has also proclaimed sections of the Ontario College of Teachers Act and the Early Childhood Educators Act that will require the colleges to provide funding for therapy for counselling for children and students who have alleged that they were the subject of sexual abuse or an act of child pornography committed by an educator in the course of that educator's practice.

I'd like to take a look at another part of the bill.

Math is the big thing. It was something that I certainly noticed a lot as a school board trustee prior to this, and now in my role as an MPP. We certainly have amazing teachers in Ontario, and we want to ensure that all students

have a world-class education. That's why we want to support our teachers to become even better prepared to teach the fundamentals of math. If this bill is passed—and I certainly think it will be after yesterday—teachers will have to pass a content knowledge test in math in order to become certified to teach in Ontario's publicly funded schools.

I think that we owe it to our students to ensure that we are helping them succeed, especially with the focus on math skills that is happening in the workplace going forward. Even when I speak with current university and college students and professors, they say one of the biggest things that would have helped their students, or helped them, is having better fundamental math skills before they enter post-secondary education.

Mr. Speaker, something that I think you know is very dear and close to my heart is also included in this bill. It's the ability for the education minister to put guidelines in place for school boards to follow to put their own guidelines in place—board-by-board guidelines—around the use of service animals in schools. The last time I spoke to Bill 48, this is what I focused the majority of my time on, and I told you some stories about some different students. I want to share some updates this morning on how those children are doing.

First, a young boy, Brayden, who I spoke about earlier, read the transcript of what I had said. He has autism and is non-verbal, but he uses a special way to communicate called RPM, or rapid prompting method. With that, he has kind of a letter board, and he spells out what he wants to communicate. He told his mom, Jen, "This is awesome. I hope my story makes the changes for the kids that want to bring their service dogs to school." She said he was so emotional, reading what I had said before, that he started to cry, but that he was so happy that we were trying to make this change so future children wouldn't have to go through what his family had endured.

Brayden has an autism assistance dog, Gusto, from National Service Dogs in Cambridge. He initially attended a public school with his dog in Kitchener, and then his family decided to move him to the Catholic board so he could be with his siblings in that school. But when he got to the Catholic board, he was denied access to the classroom with that service dog. His parents said they never imagined that changing boards would mean that he wouldn't be able to take his service dog with him, because he can bring his service dog everywhere else.

This is how Brayden describes Gusto in the National Service Dogs' book *In Service—Portraits of Dogs that Change Lives*: "Gusto is my saving grace to my world. He gives security when I am feeling anxious. He gives independence by being tethered to him and holding his handle. I think it is amazing to walk with my dog and not hold mom or dad's hands. When I am tethered to Gusto, I know where my body is at all times. This is the most amazing feeling ever."

0930

The experience with his new school, unfortunately, was so traumatic for Brayden that he has been home-schooled for the last several years. But I am happy to tell you that he

is doing very well thanks to the dedication of his parents, Jen and Trevor, in making sure Brayden has what he needs to succeed, including having Gusto by his side all day.

Another boy I spoke of, Jack, has an autism service dog named Jenson, from Lions Foundation of Canada Dog Guides. Jack attended that same Catholic school board in Kitchener as Brayden. While he was granted a trial last school year after several years of his parents fighting for that trial, school board administrators at the end of the trial determined he didn't need his service dog at school. This is the young boy I told you about earlier who had previously had severe mental health struggles because of what had gone on. It was recommended that he needed a service dog with him throughout the whole entire day—something that he was being denied by his school board.

Last summer, after finding out the school administrators were not going to allow Jack to take his service dog to school for the 2018-19 school year, his family decided to move from Kitchener to Huron-Bruce county. His mother, Donna, says that by all accounts, this is his best school year yet. For the first time, he has an educational assistant. He has the support of a social worker now at school that he did not get to have before. Most importantly, he does have Jenson, his service dog, with him at school all day. She says she has seen great strides in his ability to regulate his emotions and his mental health. Unlike in the previous school, he is doing grade-level work.

This past weekend, Jack asked his mom to tell me so I could share with you, in his own words, "I feel I can get my work done easier, he calms me down and I don't have struggles like did I in St. Teresa—getting yelled at for doing nothing and getting blamed for doing nothing. Jenson makes me a lot more confident and happy."

Minister Thompson's bill sets out the guidelines for school boards to follow, and that will give her that opportunity to put those guidelines in place. That way, school boards, board by board, can put policies in place. That way, students like Brayden and Jack have what they need to succeed in their classrooms.

Currently, less than half of the school boards in Ontario have policies in place around service animals. For the ones that do, those policies can vary drastically. Some only speak to specific types of service dogs while excluding others. Some policies mention that a school staff member may be trained to support a child who is unable to fully handle the dog themselves, while another, which does happen to be that same school board that Jack as well as Brayden attended, states that "when a student is not able to handle the dog, the dog will not be considered a certified service dog for the purposes of these procedures." That particular policy has been called quite concerning by service dog providers as there are children who may always need help with their service animal and may never be able to verbally give their dogs commands.

Also, trainers have raised concerns with school boards that even if a child doesn't usually need adult support to help with their service animal, they are children, and even though they are service dogs, they are dogs, and sometimes either one may need a little extra encouragement to

follow through on a command. As an example, a child with PTSD may be at such a heightened state of anxiety that they may not want to give their dog a command, but they may need to lie on their dog for comfort and they may need an adult's help to ask that dog to lie down so they can comfortably lie on the dog and bring their anxiety levels down. Mr. Speaker, policies like that one that, if you will, discredit service dogs when a student can't fully command that animal, I believe, are putting unnecessary hurdles in front of students to having access to their classrooms with their fully trained service dogs.

I know several children with service dogs, and I've seen first-hand how these amazing dogs support their handlers. But it's not just children with autism. There are many types of service dogs, as I mentioned, for children suffering from PTSD, diabetes and seizure disorders. I have had the opportunity to go through the parent training program at Lions Foundation in Oakville and also speak to trainers about the research around the support that these service dogs can offer, and many of them are pretty much invisible tasks. We may not be able to see that a child with PTSD is having a spike in their anxiety levels but, for them, it can be overpowering and can stop them from entering a room or being able to complete their schoolwork. Just knowing that their dog is there with them, or maybe just giving the dog a little pet on the head, can bring those anxiety levels back down. It's much the same for a child with an autism service dog.

Their service dog can also help them regulate their emotions, overcome fears and is also trained to keep that child from bolting away, something that can be quite common for children with autism. Amazingly, these alert dogs for diabetes can tell when a child's blood sugar is dropping, and that's very similar to the seizure alert dogs that can sense when a seizure is going to come on and make sure that child is somewhere safe, or even kind of brace themselves to let the child fall on the dog, so they don't bang their head if they happen to go into a seizure.

It's believed the first autism service dog trained by National Service Dogs in Cambridge in 1996 was the first such service dog for children with autism in the world, yet trainers who have been in the field for many years are still telling me that training this type of service dog is very challenging, but rewarding.

These service dogs perform many tasks that support children with autism. Families report seeing an increase in social skills and a reduction in meltdowns. It makes their child better able to regulate their emotions, which just makes getting through the day that much easier. Children also report feeling more confident in social situations and being out in public. For children who tend to bolt, their families also say they're more comfortable when taking their child out in public because they don't have that fear.

Having a service dog has also been shown to help teach the child some responsibility, as they're taught to help support the dog as much as they can by feeding it or grooming it. In classrooms, trainers and educators have noticed children are better able to focus, have lower aggression and frustration levels, which leads them to be

more comfortable, and, as Jack has said, have more confidence in the classroom.

One other thing I'd like to note for the House this morning is that usually when medical professionals and service dog providers recommend the use of a service dog, it is for all aspects of the person's life. For our children, that means spending most of their day in their classrooms, which is why, to me, this bill with Minister Thompson is so critical in giving that education minister the opportunity to put guidelines in place for school boards to create their own policies.

Mr. Speaker, as I wrap up, I just want to say that with Bill 48, we're working towards keeping our students safe in our classrooms while committing to our teachers that we will ensure they have the skills that they need to best support our students in math, while also providing families with the confidence that we are providing the supports that their children need in their classrooms.

As Minister Thompson herself has stated, now, more than ever, it is important for students throughout this amazing province to graduate with the skills and knowledge that they need to be successful in work, school and beyond. That is why the minister and her parliamentary assistant, Sam Oosterhoff, have been working so hard and conducting province-wide consultations as well on education. It's why I am so proudly supporting this bill and why I was so happy yesterday to see that the second reading was passed unanimously.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): Further debate? I recognize the member from London—Fanshawe.

Ms. Teresa J. Armstrong: Thank you, Speaker, for that wonderful, enthusiastic introduction of my riding. It is truly a great riding.

I want to welcome the guests who are here in the Legislature today. It's quite full, so it's great that people are here this morning, very enthusiastic, wanting to learn about how this place works, because they should. It's their place. It's their House.

Today we are here to debate the time allocation, and I think, perhaps, public perception is that when they come to the Legislature, they're here to hear debate on bills that are in front of the House, that are in front of their representatives. The member from Kitchener South—Hespeler actually took the time under a time allocation motion to debate the bill. Not once did she refer to what is in front of this Legislature that we're obliged to debate, and that is the time allocation.

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What has happened is that time allocation has been tabled by the government, and that's what we're supposed to talk about. But the member, who is obviously very passionate about Bill 48—as we all are, because we know that education is a huge piece of development in our children, right? So here we are, wanting to debate Bill 48, but this government has tied our hands and said, “No, we're going to file a time allocation motion, and you're going to debate the time allocation.” Here we are, as the opposition members, going to be doing that, but the member opposite avoided that conversation.

That's not really cool with me, Speaker, because here is the government telling us, "This is what we want to do with this bill." This is the strategy of what this House is going to impose on us around Bill 48, the safer schools. So everybody has got to talk to this time allocation, yet it doesn't apply the rules over there. This government needs to follow their own agenda when they present these things in the Legislature.

I'm not going to be speaking about Bill 48, because that isn't what a time allocation motion demands, mandates, directs us to do. It directs us a time to talk about what time allocation means to this Legislature and the bill that they are using under the time allocation.

The question was called yesterday on this bill, and the vote was recorded. We did vote in favour, because we know it's important that we protect our children. That is not a question in this Legislature. I don't think that's a question in anyone's mind in this House.

Then the government filed the time allocation. So the problem is, it's an extensive time allocation piece. It's very detailed. Therefore, it allows me to think that it's a very intentional thing that they had already preconceived before the Legislature was coming back. We were back here one day; we forget to mention that. We were in our ridings, working very hard, representing our constituents, during what they call a "winter break."

When we're back—the House rose yesterday, on February 19. That was the first day of the Legislature, and this government sees fit to file a time allocation rather than allowing us to have full debate on Bill 48, which is the safer schools bill. Obviously, the intent of this government is to want to debate it, as literally illustrated by their own member, just now, from Kitchener South—Hespeler. She has a desire to want to debate this bill. I'm sure she has a desire to listen to every one of us here who want to debate this bill. But what's happening? We can't do that. The rules say we debate time allocation.

This government has had this bill on the order paper since the fall of 2018, so it could have called this bill during the fall of 2018 many times over, when we could have had fulsome debate. Why didn't it do that? Because it doesn't want to have a process where people have input, consideration, considerable input, not input in a hurry.

What they do is, they rush to decisions because they have this agenda. They want to tell a story of how important they are and how they know best what's best for you. "So we are going to push and rush all the things that we believe, people, that you need. And we don't want to hear; we don't want to listen; we don't want to consult with the people that we are affecting with legislation. That isn't part of our management style in this government." They are confrontational, at best.

I'll give you an example of this rushed decision-making. Bill 66, schedule 10: They release Bill 66, and how wonderful this whole thing is going to appear to everyone. "It's going to be life-changing legislation." You're darned right it was life-changing legislation, because under schedule 10—people opposed that, because they were putting people's lives in jeopardy under the Clean Water Act.

So what happened? What happened to this government that just wants to rush legislation and put things forward and not have debate and not listen to experts, not listen to stakeholders, not listen to people it affects? All of a sudden, they had some revelation and they repealed schedule 10.

That's the danger in time allocation: that you don't allow input from people on this side of the House who represent their constituents, and you also don't allow robust, broad public consultation. This time allocation motion, the way it's scheduled out, is very clear that it doesn't want that.

When you're talking about the Clerks having to advertise tomorrow—if you don't see that advertisement that you want to be a witness to this Bill 48, you snooze and you lose—what kind of message does that send to the public, that this government wants to rush everything and doesn't want to hear from this side of the Legislature? It had months—months—in the fall to bring this forward.

We were commissioned back here for a week in December—again, this rushed decision, this creating chaos and a crisis that isn't there. We were called back to this Legislature to vote people back to work who weren't on strike. If you look at the timing of how that played out—the public is very intelligent and very smart; they know. We were called back here, and then we were told, "We want to rush it"—another piece. We stood here and we said, "No, you are not going to make rash decisions without public debate in this Legislature." And then, the nerve—"They're holding up debate; they're holding up an important decision; the lights are going to be turned off all across Ontario, in every nursing home." That message was just ridiculous.

Now we're here today, again, with this time allocation piece. They're limiting our opportunity to give educated input on a bill they've presented. The Premier talks about how he criss-crosses the province and talks to thousands of people. If that's the case, why, under Bill 66, schedule 10, which is a health and safety issue, none of these experts or specialists—why didn't he speak to them and understand what he's doing?

Time allocation—we need to have it understood that it's used in the right way, and this is not the opportunity to do that. When we're talking about protecting our kids, which we all 100% believe in, we need to have the opportunity to speak to the bill, but not everybody has had that opportunity here in this Legislature. The member from Kitchener South—Hespeler—I don't know if she has debated it before, but she certainly debated it now, and I actually listened to the debate, and I appreciated her debating the bill, but not under time allocation. Let's be clear on that. You can't just ignore it. When the government doesn't follow what their agenda is, and everybody just says, "Oh, well, we're going to allow the member to continue to debate the bill"—I wanted that, because that's what we should be doing here, and not debating time allocation. But we're not afforded that same opportunity.

We talked about the preparation time, the advertising. Hopefully, they see it, and then they have to rush and change their work schedule, maybe their home schedule. The member talked about parents who home-school their

children. If they don't have enough notice to adjust their schedule to be a presenter, if that's what they choose, there's not a lot of time.

Again, I want to implore this government to stop using tools and mechanisms that aren't necessary when it comes to operating this Legislature. They have a majority government. We have an opportunity to literally put the words into action that they keep spewing about working together. You need to do that in action—not just a slogan, not just to look like you're doing it, to fake it.

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If you want to work together, then actually do that. When we have proposals in committee—and I know we will, to try to make this bill better—why don't you implement those amendments that actually strengthen legislation to help protect children, or other pieces, protect the environment, protect labour, whatever the case may be? But the style has been they reject everything. When you say to me, when you say to someone, "Oh, we want to work together. No, we're not going to accept any amendment you have," that means you've just shut down. You've shut down before you even want to work together. You're just saying it to fake it.

People in my riding, I can tell you, caught on. They've caught on to the management style of this government, and nobody really appreciates it. Do you know what they want? They want respect, right? We all want respect. They want professionalism from their MPPs and their Premier, and that's not a high bar to set. But there have been many, many examples, unfortunately—we all want to give everyone the benefit of the doubt, but at some point in time, you keep making the same mistakes over and over again, and people lose respect. That's what's happening here.

Constant legislation—and we're talking about OSAP when students are telling this government there are wrong-headed ideas. There's another rash, quick legislation cutting out ancillary fees that subsidize transit for students, and now they've taken that out of the piece. So why can't they analyze their legislation themselves before they rush to that piece, to those decisions?

Another one that was very concerning is the health bill. Again, we're being told, "It's not really what you see. That's not how it is." Come on, that's how it is.

Time allocation: That's what's happening in this Legislature, is that they're pushing, rushing, moving legislation too quickly and making terrible mistakes. And they have to take them back. That's not right, Speaker.

I hope that we stop rushing things when it comes to children. Even the minister for autism, she needs to slow down and look at what she's proposing and talk to stakeholders and do the right thing when it comes to resources for people who are waiting for autism treatment or actually need those fees.

I'm glad I had the opportunity to talk to time allocation. I hope the people in the galleries today understood what we're discussing here today: a motion that the government put through to limit the debate on Bill 48. What we're supposed to talk to is that time allocation and why it's not right and what it does to democracy and what it does to the access

for people to present at a committee. It shrinks that opportunity. In some cases, it eliminates it for others, because people just can't get it together in a day. I don't know about everybody else, but when you work all day, you've got to let your employer know. You've got to let the association—you've got to pick somebody to come to the committee and present on your behalf. That's not something you can just do overnight and snap your fingers.

I implore this government, going forward with this time allocation obviously is—we're going to vote against it, obviously, because we don't think it should be on this bill particularly. There are times maybe in the future, who knows, where we can think about coming together on time allocation when it's something that makes sense, but in this particular case we're going to vote against the time allocation because it's the right thing to do. The right thing to do is to vote against it.

Maybe these members who actually listened to me speaking will actually do that, and then we can have a full debate. Wouldn't that be a great thing? Because then you're actually working with the opposition that you claim you want to work with. We're willing participants. Then we can actually have debate on the bill, have members talk about the bill, like the member from Kitchener South—Hespeler just did this morning, because I don't think I've heard from a lot of the members on that side. I can tell you that teachers obviously want to have input on this bill as well, and students and parents, and Catholic school boards and public school boards and trustees. It would be interesting to find out if we're going to be able to get some of the people who, on the opposition side, want to speak to the bill, other than maybe it's all tilted that the government's already predisposed the presenters list, already organized, let them know what's going to happen because they would have known this time allocation was coming up. I say that because you've had this bill on the order paper since the fall of 2018. You just didn't come up with this strategy yesterday, the first day when we're back. There was some planning around it.

I'm going to wrap up my comments, I think, and hope that there's been some logic debated here today from the House leader from—where's he from now? Timiskaming?

Ms. Marit Stiles: Timmins.

Ms. Teresa J. Armstrong: Timmins, yes. It used to be Timmins—James Bay.

Ms. Marit Stiles: He likes it this way.

Ms. Teresa J. Armstrong: Yes.

One of our members said this government can't take yes for an answer. We hope that some logic will penetrate on that side of the Legislature and people will do the logical thing and make sure that when we have bills in this Legislature, we work together and allow debate to happen until members have their full say on both sides of the Legislature, and then you collapse debate. Then you give notice to the public so that they have the opportunity to present and then you go to committee and you look at the amendments that are reasonable and you work with the opposition to make the bill stronger. Isn't that what we all want? We're here to make things work better for people,

make legislation actually effective and strong and not just look like it's doing something—you know, faking it.

I implore the government to vote against their own time allocation bill. It probably wouldn't be that detrimental. Asking them to vote against Bill 48, yes, that's a terrible mistake for them. But asking them to vote against time allocation, I could see that maybe happening one day. They get a conscience and they do it.

The other rash decision, I have to tell you—I'm going on a little bit longer than I planned—is the francophone commissioner. One of their own members felt so strongly about that decision; again, rash decisions, right? They had to do some catch-up and backpedalling and have the Attorney General now have a francophone semi, quasi position in there. Why? They didn't consult with francophones. Did they consult with the member who left their caucus?

Interjection: No.

Ms. Teresa J. Armstrong: Yes, exactly. No, they didn't. So what happens is, you create your own scandal, you create your own chaos when you don't engage in your own caucus opinions and listen to them and actually try to find a negotiation piece. If you turned the clock back, you could have talked to the person who left the caucus and maybe that would have been something that could have been negotiated. Who knows? And then, they could have said, "We're not cancelling it, we're just going to amend it."

I'll leave it at that, Speaker—

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): I just want to remind the member, you've been talking a lot about the importance of talking about time allocation, and you have wavered quite a bit. I have given you some leniency, but I have to rein you in and refer back to the initial motion pertaining to time allocation. Fair enough?

Ms. Teresa J. Armstrong: I think that's a very reasonable thing to do. And do you know why? Because you're doing your job. I wish you had done your job a little earlier too. But that's okay.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): I will ask the member to withdraw that statement.

Ms. Teresa J. Armstrong: I withdraw.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): Thank you very much. I will turn it back to the speaker for perhaps a summary.

Ms. Teresa J. Armstrong: I do have to clarify. I should have maybe worded it differently but that was the intent—

Hon. Greg Rickford: Just apologize.

Ms. Teresa J. Armstrong: Oh, and I do. I do. I guess sometimes in this House things can get a little tricky. Words are extremely important and what you say. That's the lesson that you would take from that.

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On the time allocation bill that we're here to speak about, we know that the government wants to push this bill forward and quick. They filed that motion yesterday. It's too bad that, again, decisions are being made in a very rushed way around this very important issue.

With that, I know that the member from Davenport, our critic for education, wants to talk about time allocation and

what it means to a bill when it doesn't have that fulsome debate.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): Further debate?

Mr. Doug Downey: I'd like to thank the speakers from Timmins, London–Fanshawe and from Kitchener South–Hespeler. I want to, in particular, thank the member from London–Fanshawe for giving an entire recap of all the legislation that we've been dealing with and not talking about time allocation, while she chastised the member from Kitchener South–Hespeler for talking about the important things in the bill that require time allocation.

We sometimes describe this place as three or five square miles surrounded by reality. What's been happening out there, I would like the members to know, is that parents have been dropping their kids off at school, and as parents drop their kids off at school, they have an expectation of safety for their children. That happens every day. When I drop my daughter off, it honestly does not cross my mind that there may be an issue going on in the school with a teacher that I'm not aware of, whether it be with a camera pen or some other activity. That's just not the kind of thing that a parent should be worried about. So I find it very odd that the opposition says, "We have no intention of holding up the bill. We support the bill. We voted for it. But we want run it through a bureaucratic—we want to extend the period of time that"—

Interjection.

Mr. Doug Downey: As the member from London–Fanshawe mentioned, this was tabled in the fall. It doesn't just have to be talked about here. There are lots of parents and lots of teachers who have weighed in on this, and now it's in front of us as if it's a shock. All of a sudden it's, "Oh, my goodness, it showed up."

Mr. Speaker, we need to move forward so that we can protect children and so that we can give children the comfort that the member from Kitchener South–Hespeler spoke about in terms of service dogs, that we can get some consistency.

This government does consult. This government consults all over the province, and work gets done while this House doesn't sit. Committees sit. We've had finance committee, we've had the select committee—we've had all sorts of things. We had the members from Hamilton West–Ancaster–Dundas, Kiiwetinoong, and Kingston and the Islands—all from the opposition—and members from our party, and we travelled to Dryden and Timmins and Ottawa and Fonthill—actually, that group didn't go to Fonthill, but we went to Fonthill. We were in Sarnia. We were all over the place, consulting with people. Now, that was pre-budget, but you hear things from people as you travel across the province.

I personally, in the pre-budget, between my roles as the parliamentary assistant for finance and on the committee, heard from over 400 delegations telling me what was important in their world in terms of the pre-budget. But you also had conversations while you were there about things happening in the schools and things that people were concerned about for their kids. We heard from abuse centres

and we heard from social service delivery agents. We heard from all sorts of groups that were very concerned about what's happening in their world. This bill, Bill 48, addresses a number of those pieces.

There is no benefit to holding up something that we all agree on. We all agree that kids need protection. We all agree that it's actually a good bill. The opposition would like a chance, if it goes off to committee and they sit down and say that they're going to travel to set up lengthy witness lists, that they might want to travel—this could take on a life of its own. In the meantime, I'm dropping my child off at school and I want to know that teachers who cross the line are out—they're not reprimanded, they're not coddled, they're not moved to another school.

We saw this with other institutions. We saw this kind of behaviour. It's come to a head and it's not right. We need to protect the children, and this bill does a lot of that.

Now, in terms of the College of Trades, we're strengthening the College of Trades and making sure that they're structured in a more effective way.

But beyond that, I want to talk about another really important piece in here, and it's math. Math is really important. I can tell you that the day that this government signalled that we're going back to more traditional math, my daughter came home with times tables and was told to memorize times tables. It was always interesting to me that the way math was being taught—the new math that got rolled out—it was estimate something and then work backwards and then try to work forwards again. It was very confusing for the children. I can tell you, it was confusing for the teachers. I talked to several teachers who were trying to teach the new math.

It's important that we have traditional math. That's what's happening in the world. When I get on a plane, I expect the engineer to have learned how to do proper math, not guess at things. We want that in the system for our children to be able to compete in the new world. Math is really important. It's not just important for our kids to know math, it's important for the teachers to demonstrate that they're competent in math. Part of this bill will have an exit piece on the way out of teachers' college to make sure that the teachers have had a chance to be exposed to the kinds of things they're expected to be teaching to the children. I don't think anybody can argue with that. Of course you have to know what you're teaching if you're going to teach it, I would think. This is simple stuff. This doesn't need to be drawn out over a long period of time, to say that people who teach math should know how to do the math. So why not time-allocate that? It just makes sense to move this thing forward.

I know people get upset. In the opposition, they get upset that this government is moving fast. I know they get upset. I know things are moving fast, and there's a lot of reading, and there's a lot of stuff to absorb. Then they turn around and they say, "Look at schedule 10 of Bill 66. This government is so out of touch that they plow ahead and don't listen to anybody." But then they say about Bill 66, schedule 10: "That's getting dropped out. Who made that happen? They heard from somebody." We heard from somebody. You've got to listen.

We are not so steadfast that we won't listen to people. We're hearing from people. We're hearing from teachers. We're hearing from students. We're hearing from parents. We're hearing from school boards. We're hearing from all sorts of people. We're meeting with them non-stop. So we are getting this right. And if there is something constructive that you think should be changed, then table it. We're not so closed that we won't hear things. But for the things that we know we have right, like math, that stuff needs to move forward.

And I don't want another day to go by that a child can't bring their service dog into a school, when that makes all the difference in the world. It's unconscionable that this is happening to these children. Their futures are at stake. There's no point in holding it up. This could drag on and on and on.

I also want to touch on public interest committees, Mr. Speaker. These are committees that were set up, and they haven't met since January 2017. They're an interesting tool that the minister can use to strike a public interest committee with a mandate to advise on certain matters. It's another on-going tool. That's the thing about this government: It's an iterative process where we constantly get input from people and we incorporate that to make things better, because we all know life is not static. You don't just do something and then it's done and you've got it right. You don't just let service dogs into the school and you're done and you got it right. You continue to loop back: How is that going? Are there other barriers happening in there? Are there things that need to change to improve? Is there training with service dogs we could be doing a little bit differently, or are there other kinds of support structures we can put in place? That kind of stuff will continue because we are listening. We're listening now; we listened before; we listened when we tabled it in the fall; and we'll continue to listen. We will get it right, and we will improve it as we go forward.

When the opposition comes after us and says, "You're not listening. We need more time to time-allocate"—but then they talk about the health bill and the francophone commissioner and Bill 66 and putting workers back to work on the nuclear facilities. Obviously, we had this debate. We came back from the Christmas break—the first time this House met during the Christmas break since 1869. How about that? Since 1869. This government is working all the time. It's working for the people and it's making sure that the things that need to get done are getting done. That includes protecting our children, protecting our school system and making sure that things are working properly.

The Ontario College of Teachers is going to be improved. We're going to protect children from sexual abuse. I can tell you, there is nothing more egregious, in my mind, than somebody in a power situation—

Interjection.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): The member from Hamilton West-Ancaster will come to order.

Ms. Sandy Shaw: And Dundas.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): And Dundas, as well.

Mr. Doug Downey: If I could make this retroactive, I would support that. This needs to happen now. If there's nothing else in this bill that requires time allocation, if the opposition has nothing else they agree with, they have to agree that this has to stop as soon as possible. Time allocation is the tool that we need to make that happen, to institute this. Any teacher who crosses that line is not reprimanded; they are out. I do not want them in a classroom with a child. I do not want them in a situation where they're supervising young children.

I can tell you that if you volunteer at any Big Brothers Big Sisters or Youth Haven or any other group, you have to go through a records check. I want a level of security so that when my children, my neighbours' children and my constituents' children are in a vulnerable position, they are protected, and this bill will help do that. It has to be done, and it has to be done quickly.

Now, I don't think I heard anybody arguing about that. What I heard a lot about was people arguing about whether we were talking about time allocation or not. The member from Kitchener South—Hespeler did a fantastic job of talking about the impact on individual lives. Those young children who wrote, in their own words, about the importance of a service animal for them—it's heart-wrenching. I can't imagine a child getting dropped off at school, going to the front door and being told, "Your service dog cannot enter. You're on your own." You're literally on your own.

Then, to be in a school that—if they won't allow the service dog in, what do they understand about that child's needs? The whole next step, when you're on your own—I think that's a signal that they're going to a place that is not fully supportive. I look forward to the day—and it's going to be sooner than later, if the motion passes—that these children don't even have to think about that, because sometimes just the thought of whether your service dog can enter creates an anxiety, just a thought that you might be stopped.

As it relates between different school boards, we need some consistency on that. We need some support for the families. We need it to be consistent and fair. It needs to be transparent so people know, so we avoid that kind of anxiety, so that they can get the supports that they need as they need them.

Quite frankly, getting service animals into the schools is something the member has fought for for a long time, before even coming to this House. I'm just thrilled to stand beside her and support that. It is so important that we provide the supports for the children when we can. I'm confident that this will support the students, the families and the school boards across the province. I don't think that we'll get a lot of pushback on that. I'm actually a little mystified on the schools that won't allow them to enter. I don't understand the logic to that, but so be it. That's soon going to be history, if everything goes as I hope, and we'll move forward.

Now, Mr. Speaker, I can go on and on, but I'm just doing a bit of a time check. I want to talk, just in the last couple of minutes, about the foundations of math and what that means. I distinctly remember, as a child, a contest in grade 3 to see who could memorize their times tables up

to 12 first, and the teacher made it fun. You did the flash card thing and it became a real thing. We did it at recess. We did math at recess.

Now, I'm not an accountant—it didn't work out that well for me—but some of my friends went on to be in very math-heavy programs. Some of them are in computers, and I'm convinced it stemmed from that foundational piece of having good math skills that they became engineers and students. Quite frankly, some of my best friends are doing sheet metal work, but man, they can measure and cut and do the math faster than I can with a calculator. And carpenters: If you've ever worked beside a skilled carpenter, a master carpenter, their math skills are phenomenal, and that came from schools when they were young.

So right across the trades and right across the professions, everybody needs good math skills. If we don't do that, we're doing a disservice to our children—

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): Excuse me. I apologize to the member from Barrie—Springwater—Oro-Medonte. You will have an opportunity to continue debate.

Debate deemed adjourned.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): It is 10:15 and this House stands recessed until 10:30.

The House recessed from 1015 to 1030.

INTRODUCTION OF VISITORS

M^{me} France Gélinas: I would like to welcome to Queen's Park the Canadian Cancer Survivor Network, as well as Lung Cancer Canada. I would like to specifically welcome Anne Marie Cerato, Jill Hamer-Wilson, Andrea Redway, MaryAnn Bradley, Larry Frydman, Raymond Laflamme, Roz Brodsky, David Soberman, Palmerino "Reno" Leone, as well as Julianna Leone. Welcome to Queen's Park. They are here to talk about pharmacare and take-home cancer drugs and early intervention.

Mr. Randy Pettapiece: I'd like to welcome all 25 reps from the Canadian Propane Association to Queen's Park. I look forward to meeting with this association later today. In addition, I encourage all members to attend their lunch reception in room 228. It's right after question period, from 11:45 until 2:00.

Welcome to Queen's Park, Brent Dyke, Glenn Buck, George Olah, Daryl Patjas, Doug Fines, Jason Cooper, Dan Kelly, James Callow, Jacco Bos, Allan Murphy, Marcelline Riddell, Nathalie St-Pierre, Jack Patriarche, Sue Hardy, Sam Mazzotta, Ryan Down, Greg McCamus, Dominic Palladino, Brad Hartman, Hugh Sutherland, Terry Elligsen, Brent Taylor, Donaven Welk, Jeff Reddon and Michel Gaulin.

Mr. Ian Arthur: It's my absolute pleasure to welcome Kelly McGarry here from Kingston. She caught a very early train this morning. She's here to represent her family, Scott St. John and her son Braedon St. John, in the Legislature.

M^{me} Nathalie Des Rosiers: It's with great pleasure that I want to welcome Hudson Manning. He's the new OLIP intern who's working with my office, and I'm really happy that he's here.

M^{me} Gila Martow: Je veux donner un très chaleureux accueil à deux hommes : Jean Lemay et Benoit Mercier de l'Association franco-ontarienne des conseils scolaires catholiques.

Also, Ben Gelman: He's one of the fantastic volunteers from the riding of Thornhill. It's great to see you again, Ben.

Mr. Percy Hatfield: I have four special guests from my riding to welcome today because of page Pieter Waters. Here today is his mother, Anneke Smit, who is working with the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees in Europe on a feasibility study for educational scholarships for refugees; his father, Chris Waters, the dean of the law school at the University of Windsor; and Pieter's sisters Sofie and Alies Waters. Welcome to Queen's Park.

Hon. John Yakabuski: I'd like to specifically welcome to the House today, from my riding of Renfrew–Nipissing–Pembroke, with the Canadian Propane Association, Donaven Welk. Donaven's son, Parker, is great friends with our grandson Wallace. Welcome to Queen's Park, Donaven.

Mr. Jamie West: I'd like to welcome members of OPSEU and Unifor to Queen's Park today. They're here to speak with MPPs about the investments and legislative changes we need in order to build strong public services and create good jobs.

I want to thank the members for taking the time to visit and meet with us today.

Ms. Andrea Khanjin: I'd like to welcome our friends from the Canadian Cancer Survivor Network who are here to fight to survive and raise awareness about that campaign. They include Jodi Steele, Jaelyn Jones, Palmerino Leone, Julianna Leone, MaryAnn Bradley, Sarah Cruickshank, Andrea Redway, Jaymee Maaghop, Anthony Wight, Kathryn Hamilton and Jill Hamer-Wilson. Thank you for being here today.

Ms. Jill Andrew: It's my honour to welcome David Procenko, a resident of Toronto–St. Paul's. Thank you so much for being here today fighting on behalf of Kaley, your daughter with autism.

Mr. Mike Schreiner: It's an honour to welcome about 50 of my constituents here today to support the introduction of my private member's bill. I won't mention all of them, but I will mention a welcome to Arlene Slocombe, the executive director of Wellington Water Watchers, as well as Linda Sword from the Concerned Residents Coalition, and Rand Peter, a young five-year-old advocate with the CRC.

I also want to mention that my wife, Sandy, and my daughters, Isabelle and Beata, are making their way into the gallery as well. Welcome to Queen's Park today.

Hon. Laurie Scott: I'd like to introduce page Collin Johnson today, and for support we have his mother, Kelly Johnson, in the lobby. Welcome to Queen's Park.

M^{me} Marit Stiles: Il me fait plaisir de présenter Jean Lemay, président, et Benoit Mercier, directeur général, de l'Association franco-ontarienne des conseils scolaires catholiques. Bienvenue à Queen's Park.

Mr. Stephen Lecce: I want to introduce two friends of the MPP for Northumberland–Peterborough South who is currently attending a government announcement today. He wanted me to welcome and introduce two individuals

who are very dear to him. The first is Bonnie Harrison, his office manager, a local volunteer and the proud mother of my friend Kaitlyn. The second is Mr. Frank Moses, who spent 30 years in the service as an infantry member of the Canadian forces serving from Cyprus to Somalia in six tours of duty with the Canadian Special Ops Force. On behalf of a grateful nation, we say thank you.

Miss Monique Taylor: I'd like to welcome some families who joined me for a press conference this morning and who are in the members' gallery: Nancy Silva-Khan, Tatiana Shifrin, Stephanie Ridley and Sarah Klodnicki, who is also from autism advocacy Ontario and the Ontario Autism Coalition.

I'd like to welcome Bruce McIntosh, who is a former PC staffer and is now a professional protestor.

I'd also like to welcome the families, advocates and parents from the autism community who have joined us here today to ensure that the government hears their voices in the Legislature.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): I have to remind the House that the introduction of guests is supposed to be straightforward and brief. There should be no political statement made during the course of the introductions.

Mr. Gilles Bisson: Point of order.

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

Mr. Gilles Bisson: Mr. Speaker, I've just learned that there's a number of parents who are here in order to participate by looking at question period from the public galleries, but they've been blocked and are now being sent back downstairs. I know that we have some room. I would ask you, Mr. Speaker, to allow those parents to be able to get into the galleries.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): It's not a valid point of order.

Hon. Monte McNaughton: I'm honoured to welcome from your riding of Wellington–Halton Hills a former constituent of mine, Peter Rowe, and Lloyd MacIntyre. Welcome to Queen's Park.

Ms. Teresa J. Armstrong: I'm excited to announce guests here today from London from the Canadian Cancer Survivor Network: Julianna Leone and her father, Palmerino Leone. Welcome to the Legislature today.

1040

Mr. Sam Oosterhoff: I have the great privilege of welcoming to the Legislature, as a page from my riding of Niagara West, Joséphine Noue, who is with us today and will be here for the next few weeks. Congratulations, and welcome to the Legislature.

Mr. Taras Natyshak: I'd like to introduce and welcome some friends from my neck of the woods: Julie Kotsis, Tullio Diponti, Doug Boughner, Drew Finucane and Janel Perron.

Aussi, j'aimerais accueillir M. Adam Jasniewicz, qui est un étudiant à l'école secondaire Lajeunesse et qui est ici aujourd'hui avec le Parlement jeunesse francophone. Bienvenue à Queen's Park.

Mrs. Nina Tangri: Mr. Speaker, I'm extremely excited to announce that yesterday my son and daughter-in-law gave birth to a baby girl, my first grandchild, Tara.

Mr. Terence Kernaghan: It's my pleasure to introduce Kelley McKeating and Catherine Nasmith from the Architectural Conservancy of Ontario, as well as Laurie Nancekivell and Geoffrey Cain from OPSEU, and Melissa Holden and Mike Van Boekel from Unifor. Welcome to Queen's Park.

Hon. Michael A. Tibollo: I, too, would like to welcome the Architectural Conservancy of Ontario, who are here today and are celebrating their heritage day at the Legislature. Welcome. It's great to have you all here at Queen's Park.

Mr. Wayne Gates: I want to welcome all the brothers and sisters from Unifor and OPSEU, but in particular, Tim McKinnon, who's the chairperson of my local, Local 199; David De Marco from Unifor Local 199; Jonathan Scott from OPSEU, and Amanda Picott. I'm looking forward to meeting you this afternoon. Welcome to Queen's Park.

Mrs. Belinda Karahalios: It's my pleasure to introduce Linda Bui, my OLIP intern. Welcome, Linda.

Mr. Jeff Burch: I'd like to welcome Rebecca Haight, Venette Gerden and Gwen Flynn Seymour here from the great city of Thorold.

Rebecca and Venette are both parents of children with autism, and Gwen is Rebecca's mother. Welcome to Queen's Park.

Mr. Michael Parsa: I would like to welcome one of my amazing constituency staff, Kristine Miller, to the House for the first time. Thanks for coming.

Mr. Paul Miller: I'd just like to welcome everyone one else who hasn't been mentioned.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): We're getting to that point.

Introduction of guests.

Mrs. Lisa Gretzky: It's my pleasure to welcome some brothers and sisters from Windsor. We have Rod McGill from Unifor Local 444; James Stewart from Unifor Local 444; John D'Agnolo from Unifor Windsor; Ian Whitcombe from OPSEU, and David Coates from OPSEU. Welcome to Queen's Park.

M^{me} France Gélinas: J'aimerais souhaiter la bienvenue à Logan Ockenden, qui est un élève de l'École secondaire catholique l'Horizon et qui est ici pour le Parlement jeunesse francophone. Bienvenue.

Ms. Jessica Bell: I'd like to introduce two special guests today: Jen Fitzgerald and Jennifer Del Vecchio, who are residents of the riding of University-Rosedale. Thank you for coming to Queen's Park.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): I, too, wish to welcome to Queen's Park today students from Centre Wellington District High School in Fergus. Welcome to Queen's Park.

LEGISLATIVE PAGES

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): I would now ask that the pages assemble for their introductions.

It is my honour now as Speaker to introduce and welcome the pages serving in this first session of the 42nd Parliament: from Don Valley East, Adam Karim; from Mississauga-Malton, Ahmad Elbayoumi; from Perth-Wellington, Alyssa Eaton; from Toronto-St. Paul's, Anika Sood; from Niagara Centre, Cameron Harris; from Kingston and the Islands, Collin Johnson; from Dufferin-Caledon, Daniel Chirichella; from Markham-Thornhill, Hidayah Muhammad; from Scarborough North, Jacky Sea Chung Chan; from Niagara West, Joséphine Noue; from Waterloo, Julian Wang; from Brampton West, Keya Thakkar; from Scarborough Southwest, Martin Makaveev; from Oakville, Michelle Marie Crawford; from Windsor-Tecumseh, Pieter Waters; from Toronto-Danforth, Pypar Rajaratnam; from Nepean, Raahem Syed; from Whitby, Shumyle Shahid; from the great riding of Wellington-Halton Hills, Siya Aggarwal; from Parry Sound-Muskoka, Sophie Miller; from Haliburton-Kawartha Lakes-Brock, Thomas Keys-Brasier; from the riding of Aurora-Oak Ridges-Richmond Hill, Vanessa Curran.

Welcome to Queen's Park.

Applause.

ORAL QUESTIONS

AUTISM

Ms. Andrea Horwath: My question is to the Premier. During last spring's campaign, I stood next to the Premier in the leaders' debate when he promised the parent of a child with autism, "We will be there to support you 1,000%.... I promise you, you won't have to be protesting on the front of Queen's Park like you" have with the Liberal Premier.

I want the Conservative Premier to look at families in the gallery today who have come from across Ontario to protest his policies. Does he feel he has supported them 1,000%?

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Please take your seats. Premier?

Hon. Doug Ford: Through you, Mr. Speaker: I remember that. I remember saying it and I truly believe this. This is the toughest file I've ever dealt with—ever. It has emotions involved, families involved, children involved, and it's heartbreaking. I know. I'm sure many people in this Legislature have taken calls. I've taken hundreds of calls—hundreds of calls—and listened to their stories.

We—our government—feel we're doing the right things. When we went into office, Mr. Speaker, the system was bankrupt. The system was bankrupt. They had funded it to \$256 million. We had to run to the treasury for emergency funds of \$100 million. The system was broken—a broken system that the opposition voted for. They actually voted for it.

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Order.

Hon. Doug Ford: Can I continue?

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Thank you, Premier. We normally allow a minute for questions and a minute for responses. At 50 seconds I normally stand to remind members that their time is almost up.

Supplementary.

Ms. Andrea Horwath: The reality is, it is this Premier who is breaking people's hearts across our province, Speaker. It is his policies that are breaking people's hearts. The fact is, parents don't feel supported; they feel betrayed. For thousands of parents across Ontario, therapy offers them a chance to truly connect with and communicate with their own children, sometimes for the very first time. They will do anything to access supports, but the Premier's scheme asks them to do the impossible.

1050

Under these changes, parents estimate their families will be covering 80% to 95% of treatment costs out of pocket. That's \$80,000 to \$90,000 a year on a family budget.

Does the Premier believe that paying for 5% of the costs qualifies as 1,000% support?

Interjections.

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

Premier?

Hon. Doug Ford: Minister of Social Services.

Hon. Lisa MacLeod: I appreciate the passion and the compassion of the member opposite, the Leader of the Opposition. This is a very emotional issue for many of us. Some of us in this Legislature have devoted our career to fighting for these families, including myself, the Minister of Health, and my parliamentary assistant, Amy Fee.

We have travelled across the province. We have heard from people. But as the Premier has just stated, the system we inherited six and a half months ago was broken. It was bankrupt. We had to go back to Treasury Board for an additional \$100 million so that we could continue to serve just 25% of the population with autism in the province of Ontario. That was heartbreaking. It was gut-wrenching. We had to make a decision so that we could make sure it was fair, equitable and sustainable. That's why we are moving to a model that directly funds parents and doubles the investment in our diagnostic hubs. That's the right thing to do.

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

Ms. Andrea Horwath: I have to say, for a politician who has been fighting most of her career on behalf of these families, once she's in a position of power, she is supposed to fix it, not make it worse.

For parents who are already struggling to make ends meet, the Premier's plan is downright cruel. Under the Ford government changes, families will be cut off from full support if they earn as little as \$55,000 a year of income. In other words, two parents both earning minimum wage are too rich to qualify for full support. How did the Premier decide that two parents earning the minimum wage are too wealthy to deserve the already inadequate support that his scheme provides?

Hon. Lisa MacLeod: I get that the Leader of the Opposition is angry. I would ask her to consider the truth, and

the circumstances that we inherited with a \$256-million program that was excluding three out of four children in this province. That means some children were getting some service, but most of the children were getting no service.

Speaker, she couldn't look at herself in the mirror if she had to inherit a program like that, just like we in this government couldn't after we had to inject \$100 million into this system so we could ensure that places like Erinoak and CHEO could make it through the holidays to support the 25% of the children who were fortunate enough to be in this program. That is why I am committed to clearing the wait-list so that 23,000 children who were denied service in the province of Ontario will get the service they deserve.

AUTISM

Ms. Andrea Horwath: My next question is for the Premier. Children and their families came here today from across Ontario because they were promised help by this Premier, and instead they are being sold something much, much worse. Can the Premier explain to them how a family earning \$55,000 a year is wealthy enough under his scheme to cover more than \$80,000 a year in treatment costs?

Hon. Doug Ford: Minister of Children, Community and Social Services.

Hon. Lisa MacLeod: Thanks again to the member opposite for her question, and thanks to the parents in the gallery who are here today so that we can explain our program.

I think that there is some misinformation, as I've heard over the last couple of days from the opposition. Right now they're suggesting that people will not be eligible for support if they're making \$55,000. Let me be perfectly clear: Those between the ages of zero to five will be able to be part of a childhood budget right up until they're 18, but the maximum amount of support will be in the early years because we know evidence-based early intervention is key to success. That's why we want to clear the wait-list.

Having said that, we are making sure that the most vulnerable people in this program, that is low- and medium-income earners, should have the most support. But to the member opposite's point, in terms of the \$55,000, they will be basically getting 98.5% of that budget of \$140,000 from age zero to 18 years old.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Supplementary?

Ms. Andrea Horwath: Speaker, I was very clear in my question. I talked about full support, and she actually just agreed that they will not be getting full support because of their income.

These are real people who are here today. They want what any parent wants: a fair chance for their kids. I want the Premier to tell parents—the parents of Sebastian from Waterloo, for example, or Braedon, whose parents came here all the way from Kingston, or any of the parents here today—that he still stands by changes that will leave them having to spend thousands and thousands of dollars that they don't have just so they can do basic things, like communicate with their own children.

If he doesn't stand by this scheme, what will he do to fix it?

Hon. Lisa MacLeod: I guess it comes down to how you view this plan. The member opposite thinks it's okay to only support 25% of the children in the program. This government believes that we should clear the waiting list of 23,000 children, who would be on the wait-list for an indefinite amount of time.

This is a data-driven project that we have invested additional money in, in order to support more families with better supports and more choice. We will directly fund parents so that they can make the decisions that are in the best interests of their children.

I'm proud to defend this plan and I am proud that this government will finally, for the first time in Ontario's history, support 100% of the children in this province who have autism.

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

Ms. Andrea Horwath: What I don't think is okay is for this government to kick families and children with autism to the curb and tell them they're going to have to make it on their own, when we all know how expensive the therapies are for children with autism.

The families here are not demanding the impossible. They're asking the Premier to simply keep his word. Instead of providing promised support, the Ford government is yanking it away. Instead of being a voice for these families in government, the minister responsible threatens families when they don't say nice things about her plan and herself.

Enough is enough, Speaker. Will the Premier do the right thing today, tell his minister that she has to resign, then tear up this failed scheme and replace it with a new plan, backed with actual investment that provides parents with the support for their children that they were promised during the campaign?

Hon. Lisa MacLeod: I'm proud of this plan, because for the first time in Ontario history, we will clear the wait-list by doubling the investment in diagnostic hubs and by directly funding parents so that they can make the best choices for their children, whether that is behavioural therapy, whether that's respite care, whether that's technological aids or whether that is caregiver training. We are committed to doing this.

For the member opposite to suggest that this plan will change is nothing short of providing false hope to those who think it will change. I can tell you, Speaker, that the Premier and this government have full confidence in this plan. I will make sure this plan is implemented and I will be the minister responsible for the autism program who implements this program.

AUTISM

Miss Monique Taylor: My question is for the Minister of Children, Community and Social Services.

I just want to start by saying you have it all wrong. There's nothing evidence-based about your plan—nothing. Nancy—

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): I'm going to interrupt the House again to remind all members to make their comments through the Chair.

The member for Hamilton Mountain should put her question.

Miss Monique Taylor: Thanks, Speaker.

Nancy has twin seven-year-old boys with severe autism. Right now, they are in 30 hours a week of intensive therapy. They are learning how to feed themselves and have just started to communicate with their mom. Their therapy costs \$60,000 a year each. Under the new OAP, which is the government's proud new program, they will receive less than \$5,000 a year each.

Nancy is afraid her children will never learn to live independently, that they will never have the quality of life that they deserve. The new program is devastating for Nancy and her family.

1100

Will the minister help parents like Nancy stop the changes to the OAP and, instead, commit to investing in needs- and evidence-based services?

Hon. Lisa MacLeod: Thanks to the member opposite for bringing Nancy's story to the Ontario Legislative Assembly. I think the member opposite has to understand the complexity of this situation, the fact that we have decided to invest in early intervention, where we know that that is evidence-based, where we are going to allow for a flexible family budget for families like Nancy's to get the services that they need.

But where I think the member opposite forgets part of the equation is that three out of four children in the province of Ontario have been denied support by their Ontario government because of the way the program was set up. Twenty-three thousand children were languishing on a wait-list for an indefinite amount of time, meaning that we could have a five-year-old child on the wait-list who would age out of the program by the time they were 18 without getting a call for service. That is wrong. It's unconscionable and it's immoral. That's why we have moved to a direct-funding model and we're doubling the investment in diagnostic hubs.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Supplementary.

Miss Monique Taylor: Back to the minister: Speaker, this minister doesn't seem to understand that these are children that we're talking about. They are not numbers on a list. Giving each child a minimal amount is wasting the money. You are actually wasting more money than the Liberal government's failed plan. Your plan is worse.

Tatiana is a mom of three kids. Two of them are on the spectrum. One of her boys is receiving therapy now and the other one is on the wait-list. Her one son is getting \$60,000 a year in services. The new program would give her less than \$5,000 a year. Tatiana can't afford to pay for this on her own, and her boys will regress. She's afraid that they will never be ready to go to school. For her other son on the wait-list, she is willing to wait because she knows that proper services are worth it in the end for her children.

Will the minister listen to the families who have come here today, admit that her plan needs more work and go back to the drawing board—

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

Hon. Lisa MacLeod: Thanks for bringing Tatiana's story to this assembly. Those were the exact types of stories that were so heartbreaking and gut-wrenching when we inherited this program and found out that Tatiana's son would be on that wait-list an indefinite amount of time, meaning that he would likely never get off it because of the way this system was broken. That's why we went to the Treasury Board—

Interjections.

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

Hon. Lisa MacLeod: —to invest an extra \$100 million to keep the program—for only 25% of the children—afloat. Twenty-three thousand children may not be a lot to the members opposite, but my job is to protect every single child that has autism in this province and that's what I'm doing. We're making sure that Tatiana is going to get direct-funding support so she can make the best decisions for her child who's already receiving support as well, sadly, as the child that was not going to get off the wait-list. But I can commit today that within the next 18 months he will be off this wait-list.

POLICE SERVICES

Mrs. Nina Tangri: My question is for the Minister of Community Safety and Correctional Services. Mr. Speaker, Ontario's government for the people was elected with a mandate to improve public safety across this province and to provide the brave and dedicated men and women of our police services with the tools and resources they need to perform their duties safely and effectively.

Before the last election, the Liberal government passed the most anti-police legislation in Canadian history, a deeply flawed piece of legislation that ignored the everyday realities of the difficult jobs our dedicated and brave police officers are asked to do. To restore respect to these heroes in Ontario communities, our government paused the implementation of Bill 175.

Mr. Speaker, could the minister please update the members of this Legislature on how the Comprehensive Ontario Police Services Act will make Ontario safer, and treat police with fairness and respect?

Hon. Sylvia Jones: Thank you to the member from Mississauga–Streetsville for her important question, and congratulations on becoming a grandma.

Ontario's government for the people was elected with a mandate to fix the Liberals' broken policing legislation and to fulfill our fundamental responsibility of keeping Ontario communities safe. I'm proud to say that yesterday, Ontario's government for the people introduced the Comprehensive Ontario Police Services Act. This legislation is central to our commitment to making Ontario safer, standing up for victims and holding criminals accountable for their actions. Police deserve our gratitude and respect, not our suspicion and scorn. That's why our government is providing police with the tools, resources and support they need to do their jobs, often quietly and heroically.

The previous Liberal government's legislation did not even pay lip service to the principle of fairness or due process for police officers. Not only was this unfair, it was disrespectful to the police officers. We are fixing that with this new legislation.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Supplementary?

Mrs. Nina Tangri: I thank the minister for her response. I am proud to stand here today knowing that our government is delivering on its promise to restore fairness and respect for our brave and dedicated police officers right here in Peel region, where I was inspired by their dedication by joining them on a ride-along just a few weeks ago. The men and women of our police services now know that our government is listening to them and will continue to work to ensure public safety across this great province.

Mr. Speaker, can the minister explain to the House how this proposed legislation will keep everyone in Ontario safe by improving training and making governance work better?

Hon. Sylvia Jones: Thank you again to the member. There is no greater responsibility for a government than public safety. This government has been focused on this top priority since day one. To act on our mandate from the people of Ontario and keep the promise we made to improve safety across this great province, we have proposed legislation to improve governance, training and transparency. As an early response to Justice Tulloch's report on street checks, we will mandate human rights, systemic racism, diversity and Indigenous culture and rights training for new police officers and special constables. We will make successful completion of training mandatory for members of police services boards. Our proposed legislation will also maintain First Nation policing provisions to provide First Nations with the ability to opt in to Ontario's policing legislation.

Community safety goes beyond policing itself and so does our proposed legislation. We are also proposing amendments to the Mandatory Blood Testing Act, and I look forward to debating this legislation in the days to come.

AUTISM

Mr. Joel Harden: My question is to the Minister of Children, Community and Social Services. Last Saturday, our office hosted an emergency round table about the government's changes to autism services. At the round table, I met Laura, who I'm pleased to say is joining us here at Queen's Park today. Laura's son Noah is seven years old, living with autism. After years on the wait-list, Noah finally started receiving ABA therapy and he's making huge strides, including sleeping in his own bed and being able to sit at the table with a non-preferred food item.

Why is the minister ending coverage of therapy for this beautiful seven-year-old? Why is that not helping enough?

Hon. Lisa MacLeod: I appreciate the question from the member opposite. I did miss him on Saturday when we were supposed to be playing hockey in his riding. We did win that game.

Ms. Andrea Horwath: Really? Really?

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Order.

Hon. Lisa MacLeod: He's supposed to be on my team. Let's bring a moment of levity here, because this is an emotional issue.

While we understand that 25% of the children were receiving support, we understand also that 75% of the children weren't. I have an obligation as the minister responsible for this program to ensure that we allow every child in Ontario the opportunity to get some level of support.

It's unfair, it's unequal and it's unsustainable to continue with the previous Liberal government's plan. We're going to continue to support and open this process by allowing for the doubling of diagnostic hubs, as we have at Holland Bloorview and at Erinoak and at CHEO. We're going to make sure that once those children are cleared off that diagnosis hub, we are going to ensure—

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

1110

Mr. Joel Harden: Unfair? Back to the minister: Let's talk about unfair. I think it's unfair to be giving out a tax cut in this province to the richest Ontarians that will cost \$275 million while families with autism aren't getting the support they deserve. That's unfair.

You want to talk about unfair? I think it's unfair that this government is cutting corporate income taxes by a billion dollars when families with autism can't get the support they deserve. That's unfair.

It's time for Laura and it's time for all the families who are here to have a government that will be on their side, and that requires rethinking this plan. That is not giving people false hope, Speaker. That is asking our friends in government to collegially rethink this program so we don't ruin our public school system, so we support the families that need our support. Will the minister commit to changing her mind, to listening to parents and to working with us?

Interjections.

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

Minister.

Hon. Lisa MacLeod: I appreciate the member opposite's passion for this. It's an important issue for the 25% of parents who were receiving support from this program. But I have to look at all children on this program. That's why we have to extend support to the other 23,000. That's why we have increased our budget for this program from \$256 million to \$321 million. That is why we went in for an emergency \$100 million from Treasury Board to ensure that we could keep this program alive. But, Speaker, I have to say, we must ensure that we have appropriate levels of support for all children, not just one in four. That's wrong. It's unconscionable. It is unsustainable the way the previous government had run it.

I'm going to stand here and I will let the member opposite know: This plan is the plan that will be implemented. To suggest otherwise to parents is to provide false hope to vulnerable families, and I won't have it.

AUTOMOTIVE INDUSTRY

Mr. Prabmeet Singh Sarkaria: My question is for the Minister of Economic Development, Job Creation and Trade. Every day, 100,000 men and women across this province go to work in the auto sector, including thousands from my riding of Brampton South. Recently the minister and the Premier were at the auto show, where they unveiled our government's auto plan entitled Driving Prosperity, a plan to keep these jobs in Ontario.

Ontario was North America's top auto-producing region in 2017, building almost 2.2 million vehicles, with thousands of those vehicles right in Brampton. I know that our government for the people is committed to ensuring the future of a thriving auto sector in Ontario. Can the minister inform the House about the steps our government is taking as part of Driving Prosperity to ensure the future of our auto sector?

Hon. Todd Smith: I thank the member for the great question this morning. Last week, I did have the pleasure of introducing our auto plan for Ontario, Driving Prosperity, which ensures that we continue to build over two million vehicles in Ontario and maybe even more, so that we can employ hundreds of thousands of people in the supply chain.

One of the key pillars of our Driving Prosperity plan is innovation. I just want to elaborate on how the lines have blurred a bit in the auto industry between an auto manufacturer and a tech company. We have more than 200 businesses that are currently operating in the tech sector in the automobile industry. Companies like Google and Ford and GM and BlackBerry QNX and Apple are all working in this space to ensure that we're enhancing the autonomous vehicle, the vehicle of the future. That's why we've committed to invest in the AVIN program. That's why we're creating a new wintertech development stream. We certainly have advantages in Canada, in Ontario, to develop that next phase of the autonomous vehicle, Mr. Speaker. That's why we're driving prosperity with our auto plan.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Supplementary.

Mr. Prabmeet Singh Sarkaria: Back to the minister: Speaker, I know the minister is committed to a strong future for the auto sector in Ontario, and the families in Brampton and across this province are counting on his leadership. I know that many of the principles that the minister has laid out as part of our government's open-for-business strategy are also part of our Driving Prosperity plan for the auto sector.

Right now the government has Bill 66 before the House to try to reduce the burden of red tape on Ontario businesses. Can the minister tell the House how our approach to red tape and regulatory reform is going to work to help our plan for Ontario's auto sector?

Hon. Todd Smith: Thanks again to the great member for the great question. We have made a commitment to reduce red tape not just in the auto sector but in manufacturing, agriculture, agri-food and the mining, northern development and forestry sectors by 25% by 2020. That's so that we can drive prosperity, not just in the auto sector

but in every sector of the province's economy. That's why we brought forward the Restoring Ontario's Competitiveness Act. Prior to that, we brought in the Making Ontario Open for Business Act, which undid a lot of the job-killing legislation that was brought in by the previous Liberal government under Bill 148, a bill that actually set off alarm bells at great companies like Magna, who are working in the auto sector and warned that a bill like that would decimate our sector. That's why we immediately got to work and unwound Bill 148 so that we could continue to create good jobs.

The sector agrees, Mr. Speaker. I can tell you that the Driving Prosperity plan we announced last week has been celebrated by the auto sector. Finally, they have a government that's listening—not boycotting and paying money in advertising.

AUTISM

Ms. Jill Andrew: Good morning, Mr. Speaker. My question is to the Minister of Children, Community and Social Services.

David Procenko, here today, is the father of seven-year-old Kaley, who was diagnosed with autism just before her third birthday. Kaley requires 20 hours of intensive ABA/IBI therapy a week to maintain the progress she has made. This costs \$66,000 a year. When the Liberal government announced their plan to cut funding for children with autism after five years of age, Kaley was cut off, just three months into treatment. She regressed. Now, under this government, Kaley has been let down again. Her father told me the Conservative government's changes are disastrous, and he cannot possibly afford the treatment that Kaley needs. David said he might have to quit his job, divorce his wife and possibly leave this great province of Ontario in order to save Kaley's life.

What does the Minister of Children, Community and Social Services have to say to dedicated parents like David—you might want to look at him—whose lives will be ruined by the government's changes to the Ontario Autism Program?

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Once again, before I ask the minister to respond, I would remind the members to make their comments through the Chair.

Response to the question: Minister of Children, Community and Social Services.

Hon. Lisa MacLeod: Thanks to the member opposite for bringing her constituent's concerns to the floor of this Assembly. David and Kaley, it's good of you to be here today.

That said, we are 100% committed to ensuring that we provide more flexible support to David and Kaley. We also have to balance that with the fact that we have 23,000 children on a waiting list that is indefinite. We need to ensure that there is support for all children, which is why we have doubled our investment into diagnostic hubs so we can get quicker diagnoses for children, so we can ensure that those between the ages of zero and five are getting more support when we know, through evidence, that

it helps children. That is early intervention and that is key. We are committed to ensuring that we clear that 23,000-child wait-list so that we can actually directly invest in and empower parents so that they can make the choices for their own family, whether that's a technological aid, behavioural therapy, respite care or caregiver training.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Supplementary? The member for University–Rosedale.

Ms. Jessica Bell: My question is to the Minister of Children, Community and Social Services. Since the government's cuts to autism funding, I have received hundreds of emails and calls from distraught parents, parents like Jen Fitzgerald, whose son waited nearly two years to access a program to help him better communicate and express his emotions. Her son started the program just last month, but now, because of this government's cuts, Jen has no idea what support her son will receive. She told me she is “staring into an abyss” when it comes to her son's care and his future.

Jen wants to be able to support him as best she can so that her son can be an independent and contributing member of society, but she needs help. Minister, why are you hurting, instead of helping, Jen's family and families like hers?

1120

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Once again, I will ask the members to make their comments and direct their comments through the Chair.

Minister, to reply.

Hon. Lisa MacLeod: I appreciate the member opposite talking about Jen and letting us know a little bit more about her story. For the past 13 years, I have travelled across this province and met with families whose children have autism. In fact, I worked with my former NDP opponent Laurel Gibbons to create the South Nepean Autism Centre, which we funded through our community. We fundraised so that we could provide support and respite support for those families. It's a matter that I have taken to heart with the Minister of Health. In fact, in the 2007 election, she and I had crafted the policy that our then-leader Mayor Tory had presented.

This is very near and dear to my heart, and it's important for me to continue to speak to the families, but I do have an obligation to all children in the program. I would like the member opposite to understand that there is no cut here. It was a \$256-million budget, and I've expanded that to \$321 million. But I'm also going to clear the wait-list of the 23,000 children who received no support under the previous government.

AUTISM

Ms. Mitzi Hunter: My question is to the minister of children and youth services. Minister, yesterday we learned that families earning minimum wage will receive a clawback under your government's autism program. Can you tell this House why you are choosing to keep families in poverty so that they can look after their children with dignity?

Families are pouring into our constituency offices. They are telling us about the hardship that this program is creating. They are depressed. They are without hope. This program is a disgrace. I see the tears of the people who are in this chamber. We hear them. We see you. Will this minister tell families why you expect that families earning minimum wage are able to provide the services that they need for their children? How are they going to do that?

Hon. Lisa MacLeod: I think the member opposite is misinformed. Those making minimum wage will be supported in this government in a variety of different ways, including our LIFT Credit. They will also be receiving close to 99% of the entitlement throughout this program, which is up to \$140,000 per child throughout their lifetime.

What's a disgrace is that for 15 years, that member and her party had an opportunity to invest in autism services. Instead they took—

Interjections.

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

Hon. Lisa MacLeod: They cut funding, and they left me a system that wasn't even broken; it was bankrupt. So I ask the member opposite if she can stand in her place and look at herself in the mirror for denying 23,000 children in this province support.

Interjections.

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

Miss Monique Taylor: You made their plan worse. Well done.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): The member for Hamilton Mountain, come to order.

Start the clock. Supplementary.

Ms. Mitzie Hunter: Mr. Speaker, again to the minister: She told families impacted by autism on the campaign trail that she would look out for them. Instead, she is stabbing them in the back. A fundamental principle of a child diagnosed with autism is that their needs are unique. They are different. They are not the same. Why is your program ignoring this difference? It is a fundamental principle of autism. Why is this government refusing to provide kids with autism with the support that they need? A little bit of care is simply not enough. Why is this government choosing to balance its books on the backs of kids with autism and their families?

Interjections.

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

Hon. Doug Ford: Wow. You've got nerve.

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

Minister, response.

Hon. Lisa MacLeod: It takes a lot of nerve for a member of this assembly affiliated with the Liberal Party of Ontario to stand up and speak about defending parents and children with autism. I refuse to ignore the three out of four children in this province who have autism, as her government did. I refuse to cut funding in this program, as her

government did. I refuse to allow a program where children wait on a wait-list indefinitely. That's not going to happen on my watch. We're going to implement a fair, balanced, equitable and sustainable program that lifts 23,000 children they left on a wait-list off of it and into service. That's what we're going to do as a government.

SPECIAL INVESTIGATIONS UNIT

Ms. Donna Skelly: My question today is for the Attorney General.

Our government knows that our law enforcement professionals right across Ontario are hard-working women and men who put their safety at risk every day they go out on the job. These women and men are everyday heroes who work tirelessly to keep us safe in Hamilton—my community—in Kenora and right across Ontario.

We've heard time and again that the current special investigations unit process wastes time, energy and precious resources investigating the wrong things. Under the current system, an officer who provided CPR could face a nearly year-long investigation if the injured person did not survive their injuries. They deserve better.

Speaker, could the minister tell us about how this new legislation proposes to fix this problem?

Hon. Caroline Mulroney: I'd like to thank the member from Flamborough—Glanbrook for her question.

Our legislation will, if passed, provide transparency and clarity to police officers, police chiefs and to the people of Ontario. Under the proposed changes, the SIU would be required to conclude an investigation in 120 days or provide and explanation of why that benchmark cannot be met.

Notification would continue to be required in set circumstances we would all reasonably expect, such as when use of force, custody or detention and motor vehicle pursuits result in serious injury or death, as well as in reported cases of sexual assault and when there is discharge of a firearm at a person.

However, for example, in the CPR case the member outlined or when an officer is unsuccessful in stopping a suicide attempt, those officers do not deserve to be subjected to months-long criminal investigations. If passed, this legislation would clarify the mandate of the SIU and focus its resources where they should be: on possible criminal activity.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Supplementary?

Ms. Donna Skelly: Thank you, Minister. This is evidence that our government for the people listens to the concerns of front-line officers. This new legislation is balanced. It's respectful. It is fair.

Mr. Speaker, I know that front-line officers in my community and right across Ontario will be happy with these changes to SIU investigations if it is passed. I think we can all agree that whether an officer is unsuccessful at saving a victim's life through CPR or at stopping a suicide attempt, that officer should be recognized for his or her efforts and not treated like a suspect in a criminal investigation.

Can the minister tell this House more about these proposed changes?

Hon. Caroline Mulroney: I would like to be clear: Our government knows that the women and men in uniform are everyday heroes. I would like to take this opportunity, Mr. Speaker, to highlight one such hero in our midst, who sits in our caucus: the member for Hastings–Lennox and Addington. He was a proud member of the OPP before continuing to serve our community in the House.

Sadly, when the previous Liberal government looked at police officers, all they saw were potential offenders. Their policing legislation, Bill 175, was, plain and simple, anti-police. Bill 175 made Ontario less safe by weakening the trust between the public and the police and by ignoring the everyday reality of the job that the police do keep us safe.

My ministry and our government know that effective police oversight and respect for police go hand in hand and that police officers are the hard-working men and women who deserve our respect and support. We listened to the concerns of our front-line officers. That's why we're proposing to restore transparency and fairness to a system that had previously left the police and the people in the dark.

AUTISM

Mr. Gilles Bisson: My question is to the Premier. Premier, Tyler Stone is a father of three in Timmins. Two of his young children live with severe autism. Tyler had to leave his career at the hospital to take care of these two kids, leaving his family to rely on one income. Although the Stone family was one of the 23,000 families on the wait-list for IBI therapy, they were hopeful because at least they knew that the care their children need would be coming.

1130

Minister, and to the Premier directly, on one income, how is Tyler supposed to come up with the \$60,000 to \$80,000 a year per child that is needed to pay for IBI therapy?

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Premier?

Hon. Doug Ford: Minister of Children, Community and Social Services.

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Order. Members of the opposition will know that it's within the standing orders to allow ministers to refer questions to each other. The question has been referred to the Minister of Children, Community and Social Services.

Hon. Lisa MacLeod: I thank the member opposite for his question and for bringing Tyler Stone's story to this assembly. The member opposite has a distinguished career in this House. I've known him for the past 13 years, and so I'm going to level with him. Tyler Stone's children, if they are on the wait-list, were going to be on the wait-list, under the old program, indefinitely. That means those children would have received no support from their Ontario government. I could not, in good conscience, allow that to continue.

If the members opposite want to provide false hope to parents, they can do that. But I'm here to say today that Tyler's children will be eligible for up to \$140,000

throughout their lifetime, and there will be a flexible ability for them to manage their childhood budget so that they can invest in behavioural therapy, technological aids and other services of the parents' own choosing.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Supplementary? The member from Mushkegowuk–James Bay.

Mr. Guy Bourgouin: Ma question est pour le premier ministre. Cedric, a young boy from Kapuskasing, requires 20 hours of therapy every week, but under this government's plan, Cedric will only be offered a mere two hours a week. That is one tenth of what he has been prescribed by his specialist. His family will be forced to pay out of pocket for costs not covered by this government, as well as for the cost to travel for two hours every day to and from Timmins to receive treatment.

Families and children deserve so much better than to be pushed onto long waiting lists or into bankruptcy. We have a moral responsibility towards those in need.

Premier, do you think that Cedric should be without the education, the support and the care he deserves? Yes or no?

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Minister?

Hon. Lisa MacLeod: I appreciate the member opposite's question. I also appreciated his sending me over Cedric's picture, a beautiful little boy from his community. I want to assure the member opposite that as we move forward with this plan we will be sending more support to the north and we will ensure that there is greater diagnostic support in the hubs there so that we can provide additional resources.

But let me be perfectly clear as I stand here and I communicate this plan to Ontarians: This really is about fairness, equity and sustainability. We have increased the budget for this program from \$256 million to \$321 million. We have sustained the previous program by injecting an emergency \$100 million into the program. But our goal is to ensure that the 23,000 children who weren't receiving support in the province of Ontario before—that's three out of four children who have autism in this province—will now receive support—

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

Next question.

GO TRANSIT

Mr. Mike Harris: My question is for the Minister of Transportation. Recently, our government made a fantastic announcement in Kitchener about GO expansion. We are committed to decreasing the gridlock in the city of Toronto and across the province. We are getting the people of Ontario moving so they can spend more time with family and loved ones.

In December, the minister announced more train service in the mornings and evenings between Kitchener and Toronto. This was great news for people in Kitchener-Waterloo, Guelph, Acton and Georgetown. Our government for the people is expanding GO service faster and years earlier than the Liberals had planned. With the announcement, the demand for more GO service became very clear.

Can the Minister of Transportation share with the House the additional news about the Kitchener line that was announced last week?

Hon. Jeff Yurek: Thank you to the member from Kitchener–Conestoga for that question and for continuing to work with me on the transportation file.

As he stated, our government is working on and committed to decreasing gridlock and getting the people of Ontario moving. We are doing this ahead of what was the previous government's planned schedule because we are working with our valued partners to accelerate the timelines with GO expansion.

This is an important step for our government's plan to deliver two-way, all-day GO Transit to and from Kitchener and Toronto. Last week, our government announced that the popular 4:50 express train would return to better serve those Ontarians demanding more service.

The reintroduction of the train was because of the great advocacy work of my fellow PC caucus members. I'd like to take the opportunity to thank them—the members from Kitchener–Conestoga, Kitchener South–Hespeler, Cambridge, Brampton West and Brampton South—for amazing advocacy work. They were in contact with me from day one to work for a solution when we found that capacity had really grown in the system.

It's unfortunate that the—

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

Mr. Mike Harris: Mr. Speaker, through you to the minister: Thank you for that answer.

I know the people of Waterloo region appreciate the reintroduction of the 4:50 express train, as it allows them more options to get where they need to be. Our government saw the demand and acted quickly to reinstate the express train.

Our government is finding better and smarter ways to work with our partners and current infrastructure to deliver more transit rides faster, at a lower cost to the people. Our government will continue to deliver reliable transit to the people of Kitchener, with the goal of providing two-way, all-day GO from Kitchener to Toronto.

Can the minister expand more on our government for the people's plan to expand GO rail service?

Hon. Jeff Yurek: Thanks to the member again for his question.

Mr. Speaker, on June 7 our government was elected, and we were elected for the people. We are going to expand GO Transit throughout this province, despite the opposition from members across the way.

By working with our partner at CN, we were able to speed up the timelines for GO expansion across the province. Kitchener is but one example of this great partnership. We are expanding GO service years—years—ahead of schedule by speeding up our negotiations to free up track space. That is how we will deliver two-way, all-day GO Transit to Kitchener way ahead of the proposed schedule.

Our government is committed to improving transit across Ontario, and we've made it clear that our mandate is to get the people of Ontario moving. We have several

projects moving already, including a new commuter service to St. Catharines and Niagara Falls, and we have more to come.

AUTISM

Ms. Catherine Fife: My question is to the Premier. In my riding, Sarah is raising two wonderful children who have autism. Her children have very different needs. Gwen currently receives 14 hours of therapy per week, while Ivy requires two hours. Under your program, Sarah will be \$37,000 short in paying for Gwen's therapy. The minister and even her parliamentary assistant are ignoring the fact that autism is a spectrum with diverse needs. Your plan will fail kids like Gwen, who need more support.

Does the Premier understand how damaging this program is to families across this province? And will you hold your minister and your parliamentary assistant to account for rolling out a flawed plan for children who have autism?

Hon. Doug Ford: Minister of Children, Community and Social Services.

Hon. Lisa MacLeod: I thank the member opposite for the question.

I appreciate Sarah's concerns, but I'll be perfectly honest: I worked very hard with my parliamentary assistant, Amy Fee, in criss-crossing this province. Amy is, in my opinion, the ideal member of provincial Parliament. She arrived here as the mother of four children, two of whom have autism. She has put the children on that wait-list first—those 23,000 children who were never going to get support under the previous Liberal plan. That means we are going to put forward a fair and equitable plan that has increased spending from \$256 million—

Interjections.

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

Response?

Hon. Lisa MacLeod: —to \$321 million. We are doubling the investment into diagnostic hubs, and, as importantly, we're giving parents flexibility and choice in the system in how—

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

Interjections.

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

Start the clock. Supplementary? The member for Kitchener Centre.

1140

Ms. Laura Mae Lindo: My question is to the Premier. Kelly Russell is one of my constituents, a mother with a six-year-old son living with autism. Kelly applied for the OAP with ErinoakKids in December 2016 for ABA therapy. She waited for two years while the Liberal plan failed her. ErinoakKids now can't tell Kelly where her son is on the wait-list.

Under the new Conservative plan, the funding she is entitled to won't even come close to covering her son's therapy. Kelly writes: "They are holding the key to my

child's future in their hands." Why has the minister drastically cut funding for children over the age of five?

Hon. Lisa MacLeod: I'm happy to address Kelly directly on this. What the member opposite isn't telling Kelly, and some of the others who are interested in this field, is that that wait-list at Erinoak was indefinite. They couldn't tell her where her child was on the list because it would probably take years and years and years.

To Kelly at home, what I've done instead is I have increased the budget for this program from \$256 million to \$321 million. What I'm going to do is directly invest in Erinoak so that I can double the investment on diagnostic hubs, and then once the children have the diagnosis, they're going to be funded directly so that they can get service in their community, or they could get a technological aid, or they could get caregiver training or respite care. That's what Kelly is going to be entitled to with this program.

GOVERNMENT FISCAL POLICIES

Mr. Deepak Anand: My question is for the Minister of Finance. Minister, it has been over six months since we learned the true depths of the Liberals' waste and mismanagement. The \$15-billion deficit surprised us all, but our government got to work immediately to fix the mess we inherited.

I am so proud to support the fall economic statement in which we found \$3.2 billion in efficiencies and wherein we were able to return \$2.7 billion back to hard-working Ontarians. In the months that have followed, we're working hard to make life more affordable, reduce red tape, and make sure the world knows Ontario is open for business and it is open for jobs.

Mr. Speaker, the results speak for themselves. Could the minister please give us an update on the success of our plan in recent months?

Hon. Victor Fedeli: Thank you to the member from Mississauga–Malton. Last week, we were very pleased to share the progress that we have made in restoring Ontario's fiscal health. We can now report, Speaker, that the deficit stands at \$13.5 billion. That is \$1.5 billion lower than the \$15-billion deficit we inherited from the Liberals.

Speaker, it is clear our plan is working. Our government is making Ontario open for business. We're making sure that we're open for jobs by restoring confidence and reducing the mountain of regulations and red tape.

Remember, the Liberals were spending \$40 million a day more than they brought in. We still have a lot of work to do, but we remain focused on putting Ontario back on a responsible path to balance in order to protect the key services that matter most.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Supplementary?

Mr. Deepak Anand: Thank you, Minister. Mr. Speaker, my constituents, like most Ontarians, are concerned how the Liberals mismanaged to make Ontario the most indebted subnational government on the planet. Our opposition clearly thinks that instead of solving wasteful spending, the government should tax everything and make life more expensive.

Mr. Speaker, the previous government only knew two words: "tax" and "spend." In contrast, our government has replaced those two words with "fiscal responsibility." Can the minister further inform this House how the government is working to get Ontario's fiscal house back in order responsibly?

Hon. Victor Fedeli: President of the Treasury Board.

Hon. Peter Bethlenfalvy: Thank you, Mr. Speaker, for the question, and thank you for that one number.

"Tax and spend" may be the motto of the opposition, but here is what we are for: We ended March madness spending. We launched the Audit and Accountability Committee. We restricted travel and hospitality. We reviewed spending line by line, and we saved, most importantly, \$3.2 billion while doing that.

Interjections.

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

Hon. Peter Bethlenfalvy: We did this while ensuring people don't slip—

Interruption.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): I would ask the guests who are here—

Interruption.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): You have to allow Parliament to proceed. If you don't stop, we'll have to ask you to leave.

Interruption.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Sergeant-at-Arms, we need you to remove the person who is disrupting the proceedings.

Interruption.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): The President of the Treasury Board can conclude his answer.

Hon. Peter Bethlenfalvy: Thank you—

Interruption.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Once again, I would ask whoever is—oh, it's the same person.

President of the Treasury Board.

Hon. Peter Bethlenfalvy: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

We did this so that people don't slip through the cracks. The LIFT Credit means that low-income Ontarians will pay zero provincial income taxes.

The truth is, this government has to make tough choices. It is our moral imperative to make the choices needed so that our province is fiscally sustainable not just for our children, but our children's children.

AUTISM

Mr. Ian Arthur: My question is for the Premier. Kelly McGarry lives in Kingston with her son Braedon, who was diagnosed with autism. Braedon waited nearly two years for intensive treatment, but it was worth it. The treatment was life-changing. But this April, after the government's cuts, Braedon will only receive a fraction of what his treatment costs. Under the new program, he would not even have qualified for the intensive intervention because of his age.

Kelly's husband has given up a career managing a staff of 20 to care for their son. They remortgaged their home. Kelly told me, "I don't know what else to do." What will happen to the children who will not receive therapy because of this government's plan?

Hon. Doug Ford: Minister of Children, Community and Social Services.

Hon. Lisa MacLeod: I want to thank the member opposite for asking the question for Kelly and Braedon.

I guess the question I have back to the member opposite is: Why did he think the 23,000 children on an indefinite wait-list should receive no support at all from their Ontario government? I've heard a lot from the members opposite about the faint hope that they're trying to provide to Ontario families. I've heard from the members opposite that they're trying to portray this as a cut, when it's—

Interjection.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Member from Hamilton Mountain, come to order.

Hon. Lisa MacLeod: I've heard from members opposite that they're trying to suggest to moms and dads that if their child is on the wait-list, that they will be getting off of it.

I have to tell you, Speaker, when I became the minister responsible for this portfolio on June 29, this is one of the first files I looked at. We had staff and ministers in tears looking at what the Liberals had left us. I, in good conscience, could not allow this to continue, which is why we are going—

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

Interjections.

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

Start the clock. Supplementary, the member for Niagara Centre.

Mr. Jeff Burch: My question is to the Premier. Last week, I met with Rebecca Haight, a concerned parent of an eight-year-old son on the autism spectrum. Rebecca is from Thorold and is here in the gallery today.

For years, thousands of children with autism have been on long wait-lists, desperate for support. Rebecca was one of those families. When her son was not getting the early intervention he needed, she applied for a loan of \$100,000. This is an impossible situation for working families. It is unsustainable. The minister's plan could bankrupt many families, moving them from wait-lists to a situation where they are forced to borrow money for services they need for their children.

Does the minister understand the devastation her plan will cause for everyday families, like Rebecca's, all across Ontario?

Hon. Lisa MacLeod: Thanks very much to the member opposite for bringing Rebecca's concerns to the floor of the Legislature. I would like to welcome Rebecca to this assembly.

The previous program was inflexible. We are going to provide a family with up to \$140,000 in a childhood budget that they can use between the ages of zero and 18, recognizing that early intervention is key, so we're going to front-end that investment into our children who are between the ages of 0 and 5.

We're also going to make sure when we clear the diagnostic hub wait-list that we are going to directly fund these parents, so that they can make the decision if they want a technological aid, behavioural therapy, caregiver support or respite.

But Speaker, let me be perfectly clear: I'm proud that our plan will finally provide families with the freedom to choose the best services for their child. This is the plan. The New Democrats need to ensure they're not providing false hope—

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Thank you. That concludes the time we have available for question period this morning.

VISITOR

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

Ms. Mitzie Hunter: Speaker, I have a point of order. I'd like to welcome my constituent Luisa William, who is here in the members' west gallery today.

NOTICES OF DISSATISFACTION

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Pursuant to standing order 38(a), the member for Toronto–St. Paul's has given notice of her dissatisfaction with the answer to her question given by the Minister of Children, Community and Social Services concerning autism. This matter will be debated today at 6 p.m.

Pursuant to standing order 38(a), the member for Scarborough–Guildwood has given notice of her dissatisfaction with the answer to her question given by the Minister of Children, Community and Social Services concerning autism. This matter will also be debated sometime after 6 p.m. today.

There being no deferred votes, this House stands in recess until 3p.m.

The House recessed from 1151 to 1500.

INTRODUCTION OF VISITORS

Mr. Mike Schreiner: I just want to say how deeply honoured I am once again today to have another wave of constituents from Guelph and surrounding regions come to witness the introduction of my private member's bill. There are far too many people in the galleries to introduce individually, but I would like to just single out my legislative assistant, Samantha Bird, who is in the members' gallery and did so much work on the bill. Welcome, everyone, to Queen's Park. Thank you.

Mr. Deepak Anand: I'd like to welcome Belle Serio, the general manager from the Malton BIA, a leader in business development. Belle, welcome to Queen's Park.

Mr. Will Bouma: It's my distinct pleasure this afternoon—and she's been here before, but my wife is visiting this afternoon and I'm so glad to welcome her to the people's House.

MEMBERS' STATEMENTS

AUTISM

Ms. Rima Berns-McGown: My office has been flooded with emails, phone calls and visits from individuals and families affected by autism. Last week, I sat with weeping parents who have been wrestling with a broken system that just got so much worse. They described how transformational therapy has been for their young kids, enabling them to be toilet-trained, to eat solid foods, to communicate and, in some cases, to progress from being non-verbal to highly social.

Joy says of her son Ryder, "Ongoing IBI therapy gives him hope for a job, a relationship. And although he can't communicate in a normal way, he is brilliant. You can take him to a museum exhibit he went to two years ago and he will notice every change that has been made. But without that support he disappears into himself."

Freda shared how she had to quit her job to become a full-time caregiver for her son Demetrius. The family is \$130,000 in debt. How is that in Ontario's economic or social interest?

Emily, a university student, shared how therapy allowed her to overcome her social anxiety and eating disorder once she was diagnosed at 15, but that she could only afford therapy because her mother had benefits.

The parents I spoke to were livid to have been characterized by the minister as professional protesters. "How dare she?" they asked.

Everyone agreed that we need a plan that meets the needs of everyone living with autism, regardless of their age. It doesn't make any sense to eliminate a wait-list for the sake of eliminating wait-lists if the result is that people and families and kids are hurt. If the pie is too small, well, we need a bigger pie.

So I would like to say to the minister, on behalf of the families affected by autism, it is time to go back to the drawing board, recognize that this policy announcement has been a dismal failure and start again from square one.

ARCHIBALD MACDONELL

Mr. Jim McDonell: Today I rise to recognize the recent passing of Archibald MacDonell, a proud Glengarrian who contributed greatly to the prosperity and well-being of my riding of Stormont–Dundas–South Glengarry.

Archibald was born and raised on a bicentennial farm in the former township of Charlottenburgh, now part of South Glengarry. He believed in giving back to his community and was active on many fronts. His residents recognized his commitment and leadership by electing him as reeve of the municipality, with Archie eventually becoming warden of the united counties of Stormont, Dundas and Glengarry.

During his time on council, he became very active at the provincial level, sitting as chair of the rural municipalities of Ontario association. He was past chair of the Glengarry Sports Hall of Fame and Laurencrest Youth Services, a past president of the Williamstown Fair board

and the St. Lawrence branch of the United Empire Loyalists. He received the Ontario agricultural service diploma in 1974.

Archibald had a keen interest in local genealogy. He served on the township's local architectural committee and helped many a person trace their family tree. I remember one of my first attempts at using Google. When searching for a map of Glengarry county, I was directed to an international Celtic genealogy site where people looking for their ancestors were being directed to contact Archibald, from Australia and New Zealand.

Truly, Archibald left his mark and will be missed. On behalf of my constituents, I would like to offer my condolences to Archie's wife, Isabel, and their children, Hugh Charles, Cathy, Jerome and Roy.

AUTISM

Mr. Joel Harden: I wanted to read into the record today the comments from Kerry Monaghan, a mom from Barrhaven who attended the town hall I hosted for parents of children with autism last Saturday. She writes: "My husband Patrick and I have spent \$200K on private therapy for our two children in just over three years. [The] reform to the Ontario Autism Program will not only devastate us, it will cripple us."

In the past 10 months, her son Jack "has started to learn to use the toilet at his therapy centre. He can label pictures, and count. He can copy actions and match similar picture cards. He can sort, and recognize the relationship between a toothbrush and toothpaste, or a shovel and pail. He can sit at an activity for upwards of 15 minutes with support. He is trying new foods, and eating them at the table. He can use a spoon to eat yogurt. He is using functional communication training to learn to tolerate being told 'no.' He is learning to use visual prompts to access vocabulary he knows, but cannot otherwise retrieve.

"I can ask him to sit on the floor and put his pants on, and he will. He can pull socks on, as well as his hat and boots. He is learning to tolerate being near his younger sister in sibling group therapy."

All of this he is doing on 25 hours of therapy a week. But she and her husband, she writes, will forever feel guilty that they could only afford to fund 15 hours per week for the first two years of Jack's diagnosis.

On June 27, 2019, this therapy will be taken away. I want that to weigh on the conscience of my friends in government, and I want them to ask Treasury Board for better.

ATTACKS IN THE PHILIPPINES

Mr. Roman Baber: My beautiful riding of York Centre is home to the largest Filipino constituency in Canada. With over 17,000 Filipino Canadians, York Centre is home to Bathurst and Wilson, also known as Little Manila; Earl Bales Park, home to the monument to Dr. José Rizal; dozens of Filipino restaurants, stores and bakeries, and a vibrant community that enriches our province in every possible way.

I rise today on an unfortunate but necessary note in support of not just Filipino Canadians but the entire Filipino nation. Tragically, on Sunday, January 27, of this year, in a dual bombing incident, militants attacked the Jolo Roman Catholic cathedral located in the Mindanao region of the Philippines. The first bomb exploded during Sunday mass inside the church, targeting innocent worshippers. The second exploded a short time later outside of the church, targeting soldiers and first responders who rushed to the scene. At least 26 innocent men, women and children were killed and more than 77 wounded.

We at Ontario's Parliament and all Canadians must unite against any and all acts of terror. The taking of innocent life is never justifiable, and acts of terror must be unequivocally condemned. I'm sure that I speak on behalf of the entire Legislature when I say that we grieve for this loss of innocent life and that we extend our hand in support and friendship to the entire Filipino nation.

LONG-TERM CARE

Mr. Jeff Burch: Karl Pettay is 86 years old. He was diagnosed with dementia and moved to West Park Health Centre, a private long-term-care home in my riding, three years ago. His wife, Ann Pettay, fell and injured herself last year and was put into a separate long-term-care facility. They are still waiting to be reunited.

Karl's stepdaughter, Shelly, has become Karl's most fierce advocate. She received a call that he had been assaulted by another resident at the home entrusted to protect him. He suffered two broken ribs and a significant contusion on his right wrist.

1510

The incident falls on the heels of a report by the Ontario Health Coalition on what it calls "intolerable" levels of violence" being reported at long-term-care facilities across the province. In 2018, there were seven homicides in Ontario long-term-care homes due to resident-on-resident violence. These seniors are not responsible for their actions. They suffer from some form of cognitive impairment and lack the capacity to plan. It is the homes and the government who are responsible for the assaults.

Families who entrust their senior parents to these institutions expect that those tasked with their well-being will at all times act professionally and do all they can to ensure proper care and safety at all levels. Frequently, staff at long-term-care homes are overworked due to understaffing and not being provided the tools to properly care for their patients. Our parents and grandparents took care of us; we now have the responsibility to take care of them and to ensure that they can live out the last years of their life together in safety.

EVENTS IN ORLÉANS

ÉVÉNEMENTS DIVERS À ORLÉANS

Mrs. Marie-France Lalonde: I'm delighted to stand before the House today for my first time in 2019 and to

take this opportunity to wish all those across Ontario health and happiness in the new year.

I had the privilege of hosting on Monday my fourth annual Family Day bowling event, which I shared with my federal counterpart, Andrew Leslie. The event was held at the Orleans Bowling and Striker's Billiards, which is one of many incredible local small businesses that serve Orléans. Together, we welcomed an astonishing 485 people. I was very touched to see how many generations were present, and residents of all ages coming together to build a sense of community. During this incredible showcase of skills, I was able to engage with our residents and hear about their interests.

J'aimerais remercier le travail extraordinaire de nos deux hôtes, Roch et Jonathan, ainsi que toute leur équipe au centre de quilles d'Orléans qui ont su coordonner nos invités pendant plus de trois heures.

Finally, it brings me great joy to highlight that we have in Orléans successfully hosted three round table discussions regarding seniors' issues. These discussions were held in both of our official languages. What I plan to do is I'll continue with the round tables in the process of creating an Orléans provincial seniors' council by June. The council will help me to know the needs of our community.

MALTON BLACK DEVELOPMENT ASSOCIATION

Mr. Deepak Anand: February is Black History Month and it provides us with the opportunity to reflect on the historical contributions made by the Black community. It also generates a much-needed awareness of what the Black community has gone through in the past in order for us to arrive at this point of racial equality.

Since its founding in 1975, the Malton Black Development Association has worked to confront the challenges that children of immigrants experience while adapting to the Canadian education system. Today, the mission is even stronger.

The Malton Black Development Association has created many partnerships with organizations, including Malton Neighbourhood Services, Ontario Trillium Foundation, United Way of Peel, Peel District School Board and Malton Community Building Project. Some of the community projects reach children from all walks of life and have included homework assistance, cultural heritage classes, and arts and literacy summer camps. In the mid-1990s, the MBDA launched a post-secondary scholarship program for students of African Caribbean descent in Malton and it has already awarded over 100 scholarships.

I wish to emphasize the importance of this month because without the awareness of the past, we cannot evaluate the present and neither will we know how to proceed in the future. On February 25, we at Queen's Park will be celebrating Black History Month. On this day, we will reflect on the tremendous contributions that the Black community has made to Ontario's economic, social,

political and cultural fabric. We take this opportunity to remember, celebrate and educate future generations about the rich history.

I would like to thank Malton Black Development Association and their president, Clovalyn Wilson, for their community service. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

GOVERNMENT'S RECORD

Mr. Gurratan Singh: Since getting elected, I have been raising in this House, time and time again, the issues that are leaving Brampton behind. Under this Conservative government, Brampton has seen students spending hours in commute because they don't have a university here at home; people languishing in overcrowded hospitals and facing excessive wait times; and families struggling to get by because they are forced to pay car insurance rates that are sometimes more than the mortgages for their homes. This government and the Premier have made it clear—abundantly clear—that they do not care about Brampton.

Now, we in the NDP are committed to fighting for Brampton and putting people before profits. This Conservative government is more interested in the concerns of billion-dollar insurance companies than the needs of everyday people. This is precisely why people do not have faith in government—because they focus on the few instead of the many. They'd rather bend to corporate interests than work for public need.

Government can and must do better. We must work to create a society where we lift people up, not tear them down, help people and provide them with the resources they need so they can be their best selves. This is the just, equitable, fair future that we are committed to fighting for, and we won't stop until we get there.

CHILDREN'S COLOURING CONTEST

Ms. Andrea Khanjin: I had my first calendar since being elected—it's sent out to all of the families in my riding—and I wanted to do something fun for my calendar. So what is better than a children's colouring contest, asking them to provide the artwork for each month?

As many of you know, I'm an avid lover of the outdoors and staying active, so I asked many of the children in my riding to showcase what their favourite activity is for every month. I had pledged to those children, ages four to 12, that I would engage in that activity every month for the calendar contest.

So in January I joined Kayla Leo, who drew a picture of her favourite sport, ringette. I have to admit I've never played ringette ever before, and I've only heard about it through my EA, Melissa, who played for 23 years. I was excited, though, to try something new, and I was welcomed with open arms. And it wasn't because I fell, Mr. Speaker; it was because they were genuinely happy to have me there.

For February, I had the opportunity to enjoy kite-flying at Barrie's Winterfest with Ethan Sloan and his mom and his sister. It was a cold morning on Lake Simcoe, but we

persevered as we ran all around the ice and we climbed some snowbanks.

Mr. Speaker, I am looking forward to the rest of the months and participating in activities with all the contest winners.

ONTARIO 55+ WINTER GAMES

Mr. Will Bouma: It's a great pleasure to rise in the House today and welcome everyone back. I missed yesterday because I was in my riding to make an announcement, and that's what this is about today. I'm delighted to rise in the House today to bring attention to a very special event taking place in my riding of Brantford—Brant. It's my pleasure to announce that the city of Brantford, which is the tournament capital of Ontario, and the county of Brant have been selected as host communities for the 2021 Ontario 55+ Winter Games.

The Ontario 55+ Winter Games are a celebration of active living. The games bring together people 55 years and older for competition and camaraderie. First held in Collingwood in 2000, the Ontario 55+ Winter Games are a celebration of our province's athletes and coaches. The games are hosted in odd-numbered years and are held in February, with approximately 1,000 participants. The games also promote healthy living, contribute to local tourism and economic activity, and help communities build their experience and resources to host large-scale events.

I want to personally reach out and say thank you to Russell Press and Donna Clements from the city and the county for making this happen, for doing the application and for making us all look good. But even more than them, and as with any large-scale sporting event, one of the keys to success is the strength of the volunteer team. Through their knowledge, hospitality and enthusiasm, volunteers are a vital part of the event's operations. I encourage everyone from the community and from across the province to consider joining in the excitement by helping to host the games. Our hashtag is #ourheartisinit.

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INTRODUCTION OF BILLS

PARIS GALT MORAINÉ CONSERVATION ACT, 2019

LOI DE 2019 SUR LA CONSERVATION DE LA MORAINÉ DE PARIS GALT

Mr. Schreiner moved first reading of the following bill:

Bill 71, An Act to conserve the Paris Galt Moraine by providing for the Paris Galt Moraine Conservation Plan /
Projet de loi 71, Loi visant à conserver la moraine de Paris Galt grâce au Plan de conservation de la moraine de Paris Galt.

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): Could the member for Guelph give a brief explanation of his bill?

Mr. Mike Schreiner: It's an honour to rise today to introduce my first private member's bill.

Mr. Speaker, I believe government has a sacred responsibility to protect our water and manage it for the public good. Moraines provide a vital service, filtering our water for free. Allowing our moraines to be degraded would put government on the hook for millions of dollars in water treatment infrastructure. For this reason, I'm introducing the Paris Galt Moraine Conservation Act to protect the drinking water supply for over 200,000 people in the Guelph region.

Guelph is one of the largest cities in Canada that relies solely on groundwater, and we have a responsibility to protect the water that our children and grandchildren will depend upon. I hope my colleagues opposite will acknowledge and respect the fact that this bill is based on the—

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

MOTIONS

COMMITTEE MEMBERSHIP

Mr. Stephen Lecce: I move that on the Standing Committee on Finance and Economic Affairs, Mr. Cho is replaced by Mr. Rasheed, and that on the Standing Committee on Regulations and Private Bills, Mr. Hillier is replaced by Mr. Crawford.

I will hand this motion to Raahem.

Ms. Bhutla Karpoche: Which Cho?

Mr. Stephen Lecce: Mr. Cho, Willowdale; pardon me.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Mr. Lecce has moved that, on the Standing Committee on Finance and Economic Affairs, Mr. Cho, Willowdale, is replaced by Mr. Rasheed, and that on the Standing Committee on Regulations and Private Bills, Mr. Hillier is replaced by Mr. Crawford. Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? Carried.

Motion agreed to.

STATEMENTS BY THE MINISTRY AND RESPONSES

ONTARIO HERITAGE WEEK SEMAINE DU PATRIMOINE DE L'ONTARIO

Hon. Michael A. Tibollo: It's truly a great honour for me to rise today and to encourage both the members of this House and the people of Ontario to participate in the province-wide annual celebration known as Ontario Heritage Week.

Since 1974, the third Monday of every February has been designated Heritage Day in Canada, and that day is kicked off with Ontario Heritage Week. Heritage Week takes place across Canada from February 18 to 24, and the theme for this year's celebration is Heritage: The Tie that Binds.

Our heritage brings us together in our stories, in our rituals, in song and dance, and in natural settings and gathering places that are at the heart of our community.

Notre patrimoine nous rassemble dans nos histoires et nos rituels, dans nos chansons et nos danses, dans des cadres naturels et des lieux de rassemblement situés au coeur de notre collectivité.

Here in Ontario, Mr. Speaker, heritage organizations work with municipalities to use Ontario Heritage Week to increase awareness of heritage resources and heritage-related issues within their communities. Across the province, local historical societies and heritage groups are helping celebrate our shared cultural and natural history through architecture, archaeology and in the wonderful collections hosted by museums and libraries.

Taking the lead is the Ontario Heritage Trust, an agency of the government of Ontario, which has a broad, province-wide mandate to identify, protect, promote and conserve Ontario's heritage in all its forms. As part of that mandate, the trust is committed to engaging all Ontarians in the work and promotion of heritage, especially during Ontario Heritage Week. This is a week when we honour all those organizations and volunteers who have worked to protect Ontario's irreplaceable heritage resources.

Il s'agit d'une semaine durant laquelle nous honorons tous les organismes et les bénévoles ayant oeuvré à la protection des ressources patrimoniales irremplaçables de l'Ontario.

It's also a time to reflect on the stories of the various individuals and communities who have enriched Ontario over so many years. Among the values articulated by the Ontario Heritage Trust is the potential of heritage to inspire and to stimulate activity. An exploration of our shared heritage can motivate us to bequeath knowledge, narratives and histories, and a diverse and authentic cultural environment to future generations.

February is Black History Month here in Ontario, when we acknowledge the vital contributions that Black Canadians have made to our province. In 2018, the Ontario Heritage Trust provided \$50,000 in capital funding to undertake repairs and upgrades at the Uncle Tom's Cabin Historic Site museum, one of Ontario's most important heritage places. Last month, the museum also received the prestigious Harriet Tubman Award for Commitment to a Purpose from the Ontario Black History Society.

A full appreciation of our Ontario heritage also embraces the experiences of Indigenous communities, Franco-Ontarians and those stories of every other community that weave together to tell the story of who we are as Ontario and Ontarians.

Une pleine reconnaissance de notre patrimoine ontarien englobe également les expériences des collectivités autochtones et francophones ainsi que les histoires de

chaque autre collectivité qui tissent la trame de l'histoire de l'Ontario.

I invite all members of this House and every Ontarian to take part in Ontario Heritage Week activities this year. People of all ages and backgrounds have a chance to connect with the unique spirit of our land and its many peoples.

Robbie Robertson, the great Ontario musician and member of the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame group the Band, once said, “You don’t stumble upon your heritage. It’s there, just waiting to be explored and shared.”

This week, I hope all Ontarians will explore the places, landscapes, traditions and stories that embody our heritage.

Merci beaucoup. Thank you. Meegwetch.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Responses?

Ms. Jill Andrew: Before I go on, I want to congratulate my constituency assistant, Phillip Dwight Morgan, a brilliant poet, journalist and writer, who has just been published in an anthology called *Black Writers Matter*, launching tonight at the Harbourfront Centre.

This afternoon, I was pleased to meet with members of Architectural Conservancy Ontario who are here at Queen’s Park as part of Ontario Heritage Week. We discussed that “heritage” is an expansive term, encompassing a culture and a community’s history and its history in the making today, recognizing that heritage can be anything from language to food to fashion and restoration to forms of knowledge and artistic expressions to practices of worship.

I want to note that 2019 is the International Year of Indigenous Languages and 2015 to 2024 is the United Nations International Decade for People of African Descent. As we all know, this is Black History Month, and January was Tamil Heritage Month. But to be frank, I haven’t seen anything this Conservative government has done so far to acknowledge any of these heritage markers, beyond mention today of Black History Month, pretty much at the end of February. There are many more ahead, like Islamic Heritage Month—which was introduced here, I’m proud to say, by my NDP caucus—Jewish Heritage Month, Ukrainian heritage month and Korean Heritage Month, just to name a few.

1530

Proclamation of these heritage months through acts of legislation is certainly important for validating and celebrating a community’s presence in Ontario. Beyond heritage months, though, we need to know how this government values heritage. The best way to see that is through the investments that it makes in communities. Here I would argue that I’m not sure of the value. This government has not put forward a clear cultural and heritage strategy for this province. What are this ministry’s goals? What is the direction for culture? Why have we not heard anything from the minister on his priorities? Are there going to be any consultations with Ontarians on how this government values heritage and culture?

I wish I had more to share with Ontarians as their culture critic, but my office has reached out to the Minister

of Tourism, Culture and Sport’s office several times requesting briefing meetings, and our requests have gone unanswered. Faced with this void of information, I have gone on arts tours of my riding of Toronto–St. Paul’s, meeting with artists, art collectives and art organizations to learn about their work and the challenges they experience in creating, producing and funding their creative arts. I’m looking forward to sharing those findings with the House in the future, and indeed our minister, if he actually responds to our calls and our emails requesting a briefing meeting.

But here is what we have heard from the government: funding cuts, relentless cuts to the arts and cultural sectors. And if that is any indication of this ministry’s cultural and heritage priorities, then I do believe Ontarians have a lot to worry about.

At the end of last year we heard about the cuts to the Ontario Arts Council, to the tune of \$5 million. We saw the cut to the Indigenous Culture Fund, to the tune of \$2.25 million, thus effectively cancelling the program and causing the layoff of Indigenous staff. This is particularly disturbing. Not only was this fund a response to the Truth and Reconciliation Commission’s calls to action; it existed specifically to support Indigenous cultural preservation, revitalization and transmission. It supported programs where youth could learn their community’s languages and where elders could pass on their teachings to new generations. This fund, in short, was directly linked to supporting the heritage of Indigenous peoples, and this government did not see it as a good use of taxpayers’ dollars.

Let’s not forget this government’s treatment of franco-phone heritage—it was wonderful to hear the minister on the other side—and culture in Ontario when it cut franco-phone services and the French-language university, a decision that not even all the members of the PC Party agreed with.

So what is this government’s plan for funding heritage activities, particularly for communities that experience barriers to access and inclusion, such as seniors, young people, new immigrants and people with disabilities, just to name a few? You’ve cut Sistema by \$500,000. We need to know that there aren’t any more cuts that are going to happen to the arts, and to culture particularly.

We’ve got to change this. I get that with new governments there can be delays, there can be high turnovers of staff, there can be internal politics at play, but the bottom line is, when we send an email or when we make a phone call to our minister and we say, “Hey, your new MPP for Toronto–St. Paul’s, Jill Andrew, is really eager and excited to talk about culture with you,” all we are asking for is a response.

Let’s respond. Let’s have a conversation. I’m excited to work with our minister. Let’s do all we can for Ontarians everywhere.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Response?

Ms. Mitzie Hunter: It’s my pleasure to rise in the House today as the Ontario Liberal caucus critic for the cultural file. Minister, I want to thank you for your

remarks and your efforts to be as broad-ranging as possible.

As you can imagine, as the critic for many things, as a member of my caucus, this is one of the areas that I really take great pleasure and joy in exploring. When I first became the critic for this file it was during the time of the Toronto International Film Festival, and I had an opportunity not just to take in films, as I would normally do, but to really meet with the industry, those writers and producers and musicians—all of the people who really bring that sector together. We recognize that we have such a vibrant creative sector here in Ontario that really deserves the attention and the contributions that they make.

I then have had the opportunity to attend Toronto Fashion Week and to see the incredible artistry. I attended David Dixon's show, where he was actually using fashion to illustrate the debilitating issues of osteoporosis, and using it as a way to communicate very powerfully.

You recognize that Ontario's artists, artisans, designers and creative people form the heart and the soul of our province, and they deserve to have the support, the strategy and the vision of this government.

The concern that I have, which has been raised as well by the NDP critic, is: What is that strategy? What is that vision by the Conservative government for this sector? I think that people do want to know that.

The Ontario Arts Council, which funds and supports many artists across a spectrum, received \$5 million in base funding cuts to their fund. The Indigenous community has seen a cut to the Indigenous arts fund.

My colleague Nathalie Des Rosiers asked a question in this House yesterday: Do we respect the political accord that we have with Indigenous people in this province? Do we have a plan for the Truth and Reconciliation Commission? Is the existing plan that was in place with the former Liberal government the plan that we are following? We have yet to hear what the government's plan is for Indigenous communities, and how we're going to respond to the Truth and Reconciliation Commission and its work.

But what we do see is an undoing of some of the groundwork. We see that in education, unfortunately. The curriculum work that was being done was put on hold, and we've not heard that that has been restarted.

I think it's important that we don't lose any ground when it comes to our heritage, when it comes to these areas that form the strong foundation that holds us all together.

In my final minute, I want to recognize that this indeed is Black History Month. It's actually coming down to the final week. What's important, I think, to remember is that Black history is actually Ontario's history; it's Canada's history. We know that people of African descent have been in this land before Canada was Canada, over 400 years ago. So as we celebrate this month and we celebrate the achievements of this, and all of the many heritages that come together to make up what we call Ontario, what we call Canada, it's all of us working together, hand in hand, supporting our communities, and supporting our families and the individuals who comprise those communities.

As we celebrate Ontario Heritage Week, let's remember all of the various communities that form this great province and country.

PETITIONS

MENTAL HEALTH AND ADDICTION SERVICES

Ms. Bhutla Karpoché: This petition is titled "No More Waiting for Children and Youth Mental Health Care."

"To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas one in five children and youth in Ontario experience a mental health issue that significantly impacts their lives, and the lives of people around them;

"Whereas there are 12,000 children and youth on the wait-list seeking mental health and addictions care;

"Whereas the wait times for children and youth seeking mental health and addictions care in the province average three months to 18 months;

"Whereas too many children and youth have died waiting for treatment, and early treatment is more likely to be effective in helping people live full and happy lives;

"Whereas the failure to take action in helping children and youth access mental health and addictions services hurts people, families and Ontario's communities;

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"Therefore we, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to immediately cap the wait time for children and youth seeking mental health and addictions services to 30 days after these services have been deemed essential, taking all the necessary policy and funding steps to ensure that the minister is able to enforce this cap, and provide children and youth the services they need and deserve."

I fully support this petition and will be adding my signature to it as well.

AUTISM TREATMENT

Ms. Mitzi Hunter: It is my pleasure to rise in the House today to bring forward a petition to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario.

"Whereas Unity in the Community is the registered non-profit organization having six chapters—Mississauga, Brampton, Milton, Oakville, Cornwall, She. UIC-Mississauga-Brampton-Milton is working to bring diverse communities together in order to develop cordial relations among them. To better serve the community and humanity by education and awareness;

"Approximately 72% of kids with autism don't get the help they need at school;

"On average \$60,000 a year through childhood, with bulk of the costs in special services and lost wages that increase pressure on one or both parents;

“Funding for autistic kids older than five years was cut in 2016 that caused \$3,200 per month as therapy cost and \$1,500 per month as daycare cost upon the autism-affected families;

“Prayer:

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

“Allocate more funds for autism treatment at local hospitals; efficient and quick medical treatments; wait time in schools for autism students be reduced; wait time for speech and behavioural therapy be reduced.”

I will sign this petition and give it to our page Michelle.

MENTAL HEALTH AND ADDICTION SERVICES

Ms. Jill Andrew: Good afternoon, Mr. Speaker. This petition is entitled “No More Waiting for Children and Youth Mental Health Care.”

“To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“Whereas one in five children and youth in Ontario experience a mental health issue that significantly impacts their lives, and the lives of people around them;

“Whereas there are 12,000 children and youth on the wait-list seeking mental health and addictions care;

“Whereas the wait times for children and youth seeking mental health and addictions care in the province average three months to 18 months;

“Whereas too many children and youth have died waiting for treatment, and early treatment is more likely to be effective in helping people live full and happy lives;

“Whereas the failure to take action in helping children and youth access mental health and addictions services hurts people, families and Ontario’s communities;

“Therefore we, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to immediately cap the wait time for children and youth seeking mental health and addictions services to 30 days after these services have been deemed essential, taking all the necessary policy and funding steps to ensure that the minister is able to enforce this cap, and provide children and youth the services they need and deserve.”

I fully support this petition, and I sign it and hand it over to Pyper.

ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION

Mr. Mike Schreiner: I have a stack of petitions here.

“To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“Whereas the Paris Galt moraine performs critical ecological and hydrological functions that are vital to the well-being of our environment and communities;

“Whereas the moraine provides habitat for wildlife, maintains wetlands, streams and rivers, and filters and stores drinking water;

“Whereas the city of Guelph is the largest city in Canada to rely almost exclusively on groundwater for their drinking waters and the moraine is an essential water recharge area in the Grand River watershed;

“Whereas the moraines in the area provide drinking water for close to 200,000 people and the surrounding population is expected to grow to one million people by 2041;

“Whereas protecting the moraine is the fiscally responsible option to ensure the availability of clean drinking water and finding other means of providing water would be extremely expensive;

“Therefore we, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to protect the ecological and hydrological integrity of the Paris Galt moraine.”

I fully support this petition and will sign it and ask page Hidayah to bring it to the table.

MENTAL HEALTH AND ADDICTION SERVICES

Ms. Rima Berns-McGown: “No More Waiting for Children and Youth Mental Health Care.

“To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“Whereas one in five children and youth in Ontario experience a mental health issue that significantly impacts their lives, and the lives of people around them;

“Whereas there are 12,000 children and youth on the wait-list seeking mental health and addictions care;

“Whereas the wait times for children and youth seeking mental health and addictions care in the province average three months to 18 months;

“Whereas too many children and youth have died waiting for treatment, and early treatment is more likely to be effective in helping people live full and happy lives;

“Whereas the failure to take action in helping children and youth access mental health and addictions services hurts people, families and Ontario’s communities;

“Therefore we, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to immediately cap the wait time for children and youth seeking mental health and addictions services to 30 days after these services have been deemed essential, taking all the necessary policy and funding steps to ensure that the minister is able to enforce this cap, and provide children and youth the services they need and deserve.”

I heartily support this petition and will be affixing my signature to it and giving it to page Pieter to take to the Clerk.

ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION

Ms. Catherine Fife: This petition is entitled “Stop Bill 66: Protect Our Drinking Water and Our Environment.

“To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“Whereas the Ford government has introduced Bill 66 (“Restoring Ontario’s Competitiveness” Act), which rolls back hard-won protections for children, consumers, workers and the environment;

“Whereas Bill 66 creates a municipal planning loophole that allows developers to override legislation designed to protect our environment, farmlands and drinking water;

“Whereas Doug Ford is dragging the Ontario backward by weakening water regulations that were put in place after the E. coli outbreak in Walkerton;

“Whereas Bill 66 allows the greenbelt to be bulldozed, undermining efforts to make communities in Ontario more sustainable, livable and resilient;

“Whereas Bill 66 threatens the continued viability of agricultural communities within the greenbelt;

“We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to direct the Doug Ford government to protect the safety of drinking water for all Ontarians, to protect the greenbelt, and to prioritize the sustainability and conservation of Ontario’s waters by revoking Bill 66.”

It’s my pleasure to support this petition and give it to page Collin.

FIREARMS CONTROL

Ms. Mitzie Hunter: I do have a petition here.

“Gun Violence Must End Immediately.

“To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“Whereas Doug Ford and the Conservative government are not proposing the right solutions to end the gun violence happening in our communities;

“Whereas guns and ammunition are lethal hardware that are often used illegally to cause injury and death in our communities;

“Whereas the number of gun-related incidents have increased drastically this year and we cannot afford to lose anymore lives;

“Whereas Ontarians have a right to know about—and have a say in—government decisions that affect the safety of our communities;

“We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to direct the Minister of Community Safety and Correctional Services to ban the sales of ammunition for handguns and give municipalities across the province the power to ban them within their boundaries. The protection and safety of the people of Ontario is needed now more than ever before.”

I will sign this petition and give it to page Anika.

FULL-DAY KINDERGARTEN

Ms. Marit Stiles: It gives me great pleasure to introduce this petition on behalf of my constituent Bernard King.

“Stop the Cuts to Full-Day Kindergarten.

“To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“Whereas kids deserve the best start in life and full-day kindergarten has helped improve social, emotional and cognitive development since its implementation;

“Whereas Doug Ford’s proposed lifting of the class-size cap for kindergarten would mean even more crowded classrooms, less one-on-one time with teachers and less support for our youngest learners;

“Whereas the Ford government has refused to commit to full-day kindergarten continuing past 2019;

“Whereas eliminating full-day kindergarten would negatively impact children while causing chaos for parents; and

“Whereas evidence is clear that smaller class sizes mean big benefits for Ontario students;

“Therefore we, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to call on the Ford government to take full-day kindergarten off the chopping block, oppose any plan to increase class sizes, and instead listen to families and education workers by making things better for kids, not worse.”

I am pleased to affix my signature to this petition and I’m going to hand it off to page Josie to table this for me.

1550

SERVICES EN FRANÇAIS

M^{me} France Gélinas: J’aimerais remercier M^{me} Florence Thériault de Coniston dans mon comté pour cette pétition.

« À l’Assemblée législative de l’Ontario :

« Respectez la communauté francophone.

« Considérant que l’énoncé économique d’automne du gouvernement a annoncé l’élimination du Commissariat aux services en français et l’annulation des plans pour l’Université de l’Ontario français; et

« Considérant que ces décisions constituent une trahison de la responsabilité de l’Ontario envers notre communauté francophone; »

Ils demandent à « l’Assemblée législative de l’Ontario de demander au gouvernement de maintenir le bureau du commissaire aux services en français, ainsi que son financement et ses pouvoirs, et de maintenir l’engagement de l’Ontario de financer l’Université de l’Ontario français. »

J’appuie cette pétition. Je vais la signer et je vais demander à la page Vanessa de l’amener à la table des greffiers.

MENTAL HEALTH AND ADDICTION SERVICES

Ms. Doly Begum: I have a petition here titled “No More Waiting for Children and Youth Mental Health Care.

“To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“Whereas one in five children and youth in Ontario experience a mental health issue that significantly impacts their lives, and the lives of people around them;

“Whereas there are 12,000 children and youth on the wait-list seeking mental health and addictions care;

“Whereas the wait times for children and youth seeking mental health and addictions care in the province average three months to 18 months;

“Whereas too many children and youth have died waiting for treatment, and early treatment is more likely to be effective in helping people live full and happy lives;

“Whereas the failure to take action in helping children and youth access mental health and addictions services hurts people, families and Ontario’s communities;

“Therefore we, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to immediately cap the wait time for children and youth seeking mental health and addictions services to 30 days after these services have been deemed essential, taking all the necessary policy and funding steps to ensure that the minister is able to enforce this cap, and provide children and youth the services they need and deserve.”

I fully support this petition and will give it to page Michelle.

WEARING OF POPPIES

Mr. Michael Mantha: I want to thank the community of St. Joseph and also the Legion in Richards Landing.

The petition is entitled “I Wear My Poppy With Pride and Respect.”

“To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

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

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

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

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

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

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

I wholeheartedly agree with this petition, put my name to it and present it to page Pieter.

ARTS AND CULTURAL FUNDING

Ms. Jill Andrew: This petition is to restore the 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...;

“Whereas the Ontario government has also cut its funding to the Indigenous Culture Fund (ICF) at the OAC...;

“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 elder-led 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 wholeheartedly support this petition. I affix my signature to it and hand it to Martin for filing with the Clerk.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): The time for petitions has expired.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

RESTORING ONTARIO’S COMPETITIVENESS ACT, 2019 LOI DE 2019 VISANT À RÉTABLIR LA COMPÉTITIVITÉ DE L’ONTARIO

Resuming the debate adjourned on February 19, 2019, on the motion for 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 Deputy Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): Questions and comments? I recognize the member from—I love saying this particular one; it just rolls off my tongue—Barrie—Springwater—Oro—Medonte.

Mr. Doug Downey: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It does have a certain lyrical spirit to it, which is wonderful, because I have Burl’s Creek in my riding, and you may have heard of the Rolling Stones coming to my riding.

Nonetheless, I do want to make a serious comment on the member’s statement, which, unfortunately, I wasn’t here to hear. We’re kind of bifurcated in this. But I do want to speak to—

Mr. Gilles Bisson: You’re not supposed to mention not being in the House.

Mr. Doug Downey: Thank you. The member from Timmins is quite correct. I shouldn’t refer to myself as having not been in the House. That would be inappropriate.

I do want to talk about a serious piece of this, which is the credit unions and their ability to participate in syndicated loans, which is quite simply something that we're fixing. When the Credit Unions and Caisses Populaires Act was last updated in 1994, syndicated loans weren't really as big an issue for the credit unions. What that means is that if a bank is putting together financing partners, they can partner together—TD, RBC and Bank of Montreal can partner together—but a credit union can't be part of that syndication. We're saying that we're treating them equally with banks in that sense.

It's all part of our entrepreneurial spirit to succeed and create jobs in Ontario. We have a strong and rich history with credit unions in Ontario, and we heard from credit unions all through the pre-budget consultations on this issue and others. I'm pleased that our government is moving forward to treat them like the sophisticated businesses that they are to participate in projects that benefit all Ontarians.

It's worth noting that the member for, and I have to get this right, Hamilton West—Ancaster—Dundas—every time we had a credit union speak to the pre-budget committee, it was noted that she had been the chair of a credit union for six years, so we heard that over and over. The member from Kingston and the Islands is chuckling. We got to the point where we could say each others' parts.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and thank you for the comments from the member from Waterloo.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): Further questions and comments?

Ms. Marit Stiles: I'm pleased to respond. I want to just reiterate some of the points that my colleagues have raised previously about the impact of what is really the watering down of regulations and requirements around home daycare in this province as proposed in this legislation.

We all know here why these restrictions were put in place. Right? It's because babies died. Babies died.

1600

Interjection.

Ms. Marit Stiles: Not one, actually, to the member opposite.

This is ultimately about protecting children. We understand that the government is trying to wrap this in as a solution to our child care crisis. This is not going to solve our child care crisis. What will solve our child care crisis is to invest in child care, is to prioritize child care. Watering down the regulations and the laws to ensure that more children and younger children can be accommodated in a home daycare is simply going to put more children at risk. It is unconscionable.

Especially when we look at what's happening right now—what the government is doing to the Ontario Autism Program, for example—we have children who are being put at risk, whether it's going to be that they are put back in the school system without the programming that they require, or whether they're going to be in home daycares where there are too many of them and they're too young, and the home care provider simply cannot provide the kind of care and safe protection that they need. We know; we

are hearing from home care providers who are saying, "We need these protections. It's important for children."

So let's be clear about what is at stake here: It is the safety of our very littlest ones. I urge the government to reconsider putting forward these changes to the act.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): Further questions and comments?

Ms. Andrea Khanjin: I have to say that people refer to Bill 66, but they forget the title of the bill, and that's "Restoring Ontario's Competitiveness."

Why is it that this government has to introduce a bill that says "Restoring Ontario's Competitiveness" and the key word is "restoring"? Because it was lost, Mr. Speaker. It was lost. There were decades of darkness in this province. Finally, we have a progressive government that's bringing back the light again, bringing in the competitiveness.

When you look at the comparison, how Ontario compares to other jurisdictions, how are we supposed to compete when we have 380,000 regulations in this province? We're by far the most regulated province in all of Canada. How are we supposed to compete with our own fellow provinces, let alone other countries and jurisdictions—for instance, New York state, where their approval times are less than six months, and it takes three years here in Ontario?

Again, the title of the bill is "Restoring Ontario's Competitiveness." It's not watering down environmental rules. It's not putting child care centres at risk. That is not what this bill is about. It's bringing hope and prosperity back to this province, helping people prosper and remembering that this is a land of opportunity.

Interjections.

Ms. Andrea Khanjin: Thank you.

It's a place where you can succeed. That's what this government is trying to do here: It's trying to restore Ontario's competitiveness.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): Further questions and comments?

Ms. Jill Andrew: I'm glad to rise to say a few words on government Bill 66, Restoring Ontario's Competitiveness Act.

I heard our member across the floor say that the title of the bill is "Restoring Ontario's Competitiveness." I'm a competitive person. I enjoy playing certain sports, like volleyball. I played tennis in high school. I get competitiveness. But what I often say is, you can't be competitive if you're not healthy and if you're not safe, and that's where my concern lies. My concern lies squarely with keeping our children in safe care facilities. When we cheapen out on child care without actually having a bill that makes real provisions to keep kids safe, that's where I've got a concern.

Another area of concern I have is the environment. In Toronto—St. Paul's, I have met with constituents who speak of environmental sensitivities, chemical sensitivities, that they have. I understand that schedule 10 is not so much of an issue for the government anymore. We certainly want to see our greenbelt protected, but what we

want to ensure is that we look at the environment from a holistic point of view.

When I've got constituents who are coming into my riding and telling me about instances where they can't find housing because the housing is not environmentally friendly—chemicals are causing them to get sick, and causing them to be temporarily homeless—there are a lot of bigger issues that we have to unpack if we want to be a competitive province.

We cannot be a competitive province if Ontarians, if residents in my riding, don't have a home to live in. It's as simple as that. We can't be competitive if children are in unlicensed care centres or care homes and there are too many kids to keep them safe. That's not competition; that's a health and safety issue.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): Back to the member from Waterloo for final comment.

Ms. Catherine Fife: It was a pleasure, actually, to speak for an hour yesterday on Bill 66, because I was able to document our serious concerns with the multiple schedules in this piece of legislation. I have to say, we haven't forgotten the title of the bill. This bill has a title; it doesn't really have a plan. If you truly are serious about strengthening the economy, then you truly do invest in child care, because the return on investment in early learning and care is—for \$1 there's a return on investment of \$7. Child care is an economic driver.

I found the language that the Minister of Education used yesterday to be very interesting. She was like, "We stand with business owners." That's the problem there. They consider early learning and care, taking care of children, to be a business for corporations. It is not. The home care component of this bill actually will leave more children in a situation where supervision cannot be guaranteed to be safe. The quality cannot be there.

The minister said, "We want to recognize the priorities of parents." Well, parents care about quality. Parents care about price. They care about the affordability. They care about the location. They care about the qualifications of the people who are caring for their children. Right now, we are in a child care crisis in the province of Ontario. The solution that you have in Bill 66 is no solution. It does not create any more space, it does not address affordability, and the return on investment is officially lost; 28% of the women in this province only work part-time because they can only find part-time care.

The Minister of Education went on to say, "And that's not all, Mr. Speaker"—as if she was selling child care spaces on The Shopping Channel. It is such a shift in mindset around how we care for our most vulnerable citizens in this province of Ontario. You have missed the mark on child care, for sure, in Bill 66.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): Further debate?

Mrs. Nina Tangri: It's great to be back here in the House. Since we rose for the winter, our government for the people has been working around the clock on doing everything we can to make Ontario open for business and make life more affordable for the millions of people who call Ontario home.

Since we were elected, we've hit the ground running. We passed our Making Ontario Open for Business Act, cutting red tape, reducing the journeyman-to-apprentice ratio and abolishing the Ontario College of Trades. Just this morning, we had the Ontario Electrical League tell many of us that their businesses have had a significant increase in apprenticeships due to these new changes in the ratio of journeymen to apprentices.

Interjections.

Mrs. Nina Tangri: Yes, that's worth applauding. That's more people we're going to have in the workplace very soon.

We've passed our Restoring Trust, Transparency and Accountability Act, taking many steps to make it easier for small businesses to operate and grow in the province.

I'll talk about a business that I know that was ready to leave Ontario. They were ready to move to the United States due to the previous government's heavy regulatory burden, severely high hydro prices and a complete disrespect of industry. They shook their heads and said, "Enough is enough. Ontario is not business-friendly. We can't hire more people. We're leaving." I pleaded with them to wait until our government came into effect in June, and what did we do? We made it easier to do business. They not only stayed, they grew. They hired more engineers and expanded and moved to a better location.

Ladies and gentlemen, members of this House, this is what our government is for. We're making sure more people are in the workforce. We are open for business. Promises made, promises kept.

In January, our government was given an A-, which is the highest grade ever in our province, from the Canadian Federation of Independent Business for reducing red tape and unnecessary bureaucracy. Under the previous Liberal government, we were a C+. Regulation and bureaucracy costs small business billions of dollars. That number, ladies and gentlemen, members of this House, is unacceptable.

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We've said it before, we'll say it again: When business thrives, people thrive—and it's our government's job to help create the environment for businesses to thrive so our people can thrive.

Mr. Speaker, 98% of Ontarians are employed because of small business. In Mississauga and in my riding, thousands and thousands of businesses are such small businesses. The Restoring Ontario's Competitiveness Act will help these businesses, reducing burdensome duplication and red tape that was introduced by the previous government.

Let me be clear: Our previous government left our businesses in crisis. Companies were packing up and heading to other jurisdictions. They were being suffocated by high hydro rates, gridlock and burdensome red tape. We want to make it easier for people to live, work and keep their hard-earned money in their pockets, whilst at the same time reducing our \$13.5-billion deficit, all whilst being socially responsible to the people of Ontario. That's what our government is about and that's what this bill is about.

We are eliminating duplication. We heard time and time again about how burdensome red tape and duplication hurt businesses. For example, the regulations prescribed under the upholstered and stuffed article section of the Technical Standards and Safety Act are already regulated for safety by the federal government. By removing this extra regulation, businesses will save an administrative cost to ensure they're following both pieces of legislation. Another example is the repeal of the Pawnbrokers Act, which will remove this outdated law that duplicates municipalities' existing bylaw-making and licensing authority. And by repealing the Wireless Services Agreement Act, we're again removing duplication. It is laws and regulations like these that are preventing Ontario from being open for business. If something is already regulated at the federal level, we do not need another law at the provincial level.

Mr. Speaker, we are making it easier for families to have both parents working by allowing home child care providers to increase the number of children in their care, while maintaining guidelines, adhering to strict standards and keeping our children safe. We heard today from the members opposite on how this is somehow going to make our children's lives endangered. Mr. Speaker, I know many, many parents, many mothers, who have home child care so that they can stay home with their children and help look after some other children. I think it's ideal that we allow those to have a few more children in their homes in their care—and there are no better experts than our mothers.

Parents elected us to put more money back in their pockets and respect their wishes for what's best for their children, and that's what we are doing. Our government is working hard to create a new child care plan for Ontario, a plan that will make it more affordable for families while providing choice and increased availability, reducing red tape and administrative burden for providers, and improving quality and standards of care that must be provided.

Families can end up spending thousands of dollars on child care a month. I hear from constituents every week who are struggling to pay for child care, oftentimes costing them more than rent or a mortgage. This is unsustainable and unacceptable. That's why our government is taking immediate action. The amendments here in Bill 66 are not our final plan, but rather interim changes to give families immediate relief. We're creating more spaces for children in quality programs by allowing home-based child care providers and recreation and skills-building programs authorized by the government some flexibility in how they operate, whilst maintaining and retaining the health and safety provisions currently in place.

Ontarians need choice in how child care is delivered. Not only will home-based programs help reduce costs for families, they will also benefit those who live in our rural and remote communities who rely on home-based care so much more.

These changes aren't the end, but they are urgently needed. We promised families relief, and relief is coming. Promises made, promises kept.

We're also looking to improve the long-term-care situation here in Ontario. We had a severe deficit of beds available in our province, meaning that our most vulnerable weren't being provided the level of care they needed. Too many patients were being cared for in hospital beds, worsening the hallway health care crisis we know we have, or, worse, were left on their own. During the election, our government committed to building 15,000 long-term-care beds over five years. In October, our Premier and the Minister of Health committed to building the first wave of 6,000 beds. But more action is needed. That's why we're reducing red tape in this sector as well, to improve access to the quality long-term care that residents and families expect, whenever they need it, no matter where in the province they live. By increasing flexibility when it comes to the issuance of temporary emergency licences where long-term-care beds are needed to accommodate residents affected by an emergency, and streamlining the licensing process for operators to reduce paperwork and administrative burden, thereby allowing faster support for the development and redevelopment of long-term-care beds, we are moving quickly to address the immediate challenges facing Ontario's health care system.

Together we will create a world-class health care system that works for the people of Ontario.

Mr. Speaker, our government is also committed to keeping our promise to treat taxpayer dollars with respect and accountability. By explicitly deeming public bodies such as school boards, hospitals, colleges and universities as non-construction employers, public projects will be subject to competitiveness and fairness, demonstrating that Ontario is truly open for business. Under these proposed changes, a broader range of contractors would be allowed to bid on a greater number of public sector construction projects. This proposed reform levels the playing field for all contractors and workers, remaining consistent with our government's commitment to all workers: If you're prepared to do the work and do it well, you deserve a shot at the job. Increased competition drives costs down and puts more money back in taxpayers' pockets. When it comes to government projects, it often seems to be the case that costs increase to amounts that are unheard of in the private sector. This is not right.

Part of making Ontario open for business is ensuring that Ontarians have the skills and education they need to fill the jobs our province needs. Private career colleges play an enormous role in the province's post-secondary landscape, providing graduates with the knowledge and skills they need to get a job in a specific vocation. Our province is home to a wide variety of jobs that need various skills, and career colleges, along with other vocational schools, help prepare the workforce for those jobs. Their flexible learning schedules, staggered enrolment times and compressed programs also fill a very important role for mature students seeking re-education to change careers or improve their credentials, often while working or raising a family. By amending the Private Career Colleges Act, we will reduce the administrative burdens on these institutions and create registration

requirements that make sense, while aligning tuition fee collection with the federal government and reducing unnecessary regulatory notices. Important information for students will be maintained, and modern, easy-to-use online and technological services will be introduced.

By supporting education and employment programs that benefit students and job seekers, we are helping to create the skilled workforce that our rapidly expanding labour market needs.

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Let's take an example of a personal support worker. We have a severe shortage of personal support workers in Ontario. Private colleges have allowed many people to study and qualify to become a PSW. Most are studying after working full-time in another employment or after raising their family during the day. A few weeks ago, I had the privilege of shadowing a personal support worker in a long-term-care home. I doubt that anyone here would argue that their job isn't extremely difficult and challenging. I have a great amount of respect for those people who help as personal support workers.

The amendments and changes in this bill are just the beginning of our government's plans to make Ontario open for business. We want our businesses to begin, expand and be successful in the province. As I said earlier, we need these businesses to succeed, for Ontarians to have well-paying jobs.

It's no surprise that businesses were packing up and leaving. As of June, there were over 380,000 regulations in the province of Ontario, far more than in any other province in the country. This is unacceptable. Many of these regulations have a significant cost to employers or even employees. It would be a disservice to the employers and businesses in this province if we were to keep adding regulations while every other jurisdiction is looking to reduce or streamline their regulations, lower their corporate tax rate and remove barriers that prevent businesses from operating or expanding. It's the small and medium-sized businesses that suffer the most from all of these heavy regulations, and these are the businesses we are working hard to create a successful environment for.

Like many of the members here in the House, I was a business owner. We spent so much time keeping up with regulations and keeping up with compliance that there was often not enough time left to actually run our businesses.

Most companies fully understand that safety is key and very important, but the burdensome red tape often stops many people from opening or staying in business. You see, there are lots of issues regarding business and other regulations in this province that were left behind by the previous government. We are working hard to address them.

This bill isn't the be-all and end-all. Last week, our Minister of Economic Development, Job Creation and Trade announced our Driving Prosperity plan, reaffirming our commitment to the automotive sector. This plan is comprised of three pillars—a competitiveness business climate, innovation and talent—that will strengthen and build on Ontario's North American leadership in auto-

motive assembly and parts production, and position Ontario to be a leader in the development, commercialization and adoption of advanced manufacturing and mobility technologies.

We are already seeing results from supporting our businesses. In January alone, employment in our province increased by 41,400 jobs, with over 70% of them being full-time. Our commitment to Ontario's industries and businesses will surely improve these numbers and provide Ontarians access to these well-paid, skilled jobs that they are capable of doing.

Our government is committed to improving our economy, and our minister is doing a phenomenal job. Our government has been taking action since we were elected, and this piece of legislation reaffirms our commitment to keep the promise we made to the people of Ontario to make Ontario open for business.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): Questions and comments?

Mr. Jeff Burch: It's interesting to listen to the member. This government, quite frankly, has proven time and time again that they don't really understand what red tape really is. They have proven that through Bill 66 with schedule 10, putting it forward and then withdrawing it. Is the greenbelt plan red tape? Is the Clean Water Act red tape? Is the Oak Ridges moraine act red tape? That's what they thought a couple of months ago, and now they've changed their minds.

So they don't really know what red tape is to begin with, and there's a long history of that, of the Progressive Conservative Party not knowing the difference between red tape and protections for the public. We remember Walkerton, for example.

Even in something as simple as regulating pawn-brokers, this government won't listen to evidence or advice from police asking for more regulation. They just go ahead on their own and decide that they'll have less regulation.

There's nothing to do with evidence here. There's a lack of understanding of what red tape really is. If they really cared about governments helping business, they wouldn't have started off their term by interfering with businesses; cancelling green contracts that businesses were counting on to hire employees; tampering with corporate boards and paying millions of dollars in public money as a penalty, and failing to stand up for auto jobs. How can you say you're for business and you can't even stand up for auto jobs in the province of Ontario—jobs that protect communities?

We have a government putting forward a bill that they say gets rid of red tape, and they've proven time and time again that they have no idea whatsoever what red tape really is. It's disappointing.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): Further questions and comments?

Mr. Vincent Ke: For the past 15 years, because of the mismanagement of the previous government, we have seen so many jobs and investment lost in our province. We saw over 300,000 manufacturing jobs leave our province,

and we also saw international investment in Ontario drop from number one to number four.

That is why our government is committed to creating a positive business environment, so that business can grow and create more good and sustainable jobs, and also attract more investment.

Businesses in Ontario face the highest costs to comply with regulations and red tape. We have over 380,000 pieces of red tape. It's number one in the country, while the second one, British Columbia, has only 160,000 pieces.

We know that red tape has already hit all sizes of government and all sizes of business, especially small business. That is why our government is committed and is working hard to cut unnecessary, duplicate and outdated red tape by 25%.

Over the past eight months, our government has been working hard to reduce taxes, fees and skyrocketing bills, to make families more affordable and to make it much easier for business to grow.

We believe that business owners should spend more time growing their business, not filling out paperwork.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): Further questions and comments?

Ms. Doly Begum: It's a pleasure to speak to this bill, but it is unfortunate that we are having to speak to it, in the sense that this bill does not even address its title, and it does not address the need for this province.

I want to begin by saying one thing: Children's care is not business. Again, child care is not business. Caring for our little ones is not a business. Caring for the most vulnerable is not a business.

We're talking about our kids. We're talking about the most vulnerable ones, who need proper care that's quality care. We're talking about making sure that the early childhood educators are paid properly. That's not business. The people who work in these sectors do it because they care—because they care to make sure that we're developing young ones the best way possible. That's not business.

When we're talking about removing red tape from these regulations, we're talking about regulations that were put in place after we had deaths in this province. There were babies who died. That legislation was put in place to make sure that our children are safe and that that never happens again.

1630

It is really, really disappointing that we're facing a bill on the table right now where we might have to face a situation like that again for this government to say, "Oh, maybe we made a mistake." So here I am, telling you before you make that mistake: Child care is not a business. This legislation for the protection of our children, that's not red tape.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): Further questions and comments?

Mrs. Robin Martin: I'm delighted to rise today and thank my friend from Mississauga–Streetsville for her excellent presentation on the legislation. I agree with a lot of what she said. I think the most important thing that she

said is how it's so important to create good jobs and better jobs for the people of Ontario.

We're not a government that is for business per se; we're a government which is for the people. Because of that, we tend to be for businesses because businesses create those good jobs that people want. People need to get ahead in Ontario and have been struggling for a long time. We need a competitive business environment where people can get better jobs, where businesses are vying for their labour so that they can get higher wages. That is what people want. There are a lot of good things in this legislation which will help make that happen.

I think that is the most important thing. As my friend from Mississauga–Streetsville said, when job creators thrive, when businesses thrive, communities thrive and people thrive. That is the critical thing. That is why we're supporting this legislation. We want to try to make things better for people so that they can have better jobs which pay better so people can get ahead.

It hasn't happened in Ontario for 15 years. We've had stagnation in wages, especially for low- and middle-income people who are striving to get ahead, and we want to do better for them. That is why we're bringing forward this legislation. We want to make sure job creators are encouraged to be here so people have better jobs. That's what people are looking for. Certainly when we're going door to door that's what we hear from people. They want better opportunities.

Businesses in Ontario face the highest costs from regulations. They face \$33,000 per company—

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): Thank you.

Mrs. Robin Martin: Thank you. Sorry.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): Thank you very much. Now I'm going to return to the member from Mississauga–Streetsville for final comment.

Mrs. Nina Tangri: First of all, I'd like to thank all the members of the House for speaking on this legislation. It's extremely important that I do ask all members of this House on all sides to support this legislation because it's absolutely key to making sure that we let the global world know that we are open for business, that we want to make sure that our communities all over this province thrive, regardless of the members' political leanings. It's important that we tell the global world, "Come here. Open. Expand."

We want to make sure our education facilities are able to train our youth and our immigrants to the jobs and to the skills that are needed right here in Ontario. We have a huge deficit. I heard it time and time again from many industries in my riding, where they say, "We have the jobs but we don't have the skill set ready today for those jobs."

We want to make sure that we make it easier for our institutions to train, and we are asking employers to go to the institutions and to come to the colleges and universities and teach courses that help them be job-ready as soon as they're done. We're coming a long way. We've spoken to many of these institutions and they are working with us.

On child care, it is so important. As a mother myself and now a grandmother, I want to make sure that our

children are in a safe environment. A lot of mothers and a lot of people—fathers—like to stay at home with their children. Some people are not able to go out and work. So, if they're looking after their children and maybe one, two, or three other children at the same time, it's a great benefit for everyone because many people need those neighbours to look after their children. They need someone there. We're just allowing that to happen, allowing the parents that flexibility to be able to do that.

Thank you to all members of the House. I do encourage you to please support Bill 66.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): Further debate?

Mr. Ian Arthur: It is truly an honour to rise and get to speak to this bill today in the Legislature. Listening to the debate that's already happened, both from my colleagues and from those who are across the floor, I want to pick up on a couple of things that were said here.

The very title of the act, "An Act to restore Ontario's competitiveness"—I want to talk about that. Competitive for whom and in what areas? This government talks a lot about the massive amount of red tape they're going to get rid of, this unnecessary regulation. I think they lose sight of the intent of some of that regulation. Certainly they lost sight of it with schedule 10 and the clean water framework, what was there to protect people because people died. The rules surrounding daycare were there to protect people because people died, children under the age of two died. I think we need to look deeper and actually see who we're trying to make this more competitive for.

My impression is that it's for those who lobby this government. Those who have access, who have club memberships at the Albany Club, those are the ones who have the ear of this government, because we haven't really tackled a huge amount of red tape or regulation. This government has targeted very small, very specific amounts of what they're calling "red tape."

I have to say that I agree with my colleague from Waterloo who said that we're cutting Scotch tape; we're not cutting red tape. The sort of targeted going in at certain small things is closer to Scotch tape than it is to a comprehensive examination of our business system and how we attract businesses in.

One of the other reasons I don't feel that this act addresses why Ontario is uncompetitive is the business decisions that have already happened under the purview of this government. We're talking about a reversal of subsidies for green companies and green cars, which resulted in a lawsuit from Tesla against the Ontario government, which they lost.

We're talking about a deal from Hydro One, one of the biggest energy deals in the history of this province that completely disappeared because this government interfered in the process of the management of Hydro One. The regulators specifically put the blame on the government's intervention in that decision, and it cost us \$103 million.

One of the fastest-growing competitive sectors in the world is in the green economy. It's in building energy for the future. You can talk about the failure of the Green

Energy Act. I will agree, it was not a good act, but that doesn't mean we should lose access to that growing market on a global scale. We should be trying to position ourselves at the front of that market. We have the education and we have the workforce to do that, but because of the actions taken by this government, those companies don't want to operate out of Ontario. How is that making us competitive? We are avoiding opportunity.

This bill does a lot, and there's a few areas I want to touch on. I've already used up almost four minutes here, so I'm absolutely going to run out of time, but let's talk about a couple of them.

Schedule 2 very quickly—it was mentioned that it duplicates authority that already exists in municipalities by repealing the Pawnbrokers Act, but those regulations don't actually exist in all municipalities. Some cities have passed bylaws that achieve the same things, but many haven't.

So if you want to work with municipalities to ensure that they have those bylaws in place before you repeal it, that's great. We are one day after the introduction of your police legislation, but here you're actually taking away a tool of the police to be able to do their job, and if you're not taking it away, if the expectation is that the municipalities are going to be able to pick up the slack where the province no longer has jurisdiction, then so be it, but you can't really call that reducing red tape; you call that downloading onto municipalities because that regulation will still exist on a municipal level. That's not a reduction in red tape. You can try to spin it as a reduction in red tape, but it still exists. It's still there. It's just under someone else's jurisdiction. Maybe that's convenient for this government to claim that they're reducing red tape in this area, but the actual effects of what you're doing absolutely do not achieve that.

1640

People have short memories, Mr. Speaker, memories that are so short. It shocks me that we have to talk about schedule 3 and the changes to child care. Four children under two died in home child care, and they changed the ratio to deal with that problem. Since that, no one has died. That legislation worked. I cannot believe that this is seen as red tape by this government. I don't understand it. We forget that there was a scathing Ombudsman report directed at home daycare, which led to this legislation, this change in ratio. We forget that so quickly. I pray that this reversal does not result in the same thing and that the members opposite do not have to stand in front of that press conference that may happen with these ratios being changed.

These changes are not supported in my community. I have received hundreds of emails from constituents on nearly every aspect of this bill, but in particular, they expressed concern about the child care component. Caylee Ortiz, an early childhood educator, was incredibly worried about schedule 3. She has the safety of children at her core; that is what she is worried about. She is an early childhood educator. She works with these kids day in and day out, and she knows this is a bad idea. She came into my office

to talk to me to express her concern for these changes and to ask me to lobby the government on behalf of children—not on behalf of her or people she works with. They're not worried about competition. They're not worried about that. They're worried about the children, and that's why they are asking the government to reconsider this.

I want to quote the Ontario Coalition for Better Child Care here. They had this to say about schedule 3: "They"—being the government—"are trying to do child care on the cheap ... with nowhere near the oversight that a child care program would have"—a licensed child care program would have. I believe they are right. The government wants an easy solution. We have a child care problem in Ontario. They want a cheap, easy solution that's not on them. Loosen the regulations, let the market take care of it, and by golly, we hope some more kids don't die. That is such a shameful thing to do. The regulations were brought in because of that reason. We can't go back to that, but yet here we are going back to that.

I want to talk a little bit too about the Toxics Reduction Act. I have been an environmentalist my entire life. I'm a very proud environmentalist. First of all, I believe in climate change, which I hope everyone in here does but I'm not convinced. But I want to talk about this act specifically and what you are calling "duplicated regulation or legislation," because it isn't really duplicative. There is the Canadian Environmental Protection Act and it does some things, but it doesn't go far enough.

When you start to look at how many toxic substances we continue to put into the environment, into water supplies, into the air, we begin to realize that we are actually incredibly far behind. The members opposite would bring up the regulations in New York state as a comparison point for Ontario. But if we're going to do that, let's talk about how much lower the levels of toxic substances that New York state and New Jersey release into their water and air are, compared to Ontario.

The toxic substances reduction act was a flawed piece of legislation because it did not have an enforcement mechanism attached to it. It was voluntary. But it did provide the public with important information with regard to what companies were actually putting in. There wasn't an avenue to stop those companies from putting the toxic substances into the environment, but at least we knew what they were doing. That's something that the Canadian Environmental Protection Act does not do. It does not have that reporting requirement, so we're no longer going to know whether a company is working towards reducing how many toxins they put into it.

I'd like to read from the Environmental Commissioner's most recent report, which very well may likely be her last report: "Toxic water pollution is still occurring. Many of today's businesses still routinely use toxic chemicals.... While Ontario has some rules to limit toxic chemical discharges into water bodies, those rules relating to industrial manufacturing have not been updated in a quarter century and are out of date...."

"When the regulations were passed between 1992-1994, the Ministry of the Environment committed itself to

keep them updated through 'periodic re-examinations,' with the eventual goal of 'virtual elimination of persistent toxic substances.' The ministry promised:

"When re-examinations find better technology has been developed, or industry abatement standards have improved, or the receiving body of water is suffering, new and lower limits will be imposed."

"Twenty-five years later, this has never happened. Indeed, these outdated regulations still claim to cover facilities that no longer even operate in Ontario.

"The outdated MISA regulations might not matter if up-to-date pollution limits were set by the individual environmental compliance approval issued to each facility under the Ontario Water Resources Act."

Just to put this in perspective, in the eight years from 2009 to 2018, the Environmental Commissioner's office found no evidence that toxic industrial discharges to water had been reduced. I think that speaks to the fact that this legislation, the Toxics Reduction Act, wasn't strong enough, that it needed to be improved upon. But to simply remove it and not put anything in its place, you're opening the door for more pollutants to be put in. That's worse air quality, that's worse water quality, and it's dangerous to the people of Ontario. The people of Ontario deserve better than that.

We don't want to over-regulate business. We don't want to drive away business. No one on this side of the floor wants to drive away business. I see members opposite smiling at that, but it very much is true. You can't operate a business if it causes danger to the people of Ontario. One of the ways that danger is caused to the people of Ontario is through the release of toxic chemicals into our environment—into water and into air. The levels are crazy.

I'd like to take a minute and just read some of the substances that we continue to leak in massive amounts into the environment.

Benzene: 173—we are bigger than New Jersey. We'll do this comparison with the States, with this unregulated, wonderful area for business in New Jersey: We have seven times the amount of benzene being released into it.

Vinyl chloride: We have more being released into the atmosphere.

Lead: 10 times the amount of lead is released into the air and water in Ontario than in New Jersey.

We are polluting at a rapid rate in Ontario, and yet this government is seeing fit to lift those regulations that made any attempt to reduce these toxic substances going into the environment. The health effects are going to be detrimental. It's incredibly unfortunate that the government is moving in this direction. It's dangerous.

I want to talk a little bit about schedule 9, and in particular something that I have personal experience with. I worked for a small business. I was a chef, and I had a team of people in the kitchen. As many of you may know, there are a lot of hours, and they tend to fluctuate a lot. Some days are really long, you're incredibly busy on the weekend, and Tuesday nights can be really quiet. The averaging of people's pay over a two-week period—I get

that it can be seen as a useful tool by business. It's something that I was always tempted to take advantage of, but I never could really bring myself to do that. I could schedule someone with an incredibly heavy workload in one week and then just cut their shifts the next week and totally change around their lives—exhausted one week, and no work the next—and I wouldn't have to pay them any more to do that. I couldn't bring myself to think that was right. I get that it might be seen as a useful tool by business owners, but I think a better solution is to come up with supports that help businesses schedule.

Sometimes there are unscheduled things that happen that force someone to do overtime in one week and not the other week. But what this allows is for that to be done consistently, which will take advantage of workers. There are always exceptions, there are always extenuating circumstances that cause a spike in one place, but you should never use that to justify removing money from the pockets of Ontarians, and that's what this is going to do.

1650

This is the money-in-pockets government, but you're giving business a tool to take advantage of their employees to pay them less. That is the outcome of this. I know that; I lived it. It would have been a great thing to take advantage of, from a business perspective, but only if you don't think about your employees, only if you don't think about the fact that they're going to work really hard for you—their blood, sweat and tears are put into your business so that you can succeed—and they're going to have less after two weeks. That's not right; that's not fair. There are better solutions out there, to make Ontario competitive, than doing this.

It is going to adversely affect those in precarious work positions, those earning minimum wage, those who already do not have enough money. A little bit of overtime one week might help them make rent the next month, but taking away that overtime will have a detrimental effect on them, and it will not have the effect of making Ontario more competitive or more open for business. I just don't believe that.

I'm going to take the last little bit of time to talk about schedule 10. This government has promised that, through amendments in committee, they will remove schedule 10. I look forward to seeing it removed in its entirety. But I want to talk about this at length, because this was the biggest and most significant attack on the environment that Ontario has seen in a long time.

The ability for open-for-business bylaws to circumvent the Clean Water Act and the Greenbelt Act was there for the taking. Any municipality that wanted to sign on to that could do that. It so goes against what I believe we should be proud of in Ontario. Ontario: Yours to Discover. Well, what are we going to discover if we take away all those protections that we have in place, that protect those things that we want to show off—that natural beauty of the land, the greenbelt, those parks and forests? If we open those up for development, what's going to be left?

Okay, you've attracted a company in. I think we can get those companies here without opening the greenbelt for

development. We already have gotten many of those companies. I fundamentally believe that this government has an outdated view of business and manufacturing and the companies we should be trying to attract. They're the jobs of the past. We need to look to the jobs of the future, and those companies can operate here.

Interjection.

Mr. Ian Arthur: Sorry?

We need to look to where the jobs should be going, and the types of manufacturing that we could attract back to Ontario in the future.

This legislation was incredibly unpopular, and the government is right to roll it back. Almost 90% of people oppose opening the greenbelt. This is the government's second try at opening the greenbelt for development. The Premier tried it during the campaign, and had to roll it back. This government tried it again, and has had to roll it back. So I've set the timer on my watch for another couple of months, and we'll be back here having this same discussion again about how protecting green space around Toronto somehow has a negative impact on business.

I was incredibly proud at how many municipalities stood up and said they would not take advantage of the ability to use open-for-business bylaws. In my city of Kingston, our city council was one of the many councils across Ontario who understood that schedule 10 was fundamentally wrong: that it lifted protections on clean water, that it was an attack on our environment, and that the things we care about in Ontario are far more important than an open-for-business bylaw. When they passed the resolution at city council in Kingston saying that they would absolutely not take advantage of schedule 10 if it was passed, I could not have been prouder of my small community. I'm incredibly proud to stand here today and get to speak against it as well.

I will repeat that I truly hope that the entirety of schedule 10 is rolled back in committee, as this government has promised to do, and that you don't try to manoeuvre small parts of it out of the way and hope that you can keep what you were trying to accomplish, which was circumventing planning acts in favour of those lobbyists—to loop back to the beginning of this conversation—those people who have undue influence on this government. Because they do.

I really, fundamentally hope that we can create, and I do believe we can create, an Ontario where we do have businesses that look towards the future, that lead in environmental protections, and that put us back on the global stage in a competitive nature, but I don't feel that this act and the actions of this government are going to accomplish that.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): Questions and comments?

Mr. Prabmeet Singh Sarkaria: I'm very happy to speak to this piece of legislation because, yet again, it's another commitment we made to the people of Ontario when we were campaigning, to make sure that we reduce red tape and regulations in this province that are putting us so far behind. Every single day, before we were elected,

businesses were losing confidence in the government in Ontario and businesses were leaving, but ever since we've been elected, we've seen businesses have an increase in confidence in what we're doing in this province, starting with all the legislations that we have been passing almost right after getting elected, whether it was getting rid of cap-and-trade or making sure we reduce fuel prices across this province.

Specifically, if we're speaking to this bill, we had a huge problem on our hands: 380,000 regulations in this province—380,000 regulations costing businesses thousands and thousands of dollars. We want our businesses to grow. We don't want our businesses to be filling out paperwork when they should be working hard to grow this economy. That's exactly what this bill is aimed at doing, to make sure that we have a government that fosters an environment where businesses can grow, because when businesses can grow and bring high-paying jobs, more jobs to our communities, our communities will thrive and there will be more opportunity for all of us in Ontario.

I'm very happy to stand by our government and the ministers who, day and night, have been working to ensure that our economy is back on track, to make sure that Ontario becomes the economic engine it once was and make sure that, under the leadership of Premier Ford, we bring back more jobs to Ontario.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): Further questions and comments?

Mr. Taras Natyshak: I'm pleased to join the debate today. I want to thank my colleague the member from Kingston and the Islands for adding to the debate. I think he brought a lot of insight, real factual stuff. He is someone who is definitely concerned about the impact of this bill on the environment, as it is his file, and he spoke passionately about that.

Speaker, I want to throw something out there for everyone to consider. We hear the government bemoan the fact that there are 380,000 regulations on the books. It's interesting because I can recall, back in the day when Tim Hudak was the leader of the PCs, he talked about 600,000. I don't know if the number is anywhere in between that, but let's just say it's a couple of hundred thousand regulations.

Speaker, in this bill, by my count, they have attacked that issue with ferocity in this House by eliminating about eleven of those 380,000 regulations that they are so vehemently opposed to. It's interesting, Speaker, because they're driving the bus in this place. They're running the ship, so I wonder which of the other 379,901 regulations are on the chopping block. Where are they? Where are they on regulations around protection of workers in this province?

It's funny, Speaker. I sit in a spot held by the member from—Yakabuski, the member from—

Mr. Michael Mantha: Renfrew–Nipissing–Pembroke.

Mr. Taras Natyshak: Renfrew–Nipissing–Pembroke. I recall him introducing a bill in this House to regulate the removal of snow from transport trucks because they cause significant problems in the winter. This is a serious issue. We supported that.

What are the other regulations that this government thinks should be ripped off the books and put people's and children's safety in jeopardy in this province? They're not being serious when they talk about 380,000 regulations. We'd like to see their plan.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): Further questions and comments?

1700

Mr. Deepak Anand: It's nice to hear from both sides. But again, one thing I want to talk about is that the bill is restoring Ontario's competitiveness. We are in a vicious cycle. We have lots of regulations—

Mr. Taras Natyshak: Yes, 380,000 of them.

Mr. Deepak Anand: Some 380,000 making us uncompetitive. Because we're uncompetitive, businesses are losing money. They're leaving. They're closing. They're moving away.

What we want to do is we want to rewind that. We want to create a vicious cycle to make our Ontario more competitive. That's all we're doing.

Ms. Doly Begum: You want to create a vicious cycle?

Mr. Deepak Anand: We want to create a good vicious cycle, a positive vicious cycle. That's what we're trying to do.

For the last 15 years, Ontario has suffered under a Liberal government that didn't care about job creation for families and investments in the province. Some 300,000 jobs: That's what we lost. That's why our government has committed to create an environment where businesses can grow, thrive and create jobs right here in Ontario.

Regulations cost. It costs \$33,000 for a company, Mr. Speaker. When we compare with the other provinces, it's \$25,000 to \$27,000. That's about 30% more cost. Who's hit the most? Small businesses. And who are the small businesses in the province? About 97% of the businesses in our province are small businesses.

I think it is our paramount responsibility. We should be committed to cutting red tape and increasing efficiencies. We are committed to reducing red tape by 25%. I hope all of us agree and work together.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): Thank you very much. I'd like to thank the member from Mississauga–Malton for his indulgence, and now will ask for further questions and comments.

Mr. Michael Mantha: I want to give a good shout-out to the member from Kingston and the Islands. He brought a very local perspective based on his experience that he's had, and I think we heard quite articulately his passion for the environment. A lot of his comments that struck a chord with me were, who is going to be benefiting from this so-called Restoring Ontario's Competitiveness Act, or, as he so eloquently used from our lead, the member from yesterday, from Waterloo, the bill referred to as the Scotch-tape-cutting bill.

When you look at this bill, and you really look at who is benefiting from it, it's large developers that are going to be benefiting from this, individuals that are in the backrooms. What the member eloquently indicated is that big spenders, big-money individuals, are going to be

benefiting from a lot of the decisions that are going to be made here, because we're looking at taking away many protections.

Protections for landlords, who are going to be able to continue gouging their tenants through their hydro bills—that's going to be taken away. We're looking at taking away protections from parents and grandparents and making it easier for the licensing of home care and long-term care. That's going to be happening. I believe there are quite a few incidents that have happened and deaths that have happened in long-term care, and as the member brought forward, in child care, where we have discussed, we have debated, we have come up with good legislation, but we're looking at eliminating those.

There are a lot of things that are going to be happening here: the attacks on workers that are going to be happening through the implementation of this bill. There are a lot of things that are going to be happening here, but there is only one that is going to be benefiting from it, and that's big businesses.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): Now I return to the member from Kingston and the Islands for final comments.

Mr. Ian Arthur: I'd like to pick up on what the member from Essex said there, talking about what red tape or what regulations were actually redundant and which ones are being removed. When I see redundant layers of regulation that don't need to be there, that are an obstruction to business, that make them go through the same process twice, of course I would like to eliminate that. The parts of this bill where there are changes to wireless protections, well, when that bill was written, a lot of the federal wireless protections weren't in place yet. Now that they are, I understand that there is overlap there. With the Pawnbrokers Act, I understand that if municipalities have a similar bylaw in place, then, yes, it's another layer of red tape. But reading through this bill, I run out of those examples very quickly. I fail to understand how the home-care ratios can be considered red tape. I truly fail to see that.

If the government wants to work together to come up with answers to the regulations that are truly redundant, that are making businesses do something twice or do something that is completely unnecessary, I would love to work with the government on that. But I think a very small percentage of this bill is actually aimed at that, and the bigger agenda of this government, as I said earlier, is to represent folks who, frankly, are not in this room, and they're not the people of Ontario en masse.

What you end up with is a bill where you have some elimination of that red tape; you have a few things that they want to direct attention to and stand behind, as the government; but you have a whole lot more that is there for other reasons that we're going to discover down the road.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): Further debate?

Mr. Daryl Kramp: I'm certainly so proud and pleased to be able today to speak on what I do consider a powerfully good piece of government legislation.

Red tape is a notorious opponent of progress. As Saturn V rocket scientist Wernher von Braun put it, "Conquering the universe, one has to solve two problems: gravity and red tape. We could have mastered gravity."

By taking on red tape, Bill 66, the Restoring Ontario's Competitiveness Act, 2018, will boost the provincial economy, and all of our local economies, literally overnight. When I say "overnight," collectively speaking—given, of course, the speed that government works.

It will, of course, by axing red tape, enable much-needed regulatory changes and burdensome regulations, so businesses can grow, create and protect good jobs across Canada.

Indeed, by putting jobs and the families they support as our job number one, we are really starting to put Ontario back on track, and that is by getting over-government out of the way of the entrepreneurs and the workers across this province who are busily putting the province back on the road to robust recovery. We've seen it happen already on many occasions.

As we know, we have a very, very aggressive government on this side of the House. In 2018, we roared out of the gate in this Legislature. We cut income taxes for low-income earners. We reduced hidden taxes and licence fees. We made gas and electricity cheaper for Ontarians, and we will still cut those prices even more and again.

With those important shackles and barriers to growth removed, Ontario's economy responded literally immediately. Indeed, the collective legislative and leadership efforts of the government in 2018 made Ontario, once again, open for business.

Yes, the immediate result of our government treating the economy seriously during this period was a saving to taxpayers of over a billion dollars in that first sitting of 2018, plus future interest added on top of that. That's how much our annual deficit was lopped, as the finance minister sitting before us here today—congratulations, sir, for all your good work—announced last week.

As some well-known Carpenters put it, "We've only just begun." Of course, I'm not going to go ahead—I understand the Speaker is an aficionado of good music, so I certainly will not hum the tune.

Now, with Bill 66, by restoring Ontario's competitiveness, we will continue our quest to once again make Ontario a place to stand and a place to grow.

I'd like to focus, if I could today, on red tape.

It's a term that's popular; it's historic; but it's also greatly misunderstood. It's centuries old, and it has its roots in formal red ribbons and red tape used by ancient bureaucracies in Europe, Great Britain and Asia when they wanted to exert control. The red binding said, very simply, "Stop," and stop they did, until the red tape was cut and matters were then allowed to proceed. Cutting red tape, even way back then, was about making things happen, not leaving them locked down.

Of course, in the centuries since it was first employed, the use of red tape has now been raised to a high art, especially by the Liberals who preceded us. They created red tape in the shape of hurdles and in layers and in waves,

which forced people to answer many of the same questions in multiple ways. It deflects, removes focus and puts arcane bureaucratic imperative ahead of getting the job done. It holds growth back and deters the investment which creates jobs.

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Other provinces have seen the same light as we do. Sadly, the Ontario Liberals missed that light. For example, over a decade ago the red tape reduction initiative in Newfoundland and Labrador adopted this following definition of red tape:

“(1) Non-essential procedures, forms, licences and regulations that add to the cost of dealing with government, or

“(2) Anything obsolete, redundant, wasteful or confusing that diminishes the province’s economic competitiveness, and stands in the way of job creation or wastes taxpayers’ time and money.”

Simplistic, but true, Mr. Speaker. That definition makes a lot of sense for me and, I know, my constituents and my colleagues.

Yes, Mr. Speaker, I’ve talked to a lot of people in my riding of Hastings–Lennox and Addington about red tape in this past year. I attended a round table with my neighbouring MPP from the Bay of Quinte, the Minister of Economic Development, Job Creation and Trade. We heard at that place many, many comments from people across the spectrum, and we listened. All my fellow government MPPs sitting in this House here today, we listened on the campaign trail, we listened in our constituencies, at many and various places of work and over the phone, whether before, during or after the election. We asked for their input, and we have heard them loud and clear. Those are direct savings to job creators, which they will then multiply into more jobs and more revenues, and create more funds to be able to spend accordingly to help protect the safety net that we all know and love and appreciate. These revenues, of course, will also further reduce Ontario’s deficit.

Red tape is more than a vague concept in Ontario, and it’s not some populist gambit, but sadly, we in Ontario are the poster boys and girls for red tape. A report from the University of Toronto’s Munk School of Global Affairs and Public Policy says that Ontario has the highest cost of regulation among any of Canada’s 10 provinces—the highest of any of our 10—with more than 380,000 regulatory requirements, nearly twice that of the next province and over three times the provincial average.

To another comment from across the aisle: Earlier on they said, “Well, these numbers just come out of the blue.” No, these numbers don’t come out of the blue. They come from sources that are defined, definitive and accurate. It’s not that the previous government or today’s official opposition didn’t know the extent of red tape, because both of them embraced it. They revelled in it—more and more—and they ignored the advice found in this Legislature and many other Legislatures around the world and in the media.

Three years ago, Philip Cross wrote in the *Financial Post*, “Regulating the details of how firms conform to

regulations is often offensive or even insulting to the customer. This hurts the relationship that businesses build with their clients, the very heart of small retail operations.” But then he went on further to write, “The lifeblood of business is listening—a habit of imaginative engagement with customers and suppliers. The real cost of regulations is that they disrupt this communication between business and clients and suppliers. Instead, we have businesses forced to explain what the government requires, instead of what is needed to please the client”—our constituents.

The government we replaced in 2018 ignored that good advice, of course. As we’ve heard in this chamber in the past 24 hours, the official opposition loves red tape—more and more bureaucracy. They like the idea that anybody operating in Ontario should jump through the same hoops for the federal and the provincial governments, not just the national standards that are good enough for every other Canadian in every province and every job creator. I hate to break this news to the opposition: Queen’s Park is not the centre of the universe. For the misleading orators opposite who claim everything done in Ottawa must be duplicated and different—stifling language just because we’re Ontario—well, give your fellow citizens a break. They are the people who are paying the bill, Mr. Speaker. No one can seriously believe that these two levels of government are needed to approve teddy bear stuffing, as we nonsensically heard yesterday from across the aisle.

Let me give you a real-world example of red tape and why it is so deeply, deeply despised—a personal one. Locally, in my riding, a marina needed a new dock. It was going to cost over \$40,000 to construct this dock, a lot of money for a small business. The marina owner then had to go through the approvals process. The various approvals had to come from the municipality, of course; the county; the conservation authority; the provincial Ministry of the Environment; the federal Ministry of the Environment; the Ministry of Natural Resources; the federal Ministry of Fisheries and Oceans—all requiring similar information. This process took over two years and cost more than the dock itself.

That is just one example of the millions of out-of-control bureaucracy and red tape. That’s an everyday person who works hard and tries to make a living for their family and serve the constituents in the community. There are thousands more like them.

Ontario needs to again become the economic engine of Canada by ridding itself of the triple burdens of excessive regulation, high taxes and high hydro costs.

Red tape costs Ontarians billions of dollars a year in lost productivity, broken dreams and dashed opportunity.

Red tape grows sometimes from good intentions grown old and obsolete, but oftentimes it’s from legislative or bureaucratic inattention that was simply overlooked, and too often from motivations that were given shallow or only limited scrutiny. Sometimes red tape results from panic, which leads to overcooked and overreactive legislation.

Unfortunately, layers of red tape have also been used by bureaucrats and devious governments to thwart transparency and to block public access to their internal and infernal machinations.

That's why we have consulted broadly. We have asked the public, all the people from Ontario, to tell us about their red tape experiences and their recommendations. We have conducted many, many formal and informal consultation meetings, and I know the parliamentary secretaries—the MPPs for Aurora–Oak Ridges–Richmond Hill and Flamborough–Glanbrook—have conducted dozens and dozens of consultations across this province, where we sought input, insights and inspiration from all the victims and observers and promoters of red tape. We wanted to hear about the real world, not just the view from a Toronto cubicle.

One problem is that red tape is not always obvious. It's no longer red, after all; we've come centuries ahead from that. Indeed, it is so insidious that it can be hidden until you run into it on your way to do something important that really, really matters. Getting rid of red tape requires active extermination, with all hands on deck. I can tell you, you have a team here that is willing and dedicated to doing just that.

Our goal is to fully put Ontario back on track, with an economy that's humming, a budget that's balanced, money for our social needs, and a debt that's being paid down.

This is a comprehensive bill, because we listened. Every element in this bill will help all across this great province.

Work is the starting point for all but the socialists who simply want to spend other people's money. It's very simple to accomplish something else with someone else's money. That's why Bill 66 wants to help create a job-friendly and flexible labor market.

We're going to remove restrictions on home-based child care providers to make it easier for parents to find affordable child care and easier for small providers to afford to provide it, particularly in a lot of our rural areas, where that is the only option available to them. This change will make life easier for parents and families by making more and more affordable child care available, which is definitely needed. It will also make it easier for parents to re-enter the job market and for employers to find the workers they need. There are huge economic ripple effects to this.

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I have three daughters. I have four granddaughters and three grandsons. They need child care. This will help them get back to work and on the road.

Bill 66 will also amend the Employment Standards Act to reduce the regulatory burden on businesses, eliminating, for example, the need to obtain bureaucratic approval from the director of employment standards for shift management. As someone who once employed well over 100 people at one time and well over 1,000 over the course of my years in business, I can certainly back this red tape snip because scheduling is tough enough working with all of your customers, your clientele and staff who work with you—not for you. It's tough enough to match labour to the business demands and the spikes without having to call Big Brother every time you need to change the scheduling equivalent of a comma to a semicolon.

Bill 66 will also protect valuable industrial lands by ensuring the Municipal Property Assessment Corp. assess industrial properties based on current permitted uses, not speculative uses. This will protect businesses on employment lands from steep MPAC property tax increases when land values have jumped because of new residential developments nearby.

Bill 66 will reduce the burden so businesses can grow, create and protect good jobs in a wide variety of sectors.

In agriculture and food processing, jobs will benefit by removing outdated and time-consuming reporting requirements under the existing Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs Act, including ones required for loan guarantee problems. Costly and prescriptive standards under the Milk Act will be eliminated. Instead, an outcomes-based approach will be adopted in the regulations.

Changes under the Food Safety and Quality Act will reduce paperwork and fees and encourage expansion for provincially licensed meat plants, such as small abattoirs, allowing them to focus on food safety and economic growth.

Bill 66 will amend the Agricultural Employees Protection Act to establish more equity, consistency and clarity amongst agricultural workers. Ornamental horticultural farmers and their employees will be ensured the same protection as agricultural workers in other sectors. They will not be left out because, currently, most of these workers are part of an exemption clause which leaves them without the legal protection they should have.

Bill 66 will promote much-needed building and operation of more long-term-care facilities by modernizing and streamlining the administrative requirements. So Bill 66, as we all know, will do its part to deal with a situation that all of us deal with, which of course is ending hallway health care and shortening the waiting lists.

And Bill 66 will help the auto production sector by more closely aligning with the regulations in US jurisdictions. Importantly, Bill 66 will amend the Labor Relations Act to explicitly deem public bodies, including municipalities, school boards, hospitals, colleges and universities, as non-construction employers because it's already obvious to you and me, and it should be obvious to everybody, that they're not actually in the construction business. Where's common sense? This is expected to increase competitiveness for broader public sector construction projects and reduce costs by expanding those eligible to bid and dropping down, of course, the costs of our health care.

Bill 66 will amend regulations so that credit unions are no longer restricted from participating in bank-led loan syndications. This will help them better manage their risk and compete.

Bill 66 will do its part to eliminate red tape, big and small. It will amend the Workplace Hazardous Materials Information System regulations as found under the Occupational Health and Safety Act to allow updated labels to be placed on existing chemical containers because, without this simple change, existing chemicals need

to be disposed of safely and accurately and efficiently, and replacement chemicals would need to be purchased. This change alone will save hospitals, industries and Ontario universities an estimated \$60 million to \$108 million.

Colleagues, there's a difference between making the buses run on time and having them go to the right places. The previous government did neither. The official opposition doesn't know which is which. But we're doing both, which is why we have consulted for many, many months—before, during and after the election—to hear from everybody. Our opposition hasn't bothered to advise us once on red tape they've found, because they haven't looked. Perhaps they, ideologically speaking, can't see red. But Ontarians by the thousands can and have, and they have not been shy about telling us about it.

As we've said before, this isn't a one-shot exercise, because red tape doesn't sleep. Mr. Speaker, we haven't stopped. We are continuing to solicit red tape sightings, entanglements, removal opportunities. Indeed, an energized, motivated and empowered public is sending us new ones daily. We can't forget: They are the architects of the activity that takes place in this House. This is not a group of members in this House saying, "We are going to do what we think is right. We'll just go ahead and do it." No. We represent their thoughts, their issues, their concerns, and this bill is a reflection of that. Their thoughts will not go into file 13, I can assure you.

Bill 66 isn't just the first step or the last step in red tape reduction; it's a big leap forward.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): Questions and comments?

Mr. Ian Arthur: I'll stand and add a little more to the debate.

I'm pre-empting tomorrow just a little bit, but I wanted to bring to the attention of the government that my motion to end mandatory time-of-use pricing on electricity in Ontario will be debated tomorrow. What made me want to bring this up was the member opposite talking about how we haven't approached the government with a way to reduce red tape or change regulations. To me, the changing of mandatory time-of-use pricing would be a fantastic example of the elimination of a piece of regulation that unfairly targets businesses and families in Ontario who do not have the ability to change their lives to suit the schedule that exists with time-of-use pricing. So when the member opposite says that we haven't come to them—well, I have not come to you yet, but I will be coming to you tomorrow asking for the support from this government on this motion to end that unfair practice that does target businesses and families in Ontario who can't always make that schedule work. I'm looking forward to the government's support.

I think that we would very well be willing to work on unnecessary regulation. I alluded to that earlier. We talked about that. If there truly is redundant federal and provincial regulation, yes, that should be brought in line. You will find my support for that every time. But what you won't find is, when you use that label to target regulations that were intended to protect people's safety—and that's

where the distinguishing difference is, I think, in some of this legislation and some of the different components in this bill. I talked about that at length earlier.

So yes, let's find those pieces of regulation that truly are unnecessary. Let's tackle them. Let's make that easier. But let's make sure that we protect the safety of Ontarians while we do that.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): Further questions and comments?

Mr. Ross Romano: Red tape and what it means for us in our manufacturing sector—we hear the same stats over and over again, but you really can't emphasize them enough: over 380,000 regulations in the province; we've lost over 350,000 manufacturing jobs.

I want to just talk a little bit about the north—northern Ontario and some of the greatest jobs and what we offer this province of ours, the great province of Ontario, and what comes from northern Ontario. We've got the forestry sector. We've got the mining sector. We've got aggregate. We've got all these great resources that produce jobs, that produce so much in terms of income for the province—revenue—and we need the private industries out there to be able to maximize on the opportunities through those resources. With the kind of regulations we have in place, we are strangling our businesses and making it impossible for them to be able to operate.

We've heard stories in the riding of Algoma—Manitoulin, where we have Harte Gold. It took seven years to get a permit to be able to get Harte Gold operational.

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I was just this past week in Timmins dealing with a tour of opening of the Lake Shore mine gold shaft. It took multiple years to be able to get that moving forward.

I have people coming to me, again from the Algoma—Manitoulin riding, dealing with aggregate pits, where going into the north, it's impossible for them to get permits.

I have forestry companies right within my riding that find it impossible to be able to cut down a tree—40 permits to cut down one tree.

We can be generating so much more revenue and so much more job growth if we just cut the red tape. We rely on these industries. It's our lifeblood; it's what we can do in the north; it's what we have to offer. We need to cut the red tape.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): Further questions and comments?

Ms. Marit Stiles: It gives me great pleasure to respond to the comments of the member from Hastings—Lennox and Addington.

I did want, just for a moment, though, to reflect—on follow up, perhaps—on something that I spoke about earlier today when we were responding to some other comments. That was when I mentioned how these laws and regulations around home child care operators came into effect. I mentioned that these laws came into effect because babies died.

I want to mention for a moment that the member opposite from Eglinton—Lawrence said, "Just one baby."

That was shocking to me, and I tried to correct her and say, “No, more babies.” I just want to be very clear with the member from Eglinton–Lawrence about exactly what happened and how many babies we’re talking about. You may be thinking about Eva Ravikovich, the little baby who died in an unlicensed daycare in Vaughan in 2013. But I want to remind all the members in this House that she was one of four little ones who died in home-care-operator situations between 2013 and 2014—four.

Many of the members opposite—I wasn’t elected yet, but I remember the Conservatives asking, demanding, that the Liberals do something about this. It took them 15 years to put in place the kinds of regulations and provisions to ensure that our children are kept safe, and now this government wants to undo that, to bolster home-care businesses, home daycare businesses? Daycare is not a business; child care is not a business. You know what? Business is not about profit when it comes to child care. That is the problem, and that is why babies died in this province. This government wants to undo the regulations around that.

I’m sorry that you believe that profit—

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): Thank you very much.

Interjections.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): Order, please.

Further questions and comments?

Mrs. Belinda Karahalios: Let’s talk about child care. Before the changes that were made in 2015, I believe, all child care providers could have up to five children, with no age restrictions. Age restrictions were placed. All we’re doing is saying that now you can expand from two under two to three under two.

Why we’re doing this is important. I have a two-and-a-half-year-old. It is challenging, to say the least, to find a child care spot for him under the age of two. They are not available. This is expanding that option. It is now available.

To say that having a home child care is not a business—this is demonizing those who are running these home child care businesses.

Interjection: It sounds like demonizing.

Mrs. Belinda Karahalios: It sounds like they’re being demonized. I find this offensive. These men and these women—primarily women—are doing a favour. Yes, they’re running it. It is sometimes unaffordable. In Cambridge, we’re lucky to have it at \$45 a day, which is fantastic. This is a service that we need. To say that all of them are going to be killing children by allowing an extra child under two is shameful.

Yes, it is horrible that four children died under care—horrible. God rest their souls, and God help their parents. I couldn’t deal with that. But we cannot paint all child care providers with the same brush.

So, please, let’s take a step back and realize that this is a necessary business that is needed by many young mothers like myself, and that this is helping to expand that choice, so we have options to put our children into care so

that we can go back to work and help to support the economy.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): I now return to the member from Hastings–Lennox and Addington for his final comments.

Mr. Daryl Kramp: Maybe just a quick comment back, in response to the comments. To the member for Kingston and the Islands: Thank you for your comments. Yes, I’ll certainly accept all ideas, quite frankly. Will they be automatically accepted as gospel and truth and to-do? Not necessarily, because we may have a difference of opinion. But we should always be open to ideas in this House, and I’ll be looking for your response. I do reject the premise that we will not protect public safety. Quite frankly, a lot of my life has been involved with public safety, and that’s always a priority for government and it certainly is for this government.

To the member from Sault Ste. Marie: Sir, I was also born in the north, so I well recognize the northern realities, and I can stand and tell you that it’s a whole different situation when we have business and jobs and opportunities that are sitting at a standstill for years because we cannot get by the burden of red tape. You’ve made some wonderful, wonderful moves forward with the Harte mine etc. and I thank you for that, but certainly there is a lot more to do.

To the member for Davenport: I thank you for bringing the issue to the forefront. I have attended every one of my daughters’ births as well as all of my grandkids’, so the sanctity of life I certainly understand, probably as well as anybody, albeit I’m not a mother. However, I could not have answered your concern better than the member from Cambridge did, and so I thank her very, very kindly, because she dealt with the reality of the fact that life is a precious, precious thing and is not to be discounted, and legislation does not directly go to the demise or the lack of protection for people. Yet there’s another reality. We live rurally, many of us. Home care is not even an option for probably 80% of the people, Mr. Speaker, and so the organizations and home care facilities aren’t available. We have to deal with that reality too.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): Further debate?

Mr. Jeff Burch: It’s my pleasure to rise and speak to this bill. I’d ask for your indulgence if I have to stop. I’m working through a bit of a cold and may have to blow my nose halfway through the presentation.

I’m going to concentrate mostly on schedule 10 of this bill and drive home our opposition to that. I share the concern of my colleague from Kingston and the Islands. The government has said they will withdraw schedule 10 in committee, but whether it will be withdrawn in its entirety, whether pieces will be moved around within the bill or things added—those are all things that could happen in committee. I certainly hope the entire schedule is removed, because it is, as my colleague said, one of the worst attacks on the environment, I think, in the history of government in Ontario.

I have a great deal of experience in this area as a former city councillor and budget chair dealing with planning

issues. I've talked to many people, especially in Niagara, grape growers and others, who are very, very concerned about the greenbelt and about protecting the last of some of the best farmland in North America, quite frankly, in Niagara, in the greenbelt.

I decided a couple of months ago, as municipal affairs critic, that I would go around the province, starting in my own municipality, to whatever municipal councils would have me, to talk about this bill and the dangers. I presented first at Niagara regional council. One of the government members, the member from Niagara West, appeared as well. It was an interesting kind of experience to get in front of a municipal council and get both sides of the argument, and the member from Niagara West did a very good job. I didn't envy him. It was a difficult job, I think, to explain schedule 10.

The main points that I brought out that I will bring up today are, first of all, the problem of listing environmental protections as red tape. They're clearly presented in Bill 66 as red tape. It was a fundamental communications problem. I've never heard anyone really justify how you can, on one hand, say that nothing is going to happen to the greenbelt but list the greenbelt as, essentially, red tape.

It also gives the minister new powers to approve, expand and manipulate municipal applications in a very short period of time, and that's problematic.

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Third, it requires no public consultation, which is hugely problematic, especially when you're talking about regulations that are supposed to protect the public.

The government member kept repeating that the government won't violate the Greenbelt Act; the government won't violate the Clean Water Act. But when councillors asked why it is in Bill 66, there was never an answer. I think that was a fundamental problem with the government's strategy moving forward.

Secondly, and most interestingly, the member said, "The bill doesn't give the minister new powers, because the minister can already do everything in the bill." That's partly true and partly not true, and I'll touch on that in a moment.

There was, of course, no answer to the public consultation issue that I raised, because what can you say? It's a schedule in a bill that requires absolutely no public consultation whatsoever. Municipal councillors right across the province had a real problem with that and how they would respond to their constituents.

With respect to the statement that the bill doesn't give the minister new powers because they can already do everything in the bill, it raises the question: Is the government withdrawing, or do they plan to withdraw, schedule 10 in its entirety and not replace it with anything else? If so, I think the government should have said so and not just, "Oh, we're going to take out schedule 10," but "We're replacing it in its entirety" or "We're not replacing it at all." If that's not the case, which parts will remain, and which will be replaced in committee in other parts of the bill? Because that's something that can also happen as well.

But if so, is the government doing it because they have suddenly seen the light, that they believe that it was wrong to present these environmental protections as red tape? Or are they doing it because they believe what the member from Niagara West said at Niagara regional council, and what their own speaking notes say: that the minister can do everything the bill does anyway? The truth here, Speaker, is that through a ministerial zoning order, a top-down process, the minister already has the power to override certain acts in the name of planning.

That brings us back to this: What is the purpose of the bill? If you listen to the government's messaging and talking points, they say, "Well, this is a bottom-up process instead of a top-down process. We're being more democratic. We're giving tools to municipalities." The problem with that is that no one asked for those tools, first of all. By the responses from municipalities, which I will talk about shortly, municipalities don't want tools that degrade the environment in their municipality.

What this government really had set up with schedule 10 is a system where they can play municipalities against each other, to see who is willing to bend or break environmental protections to get development dollars. It's a way for the government to force municipalities to absorb the political hit for environmentally questionable developments promoted by the government—kind of like what my colleague was saying about downloading, except now they're downloading the political responsibility to municipalities.

What this government didn't anticipate, though, is that municipalities would stand up, recognize bad policy when they see it, and say no to the government, which we're very proud so many of them did.

Let's talk a bit about the acts that are affected. I know many of these have been touched on already, so I'm only going to touch on a few: provincial policy statements and growth plans under the Planning Act; the requirement that public works conform with municipal official plans; most of the Planning Act rules for enacting, amending or repealing zoning bylaws; and source protection plans to protect drinking water under the Clean Water Act, which was enacted as a direct response to seven deaths in Walkerton, Ontario, in 2000. This is perhaps the greatest tale of caution. Something deeply concerning in Bill 66 is the ability for business bylaws to not conform with the source protection plans to protect drinking water. As I said, the legislation was enacted in direct response to Walkerton and that tragedy, which resulted in 2,321 cases of illness, over 750 emergency room visits, 65 hospital admissions, 27 confirmed cases of uremic syndrome and seven deaths within a population of only 4,800.

Walkerton residents have indicated in response to this bill that some individuals still experience adverse health implications as a result of that outbreak. There are still children today, Speaker, now 16 years old, who are struggling with hypertension and kidney disease. It's worth noting that this tragedy following the deregulation of water facilities by a former PC government cost, in addition to the human cost, \$64 million.

Speaker, another act which my residents in Niagara and across southern Ontario are greatly concerned about is the greenbelt plan, which protects farmland and natural heritage, some of our last farmland. The Premier vowed to keep this intact in its entirety after being caught making a backroom deal to allow development on a “big chunk” of the greenbelt. Now the greenbelt, Speaker—and I just met with the people from the Grape Growers association. If we want to talk about business and what’s good for business, the Golden Horseshoe is surrounded by a significant portion of the greenbelt, and as it currently stands, it’s one of the largest and most successful in the entire world because of this act. The greenbelt provides regulatory protection from sprawl and inside it is protected prime agricultural land.

The Niagara Escarpment is part of the greenbelt tourism associated with the escarpment, which contributes \$100 million to local and regional economies. The Premier himself has stated, “The people have spoken. I’m going to listen to them. They don’t want me to touch the greenbelt. We won’t touch the greenbelt.”

Those concerned with the greenbelt development outlined that that will result in land speculation by developers, resulting in a loss of farmland. This is deeply concerning to the grape growers in Niagara who depend on preserving that farmland so that we can have Ontario-grown grapes in our wine, which is incredibly important to our economy in Niagara. We don’t want to be in a situation where one day we’re completely making our wine from Argentinian grapes that are already coming into Niagara. We have to protect that farmland because once it’s gone, Speaker, it’s gone forever.

Who are the local governments and what are their responses so far? Who has stood up and said, “We will not tolerate schedule 10. We don’t want it. We don’t want to use it”? The region of Waterloo, the region of Halton, Burlington, Hamilton, Oakville, Halton Hills, Aurora, Guelph, Barrie, Newmarket, the city of Toronto, and even since the government has said that they are willing to withdraw schedule 10, Orangeville, Vaughan, Kingston, Midland, Penetanguishene, Collingwood, Cambridge. And this will continue because councils, even now, because they’re not sure about the government withdrawing this legislation, are passing motions that will be communicated to the government that they will not participate in schedule 10 or anything that looks like schedule 10.

A Waterloo staff report—and these aren’t politicians of any political stripe; these are planning staff—outlined that the proposed amendments to the Planning Act, as proposed in Bill 66, “fail to adequately protect human health and safety, in particular the safety of the region of Waterloo’s drinking water resources.” Following that staff report at the planning and works committee meeting, the councillors voted to tell the province that the region does not support the proposed amendments to the Planning Act.

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The city of London recently released a staff report as well—this is by their planning staff—detailing their

reservations with Bill 66, schedule 10. They articulated that more clarity is needed in the uses of classes that will be eligible to be considered under the “open for business” bylaw and suggested that these bylaws only be used in the most extreme circumstances, where normal planning considerations would not be addressed.

They detailed that the official plan policies related to matters such as natural area protection, the conservation of agricultural lands, the availability of municipal services and adequate transportation infrastructure are all important planning considerations that should apply in the approval of a new land use. They’ve echoed the concerns of others: “While public consultation does add time to an approval process, public input often provides decision-makers with valuable information for their consideration as a part of their deliberation on an application.”

These are municipalities chiming in and saying that the government doing something in a minister’s office behind closed doors, with no public input whatsoever, is not the way to go. It’s not the way to get things done. It may be this government’s way to get things done, but it’s not what governments across Ontario want to see. If we’re going to talk about limiting planning acts and environmental acts, those things need to be discussed in a public forum with people who live in the municipalities, people who are going to be affected by the changes to these bylaws.

Hamilton and Burlington: The mayors of both Hamilton and Burlington stated they are not interested in the new “open for business” legislation if it means sacrificing land in Ontario’s greenbelt. The mayor of Hamilton outlined that it pits municipalities against each other, as I have already mentioned, and that what is truly needed is development that is smarter, that uses existing infrastructure as much as possible.

Hamilton has talked about the fact that they don’t appreciate legislation which, far from giving them more power, actually pits one municipality against another. What would happen is a developer comes to the government and the government pitches, “Who wants this development? Who’s willing to scale back the most environmental regulation?” That’s what the city of Hamilton debated when they got together and looked at this bill, and that’s what they’re afraid of.

Oakville: “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.”

Aurora: We are “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.”

All of these comments were sent to the minister, and I hope he listened. I hope he will continue to listen as this bill goes to committee and, as I said, that it will be removed in its entirety.

From Guelph: “Any option to skip any public planning process of notice, where the public is aware of any type of potential application that would impact the city? I would not be in favour of that.”

Barrie: “Way, way, way too far.... We’re committed to continuing to protect our water quality.”

Collingwood: “The other side of this is that a lot of the checks and balances we have in place to ensure that planning is done in an environmentally friendly and economically sustainable manner are being put aside in order to make allowances for economic development.”

Finally, the Environmental Defence group released a statement that says—and I think this sums it up—“Government data shows that there is more than enough land designated for development within existing cities and towns to accommodate the expected population growth until 2041.”

So why is this government talking about cutting environmental regulations to speed up development in environmentally sensitive areas when all of the research, all of the evidence, points to the fact that there is enough land in existing towns to accommodate population growth until 2041?

They say, “We see this move as another example of the Ontario government bowing to the pressure of sprawl developers.”

Let me repeat one more time, Speaker, that what this government has set up with schedule 10 is a system where they can play municipalities against each other, as the mayor of the city of Hamilton has said, to see who is willing to bend or break environmental protections to get development dollars. It’s a way for the government to force municipalities to absorb the political hit for environmentally questionable developments promoted by this government. What this government didn’t anticipate is that municipalities would stand up and say no, as my friend from Kingston and the Islands pointed out.

Even schedule 10, which had nothing to do with red tape—and this government is downloading red tape to municipalities. Schedule 10 wasn’t even downloading red tape. Schedule 10 is downloading the responsibility to take political responsibility for your actions. Getting municipalities to put applications in for developments that the government wants to give to its friends—that is not taking responsibility for your own political actions. That’s downloading responsibility to municipalities, and it’s not something that we should see in the province of Ontario.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): To the member from Niagara Centre: When the opportunity comes up again for Bill 66, there will be the opportunity for questions and comments at that point in time.

Second reading debate deemed adjourned.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): However, pursuant to standing order number 38, the question that this House do now adjourn is deemed to have been made.

ADJOURNMENT DEBATE

AUTISM

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): The member for Toronto–St. Paul’s has given notice of her

dissatisfaction with an answer to a question given by the Minister of Children, Community and Social Services. The member from Toronto–St. Paul’s has up to five minutes to debate the matter, and the minister, or parliamentary assistant, in this case, may reply for up to five minutes.

I now turn it over to the member from Toronto–St. Paul’s for up to five minutes.

Ms. Jill Andrew: I stand today on behalf of David Procenko, who was here in the House this morning for question period. I am not the only one who was disappointed with the minister’s response. David was sorely disappointed with the minister’s response, so he was very happy that I called for a late show.

I’m not going to say my words today. I’m going to say David’s words, and I’m going to say the words of hundreds of folks who have sent us messages about why the PC government’s changes to the Ontario Autism Program are “disastrous,” to use David’s word.

David says, “All this is doing is deferring the costs of care further down the line. The government is only focusing on the present instead of trying to invest in our children’s futures.

“What the minister”—again, that’s the Minister of Children, Community and Social Services, the same one who we know bullied and strong-armed autism advocates into supporting the government bill that your own PC staffer, Bruce McIntosh, wouldn’t support. Nonetheless, I digress.

“What the minister didn’t talk about is how little money the government is offering now which will barely be able to offset therapy costs. Not even puts a dent in it.”

To remind folks, David makes a decent income. Kaley’s treatment is \$66,000 a year.

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David is considering leaving our province. He’s considering divorcing his wife. He’s considering leaving his job so he can qualify. Clearly, David is not feeling all the love that the Ontario autism program, if it’s changed as the government would like it to be, says it’s going to have. He’s not feeling any of that love or any of that support: “The minister focused on the wait-list a lot. No parent wishes a wait-list on anyone, especially those who have been through the process. But terminating the wait-list as it is without any consideration for where the support and resources are going to come from not only does a disservice to the kids like my own Kaley, but also the highly skilled and trained therapists and clinicians who can provide the care at the intensity that is required for kids on the spectrum.”

Here’s another parent as well who has given me consent, Nicole Wilson: “I’m a wait-listed parent. My son was diagnosed at two and a half years old and is non-verbal. He will be five this year and he hasn’t received any services. 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.”

Kelly says of Aaron that his 20 hours a week of therapy will be cut to 1.5, and she uses the hashtag #AutismDoesntEndAtFord: “He’s thriving in therapy”

and all of this thriving will end, courtesy of the government, on April 1.

Here we have Traymond, who is a wait-list parent: “1 of the 75% on the wait-list for services for my 3 yr old son who is non-verbal. I would prefer to stay on that list...”

This is important to note, since the government seems to think that the list, and clearing the list, is the only issue. But if you clear the list and there are no resources for the parents, it’s like putting the device in their hand. But with no therapist to teach them how to use the device, it’s air.

“I would prefer to stay on that list so that when his turn comes he will have access to consistent therapy that actually makes a difference ... not a few hrs a week that will have little to no impact.”

I should also say that one of the parents said that this new plan from the government is a “death sentence.” Those were their words, and you can scour my social media, if you want, for that: a “death sentence” for their children.

I’ve got pictures too, but I understand we can’t use props. Parents have actually sent pictures of their kids to try to remind the government that they’re actual kids; they’re actual people. They’re not a KPMG marketing firm number. They’re actual kids, not efficiencies.

Linda de Luca, with her 14-year-old boy with autism: “\$20k under this new plan. \$20k will cover 3 months of IBI. It took him 3 years to hold a fork.”

So I don’t wish this on any of your kids, government. Do what’s right. Care about children. They’re not numbers.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): Now the PA to the Minister of Children, Community and Social Services has up to five minutes to respond.

Mrs. Amy Fee: I’m happy to clarify our government’s autism program for the member from Toronto–St. Paul’s.

Earlier today, you explained in the House the story of David and his daughter Kaley. I listened intently, as I just did for the last five minutes when you were explaining different families that you have heard from.

As a mom with two kids with autism, believe me, I get where these parents are coming from. When the previous government, in 2016, cut funding for kids over the age of five, I was here protesting it. As those parents have pointed out, I was here protesting.

This has been extremely challenging and a very emotional decision for myself and the minister. Our government, though, is no longer only supporting one in four kids, as the previous government did. We are clearing that wait-list so that 23,000 children sitting there will no longer be there indefinitely, waiting. That’s the issue.

The minister knew, under the previous Liberal government plan, that we could not tell when those children

would come off the wait-list. We also knew that some of those children, who were very young, could sit on that wait-list and never come off and never receive any services.

We also recognized, when we got in and looked at what this program was, that children were really waiting too long to be diagnosed in this province. That’s why we decided to double the money into the funding hubs. Then when children get that money, it will be direct to those families, so that way it will be more flexible and they can choose the services that they need.

As a mother from Toronto who wrote to the minister said, “Giving the power back to the parents to make their own choices and access to services ... will work.” From a mother in my riding, who has a teenage son, “I’m totally for this. My son never received any money for therapy. Now with these changes all children with autism will receive some ... help.” From a long-time autism therapist in Kitchener—she’s been in this for 16 years supporting children: “This new program enables parents to choose early intervention and how their funding is utilized, taking their child’s future back into their own hands.” From a parent in the Durham region, “Because of this new plan, my three-year-old will no longer be waiting ... years for help.”

I’ll remind the member opposite that when we took office less than a year ago, the OAP we inherited was nearing bankruptcy. We were running out of money. The minister had to go to the Treasury Board twice to get an additional \$100 million to make sure that program could actually sustain itself through the end of March. Without some sort of intervention, that program would have collapsed. As the minister has stated, the wait-list would have been indefinite if she didn’t step in.

I understand that David and Kaley are going through an awful time. Seven years ago, my son Kenner was first diagnosed with autism. I have been through the previous program, we’re currently in the OAP now for two of my children, and I’ve spent tens of thousands of dollars out of my pocket, borrowed money from friends and family and a line of credit to try to do what I can for my children.

As a member of this government, but also a mother with two children with autism, I firmly believe that we must look out for everyone in this province—not just the one in four as the Liberals did, but everyone.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): Thank you very much.

There being no further matter to debate, I deem the motion to adjourn to be carried. This House now stands adjourned until 9 a.m. tomorrow morning.

The House adjourned at 1808.

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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

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Vice-Chair / Vice-président: Taras Natyshak
Roman Baber, Rudy Cuzzetto
Amy Fee, Vincent Ke
Andrea Khanjin, Marie-France Lalonde
Taras Natyshak, Rick Nicholls
Jeremy Roberts, Marit Stiles
John Vanthof
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: Vacant
Vice-Chair / Vice-président: Kaleed Rasheed
Will Bouma, Paul Calandra
Lorne Coe, Stephen Crawford
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