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Lundi
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LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF ONTARIO

Monday 25 February 2019

ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE DE L'ONTARIO

Lundi 25 février 2019

The House met at 1030.

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

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): I want to acknowledge again that this territory is a traditional gathering place for many Indigenous nations, most recently the Mississaugas of the New Credit.

This being the first sitting Monday of the month, I ask everyone to now join me in the singing of the Canadian national anthem.

Singing of O Canada.

INTRODUCTION OF VISITORS

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): I want to begin by welcoming all of the guests who have joined us here this morning at the Ontario Legislature, but also bring special attention to the fact that we have a visiting guest from the Legislature in the province of Alberta. Michael Connolly, the MLA for Calgary-Hawkwood, is here with us.

We also have in the Speaker's gallery today interns from the Manitoba Legislature. They are Krystan McCaig, Alexandria Bonney, Jonathan Daman, Claire Johnston, Emma Cash and Ashley Haller. Welcome to Queen's Park. It's great to have you with us.

Before I ask members to introduce their own guests, I would remind them to try to keep their introductions brief and to the point.

Mr. Gilles Bisson: I'd like to welcome in the gallery Candace Rennick, the secretary-treasurer of CUPE, along with many members of CUPE who are here for their particular initiative in regard to making sure that we have four hours of care. From Sudbury, we have Ina Horner, Maria Mastroianni and Sharon Richer. From Nickel Belt, we have Rick O'Connell and Sylvie Moreau. And from Timmins, we have Chris La Forest and Gloria Edward.

Mr. Robert Bailey: I'd like to introduce, in the east members' gallery, two different introductions: first, Lorne Given, a neighbour of mine from the town of Petrolia in Sarnia-Lambton—Lorne is also the nephew of the late Lorne C. Henderson—and also Don and Anne McGugan, long-time friends of mine and of Monte McNaughton, from the riding of Lambton-Kent-Middlesex. Welcome Don, Anne and Lorne.

Mr. Chris Glover: It gives me great pleasure to introduce my brother David Glover, from Oshawa, and his son, my nephew Josh Glover. Joshua Glover was my first campaign manager when I ran for school board trustee in 2010.

Mr. Norman Miller: I'm pleased to introduce, in the east members' gallery, the family of today's page captain Sophie Miller. Joining us today are Sophie's father, Derek Miller, and her grandfather Glenn Miller, who is the former reeve of Ryerson township. Welcome.

Ms. Bhutla Karpoche: I'd like to welcome to the Legislature a very special group, from my riding of Parkdale-High Park, of Humberside collegiate grade 12 students. They are Hanna Adow, Hiru Arachchige, Eden Cooper-Squires, Justin Deak, Juan Duarte Marciano, Sarah Ann Florio, Samuel Hill, Connor Johnson, Alex Johnston, Emina Mahmutovic, Jasmina Mahmutovic, Regan Mania, Heidi McIntyre, Alex Pejovic, Ethan Prisco, Alec Ralston, Madeline Richardson, Trent Spiwak, Camila Suarez, Amy Suhanic, Victoria Temertzoglou, Phenthok Tenzin, Evan Thomson, Jackson Valentine and their teacher Mike Dingwall. They're in the members' gallery today.

Mr. Michael Coteau: It gives me great pleasure to welcome Adam Moote, who is a city councillor from the township of Welland. Welcome to the Legislature, Adam.

Hon. Michael A. Tibollo: Good morning. I'd like to welcome some very special guests to the Legislature this morning: Mr. William Luke, of Luke Law Firm; Ms. Shernett Martin, executive director of the Vaughan African Canadian Association; Ms. Nadine Spencer, chief marketing officer of BrandEQ Group; Ms. Lisa Kostakis, executive director of Albion Neighbourhood Services; Mr. Jonathan Annobil, from the Ghanaian News; and Sheneeza Kanji of York Region Muslims and her daughter Yazmeen Kanji. Welcome to the Legislature.

Ms. Teresa J. Armstrong: On behalf of my colleague the member from Essex, I would like to introduce CUPE members that have come here to visit today: Cindy Guthrie, Jennifer O'Dell and Cheryle Watkins.

Also, on behalf of the member from Hamilton East-Stoney Creek, I would like to welcome CUPE member Lorena Salve.

Welcome to the Legislature today.

Hon. Victor Fedeli: It gives me great pleasure to introduce the mayor of East Ferris—the town that I live in—Pauline Rochefort; the deputy mayor, Michel Voyer; councillors Steve Trahan, Terry Kelly and Erica Lougheed; and Jason Trottier, the CAO and treasurer of East Ferris. Welcome, everybody.

Ms. Andrea Horwath: I'm happy to introduce youth and staff visiting Queen's Park later today from the Hamilton Centre for Civic Inclusion, which has brought 50 Black youth as part of their Queen's Park takeover tour. They're students from Sir John A. Macdonald school in my riding.

A special welcome to Matthew Green, the executive director of HCCI and former Hamilton councillor from ward 3, who is also joining the group. Welcome to Queen's Park.

Ms. Goldie Ghamari: It's my pleasure to introduce, from the Automotive Industries Association of Canada, three representatives I had the pleasure of meeting with today who are sitting in the members' gallery: Luciana Nechita, who I also know from my time as a board member of OCISO; Paul Prochilo, who is the CEO of Simplicity Car Care; and Brad Cochrane, who is manager of sales operations at NAPA. Welcome to Queen's Park. I look forward to the reception.

Ms. Sara Singh: I'd like to introduce Aameek Bali, who is visiting us here from Brampton today. He'll be meeting with members from across party lines to discuss the health care issues in Brampton.

1040

Hon. Todd Smith: I'd like to welcome all the folks from the Automotive Industries Association of Canada—they're joining us in the gallery today—particularly Nathan Naslund from Bay of Quinte, and remind all of us that we do have a reception at lunch today with the AIA in rooms 228 and 230.

Ms. Jennifer K. French: I am pleased to welcome a guest from CUPE, a long-term-care worker from my riding: Alice Renda. Welcome to Queen's Park.

Mr. Dave Smith: I'd like to introduce two people from my riding, also known as God's country: Mayor Janet Clarkson and Deputy Mayor Ron Windover.

Mr. Joel Harden: It's an honour to recognize Bruce Crete from our riding of Ottawa Centre, one of many long-term-care workers, a member of CUPE.

I also want to give a shout-out to Nour Alideeb and the folks from the Canadian Federation of Students-Ontario, who are in the building and will be talking to many of us today.

Mr. Amarjot Sandhu: I would like to introduce Aameek Singh from Brampton. He's a strong advocate for health care in our community. Welcome to Queen's Park.

Mr. Tom Rakocevic: I'd like to welcome CUPE member Florence Mwangi and also residents of my riding of Humber River-Black Creek.

Mr. Michael Parsa: I'd like to welcome to the House, from Aurora-Oak Ridges-Richmond Hill, Rick and Agnes Curran, who happen to be the parents of one of our pages, Vanessa Curran. Welcome to the House.

Miss Monique Taylor: I'd like to welcome Heather Neisler, who is a CUPE long-term-care worker from the city of Hamilton.

I also see Sherry Caldwell up in the gallery this morning. Sherry is the president of the Ontario Disability Coalition. I see her with some moms.

Welcome to Queen's Park.

Mr. Prabmeet Singh Sarkaria: I'd like to introduce today Nadine Spencer, Roderick Brereton and Osborne Barnwell from the Black Business and Professional Association. I want to thank them for taking the time to meet with me today.

I hope you enjoy the rest of your day at Queen's Park.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): The member for Ottawa South has indicated he has a point of order.

Mr. John Fraser: Yes, Mr. Speaker. I'm asking for unanimous consent to ask a question on behalf of the member from Simcoe-Grey. I'll be taking his question today; he'll take my question tomorrow.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): The member for Ottawa South is seeking the unanimous consent of the House to ask a question this morning on behalf of the member for Simcoe-Grey, and to allow the member for Simcoe-Grey to take a question tomorrow in place of the member for Ottawa South. Agreed? I heard a no.

ORDER OF BUSINESS

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): The government House leader has informed me that he has a point of order.

Hon. Todd Smith: Thank you, Speaker. I seek unanimous consent that statements be made this morning in honour of Black History Month, with five minutes allotted to Her Majesty's government, followed by five minutes for Her Majesty's loyal opposition, and five minutes for the independent members.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): The government House leader is seeking unanimous consent of the House to have statements this morning in recognition of Black History Month, with five minutes to the government, five minutes to the official opposition and five minutes to the independent members. Agreed? Agreed.

Motion agreed to.

Mr. Michael Coteau: Point of order, Mr. Speaker.

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

Mr. Michael Coteau: I'd like to ask for unanimous consent to have the member from Ottawa South exchange his question with the member from Simcoe-Grey this morning, please.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): The member for Don Valley East is seeking unanimous consent of the House to allow the member for Ottawa South to ask a question today in place of the member for Simcoe-Grey, and for the member for Simcoe-Grey to ask a question tomorrow in place of the member for Ottawa South. Agreed? I heard a no.

BLACK HISTORY MONTH

MOIS DE L'HISTOIRE DES NOIRS

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): I recognize the leader of the official opposition.

Ms. Andrea Horwath: Speaker, I'm going to be sharing my time with the member from Toronto-St. Paul's.

I want to say, first of all, that Black History Month is one opportunity for us to tell the truth—the whole truth—about the history of our province and our country. It's an opportunity for us to say that for over 400 years, Black history has been Ontario's history and Canada's history.

Black History Month is one chance to honour Black Canadian heroes like abolitionist and educator Josiah Henson and civil rights icon Viola Desmond. It's a chance to celebrate trailblazers like Zanana Akande, Rosemary Brown and Howard McCurdy, and advocates like Dr. Bromley Armstrong.

But important as this history is, we know that we can't stop there. We also have to tell the truth about anti-Black racism that persists in our communities, in our province and in our systems today. We have to renew our commitment to fighting prejudice and injustice, and we have to tear down the barriers that separate Black communities from the resources, opportunities and power that other Canadians or other Ontarians deserve or actually enjoy.

This Black History Month, let's renew our commitment to roll up our sleeves and do the work on these issues by partnering with Black communities that are resisting and reforming anti-Black systems; by celebrating the Black community as they continue to grow, thrive and make incredible contributions to our province; and by further empowering people who are doing good work to do more of it.

Black community members should see themselves represented and respected when they look at their government. Black community leaders must be at the table when every decision is made, because we know that the work we do together in this place and in communities across Ontario is essential if we are going to build a better future for our province, a future with justice, dignity and prosperity for every Ontarian—not that we just remember during the month of February, but justice, dignity and prosperity for every Ontarian that we work towards 365 days a year.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): The member for Toronto–St. Paul's.

Ms. Jill Andrew: I want to echo the words of our leader, Andrea Horwath, when she calls for renewing a commitment to fighting anti-Black racism in our society and removing the barriers to resources, opportunities and power that Black communities face.

As the culture critic for the official opposition, I see where social change is happening in the arts. For example, last week I attended the book launch of *Black Writers Matter*, a groundbreaking anthology of Black Canadian authors edited by Whitney French. The book title, *Black Writers Matter*, shows us how necessary it is to make that assertion in a society that often denies that we do. It was inspiring to see a new generation of Black artists, thinkers and activists reshaping and making their mark on a cultural landscape that has historically excluded our voices, our narratives, our experiences.

I think of trailblazers in the arts like the late, great transgender soul singer Jackie Shane, who was born in Nashville but made Toronto her home. She helped pave the way for countless queer and trans Black people.

Toronto–St. Paul's Anique Jordan and the Black Wimmin Artist advisory group's performative dinner, *The Feast*, held at the AGO, placed 100 Black women and gender-non-conforming artists, art workers, knowledge holders and cultural producers at the centre of one of Canada's largest art institutions.

In Toronto–St. Paul's, I think about a strong Black cultural scene with Reggae Lane, current theatre and the Nia Centre for the Arts, the first Black arts centre in the city of Toronto that plays a vital role in fostering the development of young Black artists and creatives.

We must support Black liberation. We do this with a fully resourced Anti-Racism Directorate. We end carding. We ensure our kids see and learn about themselves in schools. We ensure that institutions from affordable housing to health care are committed to a culturally relevant ethic that centres Black experiences and recognizes that Black lives matter.

February is Black History Month, Black futures month and Black liberation month. As Andrea said, it's not enough to acknowledge achievements and notable firsts during Black History Month. We must always recognize and support the ongoing work being done to build and invest in Black communities, our leaders and our well-being.

This is what inspires me in the work I want to do as an MPP—honouring the work of Black liberation done by those who have come before me while also ensuring that those who come after me have the capacity and resources to continue that project.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Next, the member for Don Valley East.

Mr. Michael Coteau: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I will be sharing my time with the leader of the Green Party.

It is an opportunity today—an honour—to stand and just recognize this incredible month. Black History Month is something that I think reminds us of the contributions of the Black community here in Ontario and right across Canada.

Today is a special time in the history of Ontario because it's the first time in the history of this Legislature that we've had six members of the African Canadian community as members here in the Legislature, and I just wanted to recognize my colleagues for getting here. I know it's been a long journey for many people and a lot of hard work, and I just want to take a moment to recognize all the members from the African Canadian community who are elected here in the Legislature.

1050

Mr. Speaker, it has been a long journey. There have been many members who have come through this building and have had the opportunity to represent their ridings. I think of my predecessors, people like Mary Anne Chambers, Granville Anderson and Margaret Best, who served in this Legislature. Two in particular that I'd like to highlight are Zanana Akande, who served as the first female minister in government in this House—I want to recognize her for her work that she did in the 1990s as a minister in this Legislature—and Alvin Curling, who sat, Mr. Speaker, in that seat that you're sitting in. He was also, I believe, in 1985 under the Peterson government, the first Black member of the Legislature to serve in cabinet.

We all would not be here if it wasn't for the work of Leonard Braithwaite, who was elected in 1963 in Etobicoke South. He was a lawyer and a World War II veteran who served with distinction. He decided to run in 1963 and

to serve in the Ontario Legislature. If it wasn't for him, Mr. Speaker, schools would still be segregated here in Ontario, and in addition to that we would not have female pages in this Legislature. I wanted to recognize him for giving all of us in this Legislature an opportunity to serve and to set an example for many of us in here about equity and freedom and fighting for all those in Ontario.

On behalf of the Liberal caucus, thank you very much for this opportunity, Mr. Speaker, to speak on Black History Month.

Applause.

Mr. Sheref Sabawy: Point of order: I just need to correct the number. It's seven members, because coming from Egyptian origin is still African Canadian. Thank you.

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

Mr. Michael Coteau: Point of order: I'll add you to the list.

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

Member for Guelph. Start the clock.

Mr. Mike Schreiner: I'd like to thank the member from Don Valley East for sharing his time. I'm honoured today to rise and recognize Black History Month and to celebrate the role that Black Canadians have played and continue to play in shaping our province and our country. Ontario has no shortage of Black trailblazers whose life's work has made the province a better place, a more fair place and a more just place.

Just last month we celebrated Lincoln Alexander Day, commemorating the first Black Canadian to serve as Ontario's Lieutenant Governor. He was also the longest-serving chancellor of the University of Guelph.

I want to sincerely thank the hundreds of volunteers in our communities who work on Black history projects each and every day. Their work deserves our support, both from the government and from our communities. These projects make a huge difference. I'd like to do a shout-out to the Heritage Hall project in my riding of Guelph.

Mr. Speaker, remembering our history must be an active process of reflection and reconciliation. This month, and every month, is an opportunity to remind ourselves of the history of anti-Black racism in our past and how it shapes our present. Black History Month is a time to reflect on this past, to learn from it, to understand how it affects us in our day-to-day lives and to take action to systematically dismantle anti-Black racism in our society today, because Black lives do matter.

Applause.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Thank you very much. Minister of Tourism and Sport.

Hon. Michael A. Tibollo: It is truly a great honour to rise today in recognition of Black History Month in Ontario and to acknowledge the vital contributions that Black Canadians have made to the province of Ontario. It's been 26 years, Mr. Speaker, since Ontario first recognized February as Black History Month.

Black History Month is an opportunity to pay special attention to the incredible accomplishments of this community, as founders, builders and champions of Ontario.

Il s'agit d'une occasion d'accorder une attention particulière aux remarquables réalisations de cette communauté à titre de fondateurs, bâtisseurs et défenseurs de l'Ontario.

The contributions to our province's history, culture and economy have been and continue to be monumental. This includes notable achievements in the arts, entertainment, sports, education, science, business and political arenas. I'd like to take a moment to highlight some Ontarians, in particular.

Je désire prendre quelques instants pour souligner la contribution de certains Ontariens en particulier.

Writers Lawrence Hill, Josiah Henson and Dionne Brand have provided a strong and resilient literary voice. Archie Alleyne, Jully Black and Molly Johnson share music that transcends beyond Ontario, all the way to the international stage.

Some of Canada's most accomplished athletes, including Baseball Hall of Famer Fergie Jenkins, Olympians Angella Taylor-Issajenko and Donovan Bailey, along with current household names, P.K. Subban and Andre De Grasse, all hail from the province of Ontario.

Toronto's own Lincoln Alexander became Canada's first Black member of Parliament, cabinet minister and provincial Lieutenant Governor of Ontario.

And we should never forget those who, over the centuries, have given their lives for this country, their country.

Et nous ne devons jamais oublier ceux qui, au fil des siècles, ont donné leur vie pour leur pays.

Black History Month is not just about celebrating accomplishments, but also about remembering and honouring the past. It is an opportunity to learn from one another. Ontario joins governments in every jurisdiction across Canada and community organizations in recognizing the significance of this month.

Mr. Speaker, I'd also like to acknowledge the lead organizer for Black History Month in Ontario, the Ontario Black History Society. For 2019, the theme they have announced for Black History Month is "Preserving Our Past, Igniting Our Future." That's exactly what our government for the people plans to do.

I call on all members of the House to look to their constituencies for opportunities to keep Black History Month going far beyond the month of February, recognizing that the journey to true equality and justice and the end of racism is not yet complete. As Ontarians, let us pledge—not just during Black History Month, but every day of the year—to fulfill the promise of our great province as a home of tolerance and freedom for all, because Black history is Ontario's history, and we are all part of our shared past and our bright future together.

Parce que l'histoire des Noirs est aussi l'histoire de l'Ontario, et que les histoires des personnes de race noire de cette province qu'est la nôtre font partie de notre passé commun et de notre plus bel avenir.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): I want to thank the members for their remarks on Black History Month.

It is now time for oral questions.

ORAL QUESTIONS

AUTISM TREATMENT

Ms. Andrea Horwath: My question is to the Premier. Over the last week, we've had the privilege of being able to hear directly from parents about the challenges that they face providing support to children with autism—the families that the Premier promised to support 1,000%.

Would the Premier agree that they are owed, at the very least, honesty from their government as they seek to provide for their kids?

Hon. Doug Ford: Through you, Mr. Speaker: That is exactly what we're doing. When the minister went and picked up the file and found out it was bankrupt, right away Minister MacLeod ran over to the treasury and asked for \$100 million extra to make sure that the 23,000 families who were forgotten under the previous administration and the opposition that supported the previous administration on that file—there are 23,000 families out there who are struggling. But we're fixing that problem to make sure that we have funds there—because we inherited a \$15-billion deficit. We inherited the largest subnational debt in the entire world, of over \$340 billion. We know that the fourth-largest line item is \$12 billion—

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Response.
1100

Hon. Doug Ford: Through you, Mr. Speaker: We will make sure we take care of the 23,000 families. They will be off the wait-list in 18 months.

Interjections.

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

Start the clock. Supplementary.

Ms. Andrea Horwath: Well, on the contrary, Speaker, this Premier is going to be bankrupting families with children who have autism. That's what this Premier is doing.

But not only that, Speaker: We found of course that numerous reports now indicate that in October of last year, or perhaps earlier, the government not only ordered service providers not to provide services for children and families on the waiting list but told those service providers not to even inform parents that this freeze was being put in place.

Why did the Premier freeze all services just six months into the year, and why were the service providers told not to tell the truth about it?

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

Hon. Lisa MacLeod: I appreciate the opportunity to stand here today.

Look, in June 2018, the Premier appointed me to be the Minister of Children, Community and Social Services with responsibility for the autism program. The first thing we saw was that we had a broken and broke system where 23,000 children were being denied service by their government under the previous Liberal administration, from the members of Don Valley East and Don Valley West. It broke my heart.

We travelled across the province, had dozens of consultations, spoke directly with service providers, and we came up with what we believe is a fair and equitable plan. Just 15 minutes ago, my deputy minister announced that she has repudiated the erroneous report that there was a freeze on the wait-list. For anyone to perpetuate that is to provide false hope to parents—a false narrative. It's disgraceful and it's disappointing.

Our motivation in this government has always been to ensure that the 23,000 children denied service will finally get it.

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

Ms. Andrea Horwath: Speaker, it looks like what the first thing they did was make it worse for families, not better, after receiving the file.

The government told service providers that no children were to be approved for new services, but that service providers were to keep that information secret. Parents were told that approvals were still going ahead, even though they weren't. We've heard from parents across Ontario who were told that their children were moving up the wait-list. They were planning their lives around this information. Why weren't they being told the truth?

Hon. Lisa MacLeod: Speaker, this is a very difficult and emotional file for the 8,400 families who are receiving support. That's only 25% of the children in Ontario who have autism.

As I've just stated, my deputy minister has repudiated the false and erroneous reports that were out over the weekend. Our commitment in this government is to ensure that we support all children with autism in the province of Ontario—the three out of four children who were denied support by their previous Liberal government.

Let me be perfectly clear. John writes in to my office, "That all families will be able to get funding is a huge step forward." We spoke with Matthew Jason Dever, who said, "We have the opportunity to change the model, and provide choice to parents to fund therapies other than ABA. #ThankYouLisa."

Our administration has been consistent and clear since day one—eliminating the wait-list in 18 months for the three out of four children who were denied service by their Ontario government.

AUTISM TREATMENT

Ms. Andrea Horwath: My next question is also to the Premier. For weeks, the Premier and his minister have insisted that thousands of families were languishing on wait-lists. Can the Premier tell us how many children were secretly denied service and how many families were added to those wait-lists by the freeze the government refused to tell parents about?

Hon. Doug Ford: Again, through you, Mr. Speaker: I want to make sure everyone understands the situation of the finances when we opened up the file. When we opened up the file, the previous government had not only bankrupted this province, but they had bankrupted the autism file, to a tune of \$256 million. We're enhancing it by \$100

million. We're doubling the therapists. We're making sure that the 23,000 people who were on the wait-list will be off the wait-list, because we're taking care of the finances of this province for the first time in 15 years. There's now confidence in this province that people are opening up businesses. We'll get more money from companies and create more jobs. That's what we're doing for people who have autism.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Supplementary?

Ms. Andrea Horwath: Speaker, we know that the past Liberal government failed these families, but this Premier decided to give rich people \$275 million in tax breaks and bankrupt families of children with autism. That is not the right choice or the right priority for any government in Ontario.

He cannot hide behind Liberal failures to justify his own failings, Speaker. The Ford government has pulled support from families that desperately, desperately need it. His minister has threatened professionals who refuse to endorse those changes, and now we learn that she misled the families she's supposed to help. The minister is supposed to be a voice for—

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

Ms. Andrea Horwath: Withdraw, Speaker.

Now we learn that she pushed aside the families that she is supposed to be helping. The minister is supposed to be a voice for children at the cabinet table, Speaker. How can he keep her in this job?

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

Hon. Lisa MacLeod: The Premier is keeping me in this job so that we can implement the plan to ensure that we get the 23,000 children who are currently being denied support from their Ontario government the support they need in the next 18 months. That is our commitment to the people of Ontario.

We are doubling our investment into diagnostic hubs. We have invested an extra \$102 million so that the 25% of children who are currently receiving support will continue to receive it. We are going to directly empower families with up to \$140,000 with a childhood budget so that they can choose the supports they want.

Today, when I left for question period, I received a beautiful note from Dr. Carl A. Rubino. He says, "As one of the originators of behavioural analysis services in Ontario, I applaud what you have done with the envelope for autism services. I'm not at all convinced that the resources allocated to these providers, both practitioners and agencies, have been spent well."

Speaker, our commitment in this program that I will implement is 23,000 children who, for the first time in their lives, will have hope at the end of the tunnel. They will finally receive the support that they desperately need—

Interjections.

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

I had to interrupt the minister; I had to stand up because I couldn't hear what she was saying because of the ovation.

Start the clock. Final supplementary.

Ms. Andrea Horwath: Speaker, 10 years ago, the Premier's now Minister of Children, Community and Social Services stood in this assembly and said, "When we as legislators make promises to children—whether it is ... to fund autism treatment for children ... or to appoint an independent children's advocate—those promises must be kept. Impressionable children rely on us. We are their protectors."

Well, so much for that. So much for her former sentiments about children in this province. By her own standards—by her own standards, by any standards—this minister has failed these children and she has failed their families.

Will the Premier do the right thing, remove her from this position and start living up to the promise that these families deserve, which is a government that provides the services that their kids need?

Hon. Lisa MacLeod: It's always an honour to be able to stand here on this side of the House and communicate our government's message in making sure that we empower families to make the best decisions for their children.

I'm proud of this plan that will ensure that 23,000 children who are right now languishing on a wait-list will have the opportunity to receive support from their Ontario government after being denied said support from the previous Liberal administration. I personally think that I have to stand up for all children—not just one in four, not 25% of the kids, but all of the children within this program. That's why I remain steadfast and committed to implementing this government's plan. This government's plan is about fairness and equality, and it is about compassion and sustainability.

Speaker, I'm proud to talk about this plan and I'm proud to support the families who weren't getting support before. I'll talk to you a little bit about Alistair, who said, "As a parent of two children with autism who have been waiting for over two years with no service, this is a welcome change. Thank you for the change."

1110

INDIGENOUS HEALTH SERVICES

Ms. Andrea Horwath: My next question is also to the Premier. Over a month ago, Cat Lake First Nation declared a state of emergency due to black mould. As the member for Kiiwetinoong told the chamber last week, children and families in that community are living in conditions that are unsafe and unacceptable in a province like Ontario. One woman has died. This is an urgent matter, and the families seeing rashes on their children's bodies don't want to hear about jurisdictional squabbles.

Will the Premier send the requested community health assessment team to Cat Lake First Nation immediately?

Hon. Doug Ford: Minister of Indigenous Affairs.

Hon. Greg Rickford: There is no jurisdictional squabble here, I can assure you. The chief and I had a discussion not long ago. We shared our profound disappointment for a federal government that has failed these communities time and time and time again.

I have a little bit of experience in these regards, Mr. Speaker. During my time as the member of Parliament for Kenora, we built new subdivisions in these communities. We built new nursing stations. We built the kind of infrastructure that gave those communities an opportunity to live in a safe community and in a safe immediate environment like their homes.

We're calling on the federal government now to take action. We'll continue to support this community and its declaration of emergency by coordinating with our stakeholders, hopefully finding some solutions. But ultimately, this rests with the federal government and their responsibility to build new homes for those people and remedy the homes that are there in that community, so that people have a safe, clean environment to live in.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Supplementary?

Ms. Andrea Horwath: Mr. Speaker, I have to say that I'm fairly disgusted by that response. When you see the pictures of those kids that are suffering—and a minister who pretends that there's no jurisdictional squabble, and then his first response is that it's a jurisdictional squabble, putting it over to the federal government as their responsibility.

There are treaties that have been signed. Ontario is a signatory to the treaty that requires us to get involved in health care issues on-reserve, and that's what needs to happen here.

The minister needs to step up to the plate and do the right thing. One month has passed. These kids are suffering significantly. Do the right thing and make sure that the resources are provided to those kids that need it. Don't continue to talk about the federal government and their responsibility. Step up to the plate, do your job and send a health assessment team to start diagnosing, treating and following up on the medical crisis that is unfolding and has been for many, many months now at Cat Lake.

Hon. Greg Rickford: Let's be clear, Mr. Speaker: This is an ongoing failure of the federal government to live up to their responsibilities as they pertain to housing and other infrastructure in the community.

Cat Lake is just one of a series of communities that have suffered miserably—big promises, but nothing on-reserve for these communities. They have hope that their homes and that their infrastructure are a safe environment for their folks to live in.

I've written to the appropriate federal minister. I've had a discussion with the chief and council. We'll be talking later this week to see what other things the provincial government can do with that leadership, as they fully understand and they fully appreciate who has jurisdiction of what and who is willing to help. So far, it has only been us. We take our responsibilities as a top priority for Cat Lake.

Interjections.

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

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): The member for Hamilton West–Ancaster–Dundas, come to order. Member for Davenport, come to order.

Start the clock. Next question.

INTERNATIONAL TRADE

Mr. Will Bouma: My question is for the Minister of Economic Development, Job Creation and Trade.

Last week, the Premier travelled to Washington, DC, to stand up for Ontario workers and Ontario jobs, and to promote our Open for Business message. Travelling with Premier Higgs of New Brunswick and Premier Moe of Saskatchewan, Premier Ford met with his US counterparts to call for an end to unjust tariffs. Steel and aluminum tariffs remain in place months after the federal government signed a new NAFTA deal, hurting businesses and workers in my riding and across the province.

Could the minister please outline for the House how our government is working hard to promote free trade and support the good jobs that depend on it?

Hon. Todd Smith: Thanks to the member from Brantford for the question this morning.

Our government remains committed to doing everything we can to get rid of these tariffs. Over 16,000 people in Ontario work in the steel and aluminum industry, and more than 200,000 work downstream in the supply chain and in businesses that use that steel and aluminum. That's thousands of families that are uncertain about what 2019 is going to bring because of these tariffs that remain in place.

That's why the Premier travelled to Washington to meet with his state-level counterparts at the National Governors Association meeting in Washington late last week and throughout the weekend: to remind them that workers on both sides of the border are being hurt by these tariffs. Millions of jobs, free trade between our two countries depend on eliminating these tariffs in Canada and the United States. We have to work together on this.

What we have now is a lose-lose situation on both sides of the border. It's time for those tariffs to go so we can have a win-win for families in Ontario and the United States.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Supplementary?

Mr. Will Bouma: Thank you to the minister for his response. I'm so glad to hear that our government is doing our part to get these tariffs lifted and to protect Ontario jobs. Fighting to remove tariffs is an important part of making sure Ontario is open for business.

As the members of this House know, Premier Ford, Minister Smith and our entire team have been busy making sure Ontario is open for business and for jobs. In fact, I held a small business round table in my riding of Brantford–Brant to consult local businesses. Those businesses made it clear that we need to fight these unfair tariffs in order to create good jobs in Ontario.

Could the minister please outline the importance of promoting our Open for Business message to our trading partners and around the world?

Hon. Todd Smith: Thanks again to the member from Brantford.

The numbers speak for themselves: Over 41,000 jobs were created in Ontario last month.

While in Washington, the Premier had the opportunity to meet with American business leaders, governors and US

trade representative Robert Lighthizer. He brought our message right to them and they heard us loud and clear: Ontario is open for business, and Ontario is open for jobs.

The Premier shared with them all of the measures we've taken since coming into office, measures that have made Ontario a better place to invest, create jobs and grow businesses. We've significantly reduced the regulatory burden on businesses. We've cut taxes. We've gotten rid of Liberal job-killing legislation and their job-killing cap-and-trade program. We've announced a new auto plan as well, to strengthen that sector here in Ontario, where five manufacturers are currently doing business.

After 15 years of Liberal government, we're telling the world that Ontario is again open for business.

AUTISM TREATMENT

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

Last week, the minister accused the opposition of providing false hope to families that are anguished over the Conservative autism program, but now we've seen it was the ministry that provided false hope by secretly freezing the wait-list so that no more children could get help.

Families are angry. They don't trust the minister and they feel betrayed. Can the minister explain why she provided false hope to all of the families trying to get critical services for their children?

Hon. Lisa MacLeod: It's a great opportunity to stand up and again speak about our plan to clear the wait-list in the next 18 months for the 23,000 children who are languishing without support from their Ontario government.

As stated during the previous rounds of questioning, my deputy minister has repudiated this. At no time did I direct anyone to inflate a list. Anyone who would suggest that is participating in what I would consider a disgraceful false narrative and providing false hope to families—

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

Hon. Lisa MacLeod: Sure, Speaker, my pleasure. I withdraw.

But I want to reiterate: We have met with hundreds of families. We have heard numerous stories about how their children were languishing on the wait-list. I want to talk about May for a moment here, if I could. "I have been on a wait-list for almost two years in the current OAP. My son will need to wait another 10 years to even have a chance in this fight."

Lots of families on the wait-list are happy—I appreciate May's support, because we want to make sure that we support May.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Supplementary?

Miss Monique Taylor: Speaker, I'd like to tell you about Heather's daughter, Riley, who has been on the OAP wait-list since 2017. Two months ago, she was informed that Riley's spot was open and she signed all of the papers. Heather was relieved that her daughter would finally get the support that she needed, but she was never told that there was a secret freeze and that that support would never come. She feels betrayed and misled by this government.

1120

Speaker, the truth is—

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

Miss Monique Taylor: I withdraw.

Speaker, the truth is that this person feels betrayed. The truth is that this government and this minister have lied to the families of this province—

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

Miss Monique Taylor: I'm sorry, Speaker, but I cannot withdraw. I respect your position, I respect the Legislature, but we have the proof—

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): I think the member understands the consequences of refusing to withdraw. I am now warning the member. She must withdraw.

Interjection.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): I have no choice but to name the member. Ms. Taylor, you have to leave the chamber for the day.

Miss Taylor was escorted from the chamber.

Interjections.

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

Next question.

POLICE SERVICES

Ms. Jill Dunlop: My question is for the Minister of Community Safety and Correctional Services. Last week, our government for the people introduced the Comprehensive Ontario Police Services Act. If passed, this act would finally fix the previous Liberal government's Bill 175, which treated police with suspicion while making it increasingly difficult for them to do their jobs.

Mr. Speaker, could the minister please update the members of this Legislature on how the Comprehensive Ontario Police Services Act will provide better support to our police officers and keep the people of Ontario safe?

Hon. Sylvia Jones: Thank you to the member from Simcoe North, and thank you for joining me in Barrie on Friday when we marked Human Trafficking Awareness Day with our colleagues the member from Barrie-Innisfil and the member from Barrie-Springwater-Oro-Medonte.

It was an important announcement because with the joint forces—the Barrie police, the OPP and the Canadian Border Services Agency—that tri-group was able to successfully save 43 victims of labour human trafficking in Ontario. On Friday, we were able to thank them for their service and it was an incredible announcement. So thank you for joining me.

As we see every day, police and their government are partners in keeping our community safe, and our proposed legislation would strengthen that partnership. Our partners in policing agree. The president of the Ontario Association of Chiefs of Police and the chief of Barrie police, Chief Greenwood, have welcomed these proposed changes:

“The Ontario Association of Chiefs of Police has long advocated for significant changes to the Police Services Act in order to assist us in the efficient and effective management of police services that enhance public and officer safety. We believe there are items in this new legislation that are welcome and look forward to continuing to work with the government....”

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Supplementary?

Ms. Jill Dunlop: Thank you very much, Minister, for your continued advocacy when it comes to ensuring the safety of our province.

Mr. Speaker, we witnessed the previous Liberal government fail to respect the profession of policing. It is great to see our government for the people respecting our police officers and acknowledging the incredible work they perform to ensure that Ontario's many communities are safe.

Could the Minister of Community Safety and Correctional Services please explain how the Comprehensive Ontario Police Services Act will protect law-abiding citizens and families and treat police with fairness and respect?

Hon. Sylvia Jones: It would be a pleasure, Speaker. Our government spoke to police respectfully. We value their perspective on community safety. Their concerns helped us propose a bill that finally puts public safety first.

That conversation with policing partners is ongoing. In fact, the president of the Police Association of Ontario, Bruce Chapman, recently has welcomed our new approach and our proposed legislation: “Ontario's front-line police personnel welcome today's announcement by the Ontario government and are hopeful that this new Comprehensive Ontario Police Services Act will serve to restore fairness and respect for professional policing, make oversight more effective, and improve governance, training, and transparency.”

When it comes to public safety in Ontario, I'm proud to say that we are doing what the Liberals and the NDP have refused. We are respecting the police and protecting communities across Ontario.

AUTOMOTIVE INDUSTRY

Ms. Jennifer K. French: My question is to the Premier. When Oshawa found out about GM's decision to abandon our community—a community that has been loyal and supportive of auto manufacturing for 100 years—we were devastated. We rose up and we have been rallying ever since.

This Premier, instead, was told by GM to stay seated and that is exactly what he has been doing—sitting on the sidelines since the announcement. But Speaker, Michigan state leaders didn't go quietly and GM has given them a reprieve. Now that Michigan has proven leadership that fights for jobs in their community can make a difference, will the Premier finally get off his seat and stand up for auto workers in Oshawa?

Interjections.

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

Premier?

Hon. Doug Ford: Through you, Mr. Speaker: I'm glad you mentioned that. We had a meeting with the governor

of Michigan and a meeting with governors right across the US and we're the envy of North America. We created 43,000 jobs. We're cutting red tape. We're the largest trading partner to 19 states, second to nine others. If we were a stand-alone country, we would be the third-largest trading partner to the United States.

When I went there and I met with hundreds of people, not to mention Fortune 500 companies, they said, “Thank God you're in power now and not the Liberals.”

We're cutting taxes. We're cutting red tape. We're creating an environment to thrive in this province. And they have certainty. They have certainty like they've never had before.

Interjections.

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

Interjection.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): The member for York Centre, come to order.

Supplementary?

Ms. Jennifer K. French: Thank you, Speaker.

Again to the Premier: Michigan stood up to GM and stood up for auto workers. GM has responded. Jobs are being saved in Hamtramck in Michigan.

This government talks a lot about jobs. They talk all day about jobs, but in Oshawa and across Durham, there are thousands and thousands of good jobs and this Premier won't do anything to keep them—nothing. “Good jobs” cannot be one of the Premier's bumper stickers. Good jobs have to be a commitment. It has to involve action. There is hope, and good jobs are always worth a fight.

Will the Premier recognize that there is always hope and change his mind after seeing what leadership can accomplish and actually help the auto workers in Oshawa and Durham region?

Interjections.

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

Premier?

Hon. Doug Ford: Through you, Mr. Speaker: I've talked to hundreds and hundreds of Oshawa GM workers, and do you know what they want? They want certainty now. They want certainty that they're going to have a job when they—

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): I apologize. I have to interrupt the Premier. The opposition has to come to order. I have to be able to hear the Premier.

Premier, continue.

Hon. Doug Ford: They want certainty, as I was saying, Mr. Speaker. We're giving them certainty. We're creating jobs. Do you know the biggest problem we have? We don't have enough people to fill the jobs out there. There are over 150,000 jobs waiting for people. We need more people to fill those jobs.

Again, we're the envy of North America. We had accolades from every single governor we met. When we met the Fortune 500 companies around the round table—they're investing back into Ontario. They're creating more jobs because they have certainty. They know they have a

government that's pro-job, pro-people. We're there for the people. We're creating jobs. We told the world down there we're open for business—

Interjections.

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

1130

PUBLIC TRANSIT

Mr. Stan Cho: My question is for the Minister of Transportation. This past week, we heard a lot about the TTC upload from activist groups. As a member who has a riding that relies heavily on public transit, I fully support our government's initiative to upload the subway so that we can get the people of Toronto and Ontario moving. We all know this province is trapped with gridlock that the previous government, propped up by the NDP, supported by making minimal investments in public transit and, instead, racking up a deficit of \$15 billion.

Our government is committed to getting the people of Ontario moving. We are committed to turning projects into priorities, and we will do just that with the upload of the subway.

Will the minister please inform the House why the upload matters so very much?

Hon. Jeff Yurek: I'd like to thank the member from Willowdale for that question and his strong support for the upload of the TTC.

As everyone in this Legislature will recall, the government for the people made a very exciting announcement a couple of weeks ago. We've signed a joint terms of reference with the city of Toronto, with the TTC, to begin the process of uploading the subway. Our government for the people's position remains unchanged: An upload of subway infrastructure to the province will get transit built faster and fulfill our commitment to the building and maintenance of new and existing subway lines. With an upload, we will be able to cut through the red tape to start new projects and finish construction faster.

This is what the people of Ontario asked for during the last election, and we are committed to delivering on our promise the Premier made. The government of Ontario will upload the TTC.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Supplementary?

Mr. Stan Cho: Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and through you, thank you to the minister for that response.

I am really pleased to hear that our government is moving so quickly on our promise of decreasing gridlock and building and maintaining new and existing subway lines throughout the upload. I can tell you from experience that the gridlock in my neighbourhood is real, and it is taking valuable time away from Willowdalers and Ontarians.

Our government was elected with the clear mandate of supporting the TTC upload. Now, this may sound foreign to the opposition, but we actually listened to the people. The TTC subway is the third-largest transit system in North America, reporting about 530 million riders in 2017, with about 69,000 people taking the subway in conjunction with the York region transit system every single day.

Can the minister update the House on how the upload will reduce gridlock, expand capacity on our system and finally get the people of Willowdale and Ontario moving?

Hon. Jeff Yurek: Thank you very much, member from Willowdale, for that question.

Our government for the people is working together with our partners to ensure that more subway lines will get built more quickly. We're improving how transit is built in Ontario to get Ontarians moving. We will build a world-class transit system that everyone in Ontario can be proud of, and we are delivering on that promise.

Our current transit infrastructure is not serving Ontarians in the ways that it should be, and the end result is gridlock and delays. It's unfortunate the opposition is opposed to solving gridlock and getting the people of Ontario moving. What the NDP do not realize is that the commuter does not care which level of government owns and operates the subway; they just want a subway that is efficient, reliable, modern and part of a network that is continually expanding, and that is exactly what our government is doing for the people of this province. We are going to build subways. That's what this government is going to do.

CHILD PROTECTION

Ms. Judith Monteith-Farrell: The Ontario Ombudsman has announced that the Thunder Bay office of the Provincial Advocate for Children and Youth will be closing. One of my constituents, who works in the office, wrote to me: "Everything we do is to elevate the voices of the children and youth involved in the systems of government care. On Thursday ... I lost my job ... we don't know anything more ... we are kept in the dark and just wait ... it is a very cruel process." It means children and youth in care across the northwest, including Indigenous communities, will have nowhere to turn—sorry, to the Premier.

Will the Premier reverse this reckless decision so the people working in this office can keep their jobs providing the support our vulnerable youth desperately need?

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

Hon. Lisa MacLeod: I appreciate the question from the member opposite. We're completely committed to ensuring that greater child protection occurs in the province of Ontario, which is why, as we transfer powers over to the Ombudsman, we will have greater oversight capabilities for children in custody and care throughout the province.

It's also why my ministry will be doing two additional things. The first is creating three round tables, one which will be Indigenous-led, one which will be for children in custody and a third that is for children in care. Finally, this year, I will be embedding a new advocacy role within my office, and I was pleased to announce that last Thursday while I was speaking to the Ontario residential centres across the province of Ontario.

I remain dedicated to this initiative, and I'm very pleased that I'm working with the Ombudsman directly to ensure that there is greater oversight for those most vulnerable children who are both in custody and in care throughout the province of Ontario.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Supplementary.

Ms. Judith Monteith-Farrell: My question is for the Premier. The people who are losing their jobs in Thunder Bay are advocates for vulnerable children in northern and Indigenous communities now. Ontario will be the only province in Canada that does not provide dedicated advocacy services for children and youth at risk. Children and youth will suffer, and youth suicide is already at crisis levels. They deserve to be kept safe from abuse and to have front-line staff to turn to.

Premier, why shouldn't northern and Indigenous children and youth have access to dedicated advocacy services?

Interjections.

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

The question has been referred to the Minister of Children, Community and Social Services.

Hon. Lisa MacLeod: I remain committed to ensuring that those three tables that I've just discussed will be active, and with a full Indigenous-led component, as well as those for children in custody and in care. They will really, I think, provide a solid basis of information for our ministry as we move forward with embedding within my office an advocacy role for children in custody and in care.

I appreciate the member opposite's question, but this government made a decision in the fall economic statement to transfer oversight capabilities to the Ontario Ombudsman. We have full faith in the Ombudsman, and we believe that he is best suited to ensure that there are investigations that are happening across Ontario, whether that is in our group homes, foster care or in our detention facilities in our youth justice system.

Speaker, again, we remain committed, and we're looking forward to working with the Ombudsman, Paul Dubé, in order to ensure that there is greater child protection in the province of Ontario.

NORTHERN ECONOMY

Mr. Norman Miller: My question is for the Minister of Natural Resources and Forestry. Our government for the people was elected on a promise to finally open up the incredible resources of the north, to make our northern communities open for economic development and open for jobs. That's why I was excited to learn about the next step of our government's review of the Far North Act. Since the previous Liberal government forced this act on the communities of our north, little progress has been made to promote collaboration and job creation with our First Nations communities. It has limited the possibilities for jobs and economic growth in the north.

Can the minister update the House on how our government is encouraging economic growth in the north, instead of putting up barriers?

Hon. John Yakabuski: I want to thank my colleague for the question and for his unwavering commitment to the north.

Speaker, he is right: Our government for the people was elected on a promise to create a path forward that will make our northern communities open to economic prosperity and open to jobs by reducing restrictions on important economic development projects like the Ring of Fire, all-season roads and electrical transmission projects.

In our fall economic statement, we announced that we would be reviewing the Far North Act, and as the next step we are seeking input on a proposal to repeal the act, while retaining approved land use plans through changes to the Public Lands Act and continuing forward with plans already at an advanced stage. We believe our proposal will provide benefits to First Nations and other northern communities, ensure a collaborative approach to development and provide a stable environment for business. We are making the Far North open for economic growth and open for business.

Interjections.

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

Start the clock. Supplementary?

1140

Mr. Norman Miller: Thank you to the minister for his answer. For years, we have heard from northern communities that the Far North Act limits economic opportunities in the north. Our government's proposal is the type of bold action we need to take if we are going to make the Far North open for business and open for jobs.

Many of us remember the pushback this act received when it was passed back in 2010. That includes Far North First Nations who were opposed to the act when the Liberals pushed it through.

Can the minister tell us how we are going to ensure a collaborative approach to development that benefits First Nations?

Hon. John Yakabuski: I thank him again. He is absolutely right. When the Far North Act was implemented, it was opposed by First Nations and the municipalities of the north. Our government is working for all of the people of Ontario, including the 24,000 people who live in the Far North. We will listen carefully to what Far North First Nations have to say about our proposal to work together to bring prosperity to the north.

Our proposal has been posted on the Environmental Registry for 45 days. I will work together with the minister responsible for Indigenous affairs as we have special engagement sessions with Far North First Nations communities and tribal councils to gather their feedback. We support development that is beneficial to our communities while maintaining our commitment to conservation.

Again, Speaker, we are making our Far North open for business and open for jobs.

LONG-TERM CARE

Ms. Teresa J. Armstrong: My question is to the Premier. Your government has promised to create thousands of new and long-overdue long-term-care beds. Can you tell—

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Order.

Ms. Teresa J. Armstrong: There's no end to the self-gratification in this Legislature, is there, Speaker?

Can you tell the House what steps you will take to ensure the appropriate staffing increases to match these new beds and to ensure long-term-care residents receive at least four hours of hands-on care per day, which is precisely the amount of care time that Shirlee Sharkey, a member of the Premier's own council on ending hallway medicine, said that we needed more than 10 years ago. Does the Premier agree with Shirlee Sharkey?

Hon. Doug Ford: I'll send this over to the great Minister of Health.

Hon. Christine Elliott: I thank the member very much for the question. She is correct: We did promise the people of Ontario during the election campaign that we would create 15,000 new long-term-care spaces within five years. We are already well on the way. We have created over 6,000 already, and we're working daily on creating more.

There is a need for long-term-care spaces across the province, but there is also a need for long-term-care staffing. I would agree that the safety of patients in Ontario has been and always will be my first priority as Minister of Health, but the reality is, and we know, that our health care system is in trouble right now. We need transformational change, and that is in every respect. We need to take a look at everything we're doing, including making sure that we have the right mix of human resources in all of our health care settings across the province.

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

Ms. Teresa J. Armstrong: Back to the Premier: My bill, the Time to Care Act, if passed, would ensure that every resident in every long-term-care home in Ontario would get an average of four hours of care per day. The last time this bill was debated, the Minister of Finance, the Minister for Seniors and several other Conservative MPPs voted in support. Can the Premier confirm for the House that this bill will pass at the first opportunity to pass?

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): The question has been referred to the Minister of Health and Long-Term Care.

Hon. Christine Elliott: Ensuring that we have the right mix of human resources in all of our health care settings, from home care to hospitals and long-term-care homes is a matter of great importance. But I would also remind the member that we all know that the Gillese inquiry has yet to come forward with their report. We expect it will be coming forward in the latter part of the spring this year. We will be looking forward to the recommendations that are made in the report, both specifically and more generally with respect to staffing in long-term-care homes. We will be listening to those reports, we will be looking at those considerations, and we are currently looking at the right mix of human resources in all home care settings now. So please be assured, both the member and the people of Ontario, that we take this seriously and we are reviewing it now.

LA VIOLENCE ET LE HARCÈLEMENT SEXUELS

M^{me} Gila Martow: Ma question est pour le ministre du Tourisme, de la Culture et du Sport.

Récemment, on voit que des nouvelles inquiétantes circulent au sujet des incidents de harcèlement et de violence dans le secteur du sport amateur au Canada. Monsieur le Ministre, les athlètes ontariens et ontariennes dévoués et assidus méritent de participer aux compétitions dans un environnement sans harcèlement, agression et intimidation. Comme vous avez déjà mentionné, notre gouvernement pour le peuple soutient nos athlètes dans leur quête de l'excellence. Cependant, nous devons nous assurer qu'ils peuvent participer aux compétitions dans un environnement sécuritaire.

Monsieur le Ministre, pourriez-vous expliquer ce que vous faites pour lutter contre les abus et le harcèlement dans le secteur du sport de la province?

L'hon. Michael A. Tibollo: Merci pour cette question très importante. Il est extrêmement troublant d'apprendre le niveau de harcèlement et de comportements inacceptables qui se passent dans le sport amateur aujourd'hui. La relation entraîneur-athlète doit être basée sur une confiance et une compréhension mutuelle. Toute action qui compromet ces principes est inacceptable et faite au détriment des nombreux excellents programmes sportifs en Ontario. Même s'il existe déjà un cadre de processus d'évaluation du harcèlement et des codes de conduite, nous reconnaissons qu'il reste du travail à faire et qu'il faut l'accomplir.

À la réunion des ministres à Red Deer, des ministres de tout le pays et moi-même avons pris des mesures pour régler cet important problème. J'ai hâte à élaborer plus longuement dans la réponse à la question supplémentaire.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Supplementary.

M^{me} Gila Martow: Encore au ministre : je suis heureuse d'en savoir de votre réunion productive avec les ministres à Red Deer afin d'aborder cette question très importante. Il est également très encourageant de constater que vous avez pu connecter avec quelques-uns des jeunes athlètes qui ont participé aux Jeux du Canada. Ces athlètes méritent de participer dans un environnement sûr. Je suis fière que notre gouvernement pour le peuple prenne des mesures pour régler cet enjeu.

Je suis curieuse de savoir comment s'est passée la réunion avec les autres ministres. Le ministre peut-il informer l'Assemblée législative de la manière dont la question du harcèlement et des agressions sportifs a été traitée?

L'hon. Michael A. Tibollo: Pendant mon séjour, tous les ministres du Sport du pays ont signé la déclaration de Red Deer, qui nous engage à lutter contre les abus et le harcèlement dans le sport en Ontario. Nous savons qu'il y a un problème dans le sport amateur. L'Ontario veillera à ce que nous soyons des dirigeants qui veilleront à ce que, peu importe qui vous êtes, vous puissiez jouer en toute sécurité.

Nous avons également parlé des avantages du sport et des loisirs sur la santé mentale. Je suis fier du travail que

nous avons accompli et de notre engagement à promouvoir le mieux-être et le bien-être des enfants et des jeunes. Notre gouvernement reconnaît que le sport peut être un outil puissant contre les problèmes sociaux.

AUTISM TREATMENT

Mr. Faisal Hassan: My question is to the Premier. Premier, families in my riding are disgusted by this government's attack on children with autism—mothers, like Leyla Calliste, whose beautiful four-year-old son Christian was diagnosed with severe autism when he was two-and-a-half years old. He was on the waiting list for services for 18 months and his name finally came up last April. Since receiving the support he needs, Christian has been thriving. But Christian's funding will be pulled on March 31, leaving him and his family with very few options. They simply cannot afford the therapy he needs.

Premier, why is this government abandoning Christian?

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

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Hon. Lisa MacLeod: Thank you for referring that, Premier, so I have an opportunity to talk about what our motivation actually is.

Since assuming office, I have travelled, along with my parliamentary assistant, Amy Fee, to dozens of round tables, meeting with hundreds of parents, service providers and stakeholders in this space.

We inherited a program that was not only broken, but broke. It required \$100 million in emergency funding just to support the one in four children who were receiving support in the province of Ontario. Our motivation is to clear the wait-list. We're doing that by doubling our investment into the diagnostic hubs, and we're going to go to a direct funding model which will empower parents to choose the services that they want through their childhood budget.

Alastair reached out to me the other day and he said, "I don't think people understand how bad the autism wait-list currently is. Our son is eight, he's 853 on the waiting list. The wait-list is moving at about 80 kids a year. Meaning he would age out at 18 and never get service!"

Speaker, that's unacceptable to me and that's why, as the minister responsible for this program, I'm going to clear the wait-list in 18—

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Supplementary?

Mr. Faisal Hassan: Again my question is to the Premier: Another mother from my riding is Natalie Vieira whose son, Macen, was recently diagnosed with autism. Macen is 18 years old and will soon be too old to receive support through the Ontario Autism Program. He never received the supports he needed. As a result, he has struggled in school.

Natalie is here today to tell the government that children living with autism need early intervention to help them reach their full potential, but this government's cuts to the Ontario Autism Program will make it harder for children to get the services they need.

Why is this Premier making life harder for children with autism?

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): The question has been referred to the Minister of Children, Community and Social Services.

Interjections.

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

Minister?

Hon. Lisa MacLeod: I appreciate Natalie joining us in the Legislature today and I want to assure her that the issues that she's experiencing are the primary motivation behind us wanting to clear that wait-list in the next 18 months, by making more diagnostic hub support across the province and directly empowering parents to make the choices that they need.

Sherri Taylor, who is a parent from Windsor, wrote in. She said, "Parents need to have services available to them before their child is no longer a child. Families need more support and choice for their children with autism neuro-diversities. Our children sit on wait-lists for years only to be shuffled through consultative models that do not provide the direct treatment. Families are in crisis. Our government is heading in the right direction recognizing that early intervention is key."

I appreciate Sherri's sentiments. She is one of the hundreds of families that we've been working with throughout the past number of months in order to course-correct so that 23,000 children will get off that wait-list—

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

PUBLIC SAFETY

Mr. Kaleed Rasheed: 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. We have a mandate to restore respect to the brave men and women of our police services and to provide them with the tools and resources they need to perform their duties safely and effectively.

Today, police services across Ontario are getting ready to promote Crime Prevention Week. Can the minister explain to this House how our government for the people is supporting the efforts of all policing partners to keep communities safe?

Hon. Sylvia Jones: Thank you to the member from Mississauga East–Cooksville for this important question and for your advocacy in assisting us in Crime Prevention Week.

Crime Prevention Week is an important opportunity to consider public safety as a shared responsibility. Our government was elected with a mandate to fix policing legislation and restore respect for the police as important partners in public safety. Police officers have always stood up for the safety of our communities, and now we have a government that respects and supports them in the work that

they carry out—a very difficult and dangerous job each and every day.

To deliver on our commitment to the police, we introduced Bill 68, the Comprehensive Ontario Police Services Act, in the Legislature last week, and I am pleased to be debating it later on this afternoon.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Supplementary.

Mr. Kaleed Rasheed: I thank the minister for her response.

Mr. Speaker, Ontario is home to some of the finest police officers anywhere in the world. It is an honour to be part of a government that recognizes their contributions to our communities and is willing to stand up for front-line police officers.

As a member of this government for the people, I am proud to stand here today and know that our government is committed to providing police officers with the support, tools and resources they need to protect the people of this province.

Mr. Speaker, could the minister tell us how our government is working with communities and policing partners to promote a safer Ontario?

Hon. Sylvia Jones: It would be a pleasure, Speaker.

Crime prevention on the community level has an important role in reducing crime and making our communities safer. When the police, the people and their government feel empowered to work together toward the shared goal of keeping our communities safer, we are better positioned to succeed. This partnership, built on fairness and transparency, is particularly important when it comes to police oversight. We ask police to put themselves in harm's way each and every day to keep our loved ones safe and our streets safe. In return, we see it as only fair to treat them with the fairness and respect that everyday Ontarians deserve.

On behalf of the entire government, I congratulate the Ontario Association of Chiefs of Police on Crime Prevention Week and thank them for this important initiative.

AUTISM TREATMENT

Mr. Michael Mantha: My question is to the Premier. Marshall, a little four-year-old boy from Manitouwadge, was diagnosed a year ago with severe autism spectrum disorder. His mom, Adrianna, is a single mom who is trained to work in the health care sector. Unfortunately, she had to quit her job to take care of her son full-time at home. Adrianna can't work or find a rental unit that is affordable enough to allow her to pay for her son's therapy. This is the reality of too many families in northern Ontario, and nothing in this government's changes to the autism program will fix it.

Why is the Premier leaving people like Marshall and Adrianna with no options left?

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

Hon. Lisa MacLeod: I appreciate the opportunity to once again speak about our reforms to the Ontario Autism Program that will ensure that 23,000 children, or three out of four children in Ontario who have autism, will get the

service from their Ontario government after being denied the service for the past 15 years.

Deanna, a mother of a child with autism, said, "More funding for diagnosis is great news. Also, giving parents direct funding and flexibility with respect to how it can be used is a terrific development, in my opinion."

Hon. Lisa MacLeod: We went—

Interjection.

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

Hon. Lisa MacLeod: —because we recognize that every child with autism in the province of Ontario deserves to have the support of their Ontario government, unlike the previous plan that was developed by the member from Don Valley East and the member from Don Valley West.

We are committed to clearing the wait-list. We're committed to doubling our investment in the diagnostic hubs. And I'm proud today to say we're committed to making sure there are greater supports for those in northern Ontario.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Supplementary.

Mr. Michael Mantha: Again, to the Premier: Marshall and Adrianna patiently waited for the Ontario Autism Program funding but received nothing. When Adrianna asked why, she was told, "There is none available for your region."

Too often, communities like Manitouwadge are forgotten by the provincial government and end up lacking in services. The two biggest cities around are Sault Ste. Marie and Thunder Bay, 400 kilometres away. There isn't even one private behavioural service provider around—nothing. But this government's announcement will do nothing to change that.

Premier, why is this government refusing to increase capacity in northern Ontario for autism services while cutting the funding available to families like Adrianna's?

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): I would remind the members to make their comments through the Chair. The question has been referred to the Minister of Children, Community and Social Services already.

Minister.

Hon. Lisa MacLeod: Thank you very much, Speaker. I appreciate the member opposite's questions and his concerns. As I indicated in the beginning of my response, we are dedicated to providing more investment into northern Ontario. I largely credit our finance minister as well as our minister of northern affairs and mining because they are committed to their communities and they have been strong and vocal advocates, not just around the caucus table but around the cabinet table.

That's why we are dedicated to ensuring that we are going to double the diagnostic hub investments. It means we're going to go to a direct-fund model where parents will have the ability to access up to \$140,000 for their child for flexible choices and how they best think they can support their child, whether that's behavioural therapy, whether that's a technological aid, whether that is caregiver training or respite support. But, Speaker, let me be perfectly clear: This government is committed to clearing the wait-list in 18 months and I will be the minister who

does that, because we believe all children who have autism in the province of Ontario deserve support—

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): That concludes our time for question period today. This House stands in recess until 1 p.m.

The House recessed from 1201 to 1300.

MEMBERS' STATEMENTS

MISSION SERVICES OF LONDON

Ms. Peggy Sattler: I rise today to recognize the hundreds of walkers, volunteers and donors who participated in London's Coldest Night of the Year, raising funds to support Mission Services of London.

The event came at a critical time for Mission Services, which earlier this month announced significant cuts as a result of the ever-increasing funding gap between provincial dollars and the needs of some of the most vulnerable members of our community. Over the years, this gap has been filled more and more by private donors, with some vital Mission Services programs funded as much as 60% by donations.

The gap forced Mission Services to make the difficult decision to reduce programming at Quintin Warner House, a live-in addiction treatment facility for men, and close 21 crash beds as of April 1. Last year, those 21 beds accommodated almost 7,700 stays by people whose mental health and addiction challenges prevented them from accessing traditional shelter beds.

Let's consider the potential costs of closing the 21 crash beds if the people who use them end up in hospital every night instead. A single visit by ambulance to the emergency department, excluding the cost of the police and medical treatment, is approximately \$1,100; \$1,100 times \$7,700 means an additional \$8.4 million in hospital costs annually.

Speaker, this is a clear example of the negative consequences of short-term thinking and the failure of successive Liberal and Conservative governments to adequately support those struggling with mental health and addictions.

BOB VESEY

Mr. Lorne Coe: I'm pleased to celebrate the induction of Bob Vesey from my riding into the 2018 Ontario Lacrosse Hall of Fame. For 57 years, Bob has been involved as a builder for the Brooklin Redmen. He has held multiple non-playing positions during his tenure with the Redmen, including general manager, executive member, president, and golf tournament organizer.

Speaker, although the positions and accolades he has accumulated during nearly six decades of involvement are numerous, his pride rests in the championship teams that he has been part of, including 15 Ontario Lacrosse Association provincial championships, 13 Eastern Canadian

championships and seven Mann Cup national championship teams.

Bob is an integral part of building the loyal fan base of the Brooklin Redmen and has been a great ambassador for the sport of lacrosse.

Congratulations, Bob Vesey, and your wife, Joan, on your well-deserved induction into the Ontario Lacrosse Hall of Fame.

AUTISM TREATMENT

Ms. Jennifer K. French: It has been a very busy time in our office, fielding phone calls and emails and meeting with anxious families and professionals who believe that every child with autism deserves access to appropriate services. I've been talking with concerned parents who want their children to be able to reach their full potential, and one would think that the government would want the same. Instead, this government is purposefully attacking their futures to save a buck.

Children who are now receiving therapy will almost certainly not be able to continue because no family that I have heard from will be able to afford the cost on their own. Capping dollars and limiting investments in our children based on age and family income is unconscionable.

I have met with service providers who will not be able to responsibly transition so many children to the school system in such a short period of time. Our schools are not prepared for the influx of school-aged children who will no longer be able to afford weekly autism therapy.

I met with behaviour analysts and therapists who cannot meet the needs of a child for the pathetic pittance that the government is offering. The government claims to offer choice to parents, but they eliminate the choice to have their children participate in evidence-based, individualized therapy catered to their needs and goals. Surely all children have a right to learn.

To provide inadequate funding, as the new OAP does, wait-list or no wait-list, is to deny innocent children the right to an accessible education. This is heartbreaking, and what a terrible, terrible way to treat our children and the autism community.

FOOD BANKS

Mr. Kaleed Rasheed: In the last year, the Mississauga Food Bank recorded an 18% increase in the number of neighbours accessing neighbourhood food banks, meal programs and other sources of emergency food. Every day, we share sidewalks, grocery store aisles and office space with these neighbours, who are struggling to make ends meet. It is disheartening to see the increase of people relying on food banks.

Earlier this year, I had the honour to host the Minister of Children, Community and Social Services in my riding of Mississauga East–Cooksville. The minister, myself and some of my esteemed colleagues had the opportunity to tour the Mississauga Food Bank in my riding. I'm proud to say that we raised \$5,000 and donated several crates of food during our visit. As the MPP for Mississauga East–

Cooksville, I'm proud of the work the Mississauga Food Bank does for our community.

I would also like to express my gratitude and thanks to the MPP and minister from Nepean for coming to my riding to tour the food bank and for working towards reducing poverty in our province.

W.E. TRANS SUPPORT

Mrs. Lisa Gretzky: Today, I want to talk about W.E. Trans Support centre in my riding and the invaluable work that they do to strengthen our trans and queer community, their families, friends and allies.

Because of the incredible support that they offer to people across Windsor-Essex, I was saddened and angry to learn that W.E. Trans Support centre was robbed late last week. Their donations were stolen and the office was damaged. Disturbingly, this appears to be a targeted attack in direct response to a local announcement that the pride flag would be flown at every Greater Essex County District School Board elementary school in June.

The W.E. Trans Support centre is resilient. Despite this attack, they are continuing to serve the community out of their downtown space, providing the services that people rely on. W.E. Trans offers a wide range of support for individuals, such as counselling and assistance with filing documentation, as well as facilitating group programs, such as youth drop-ins and inclusive social events. They also offer consultation services and training so that local businesses and organizations can ensure that their spaces are inclusive, supportive, accessible and respectful. The W.E. Trans support centre is a crucial part of our community in Windsor-Essex, and they continue to be a safe space for those who seek their support.

I want to encourage all allies of the centre to offer their support to W.E. Trans as they restore their space, and join me in renouncing this targeted attack.

AUTISM TREATMENT

Mr. John Fraser: We've all heard from parents in our ridings who are concerned about the new Ontario Autism Program, so I want to recap the minister's actions so far on the new Ontario Autism Program.

First, she stopped admissions into the program and concealed this information from parents, and, in the process, wasted valuable resources.

The minister threatened a therapist group, telling them that if they didn't support her new OAP, it would be a long four years.

The minister called parents who were expressing concern "professional protestors." Aren't they simply parents who will do anything for their children because they love them?

The minister has refused to release the financial details of the new program, especially the income testing. Parents should have had this from the get-go. She still hasn't released it. It's almost three weeks later. How can parents,

or any of us in this room, have confidence and trust in the minister?

This is not a partisan issue. In 2016, when 2,200 families were going to fall between the cracks, members listened. We went back, we got a fresh set of eyes and ears to look at it and we corrected that problem. That's what parents deserve. That's what's needed right now. Right now, parents need a fresh set of eyes and a fresh set of ears that will listen to them and work with them and get this right.

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LINCOLN M. ALEXANDER AWARDS

Mr. Vincent Ke: On Monday, January 21, I represented the government at the 2018 Lincoln M. Alexander Awards ceremony. This award was created in 1993 to commemorate the legacy of the Honourable Lincoln Alexander, Ontario's 24th Lieutenant Governor. This award is presented annually to three young people who have demonstrated outstanding leadership in promoting positive social change and eliminating racial discrimination.

For 2018, one of the award winners was from my riding of Don Valley North: Miss Lisa Wang. Congratulations. Lisa received one of the two high school students' awards. She was president of the student council and the social justice and equity committee at Marc Garneau Collegiate. Lisa worked hard to eliminate racial discrimination at her school by hosting many initiatives to celebrate and highlight the ethnic makeup of the student body.

She has graduated and now attends Harvard University. She continues her role as an ambassador from Don Valley North and Ontario to eliminate racial discrimination globally. Congratulations on your hard work. I wish you all the best in your future goals.

STUDENT UNIONS

Mr. Chris Glover: Over the past month, I've been on a tour of colleges and universities and I've heard from students across this province, especially from students who are deeply, deeply concerned about the OSAP cuts and the downloading of billions of dollars of debt onto the students in this province. Many are concerned about whether they will be able to continue their studies; many others are concerned that they will not be able to pursue the careers and the studies that they had hoped to pursue.

The biggest attack that has come from this government has been the attack, both verbal and practical, on student unions. We've seen in Bill 66 that this is just a precursor to a bigger attack on unions and unionized workers across this province. The government has not explained how the student unions are going to be able to continue to provide essential services on their campuses such as food banks, emergency first aid response teams, student newspapers, radio stations, clubs, and safe spaces for women, racialized communities and LGBTQ communities.

The government and the Premier should stand up in this House and apologize for attacking the student unions who

are providing these essential services to the students in this province, and he should reverse the downloading of billions of dollars of debt onto the students of this province.

HOCKEY TOURNAMENT

Ms. Goldie Ghamari: On January 13, I had the pleasure of attending the Leitrim Minor Hockey Association novice tournament in Findlay Creek. It was an incredibly fun and exciting 42-team hockey tournament that showcased some of the best young hockey talent in Carleton. I was there to watch the Leitrim Hawks A-division team narrowly beat the Metcalfe Jets in the thrilling final game.

Hockey is a central part of my community. It brings people of all ages and backgrounds together in the common celebration of our great Canadian pastime. At the Leitrim Minor Hockey Association hockey tournament, I saw my community at its very best. Residents of Osgoode, Kemptville and Stittsville came out in force to cheer on the A-, B- and C-division teams in a day of team-building and fun competition. We were even pleased to welcome the Iqaluit Blizzards, who came down all the way from Nunavut and who left as the C-division champions.

I saw the creation of lasting friendships and feats of perseverance on the ice. I also saw proof that Carleton produces the best young hockey players anywhere in the province. I might be a little biased there. I had the pleasure of talking to the kids on the Metcalf Jets A-division team before they hit the ice, and I was very impressed. I also spoke with the Leitrim team as well. Their perseverance, teamwork and integrity were very impressive and served as a reminder that when we put our differences aside and work together we can get more done. I hope that we can emulate these young athletes and continue to work together despite our differences to make this province the very best it can be for all Ontarians.

POLICE AUXILIARY UNITS

Mr. Will Bouma: I just wanted to take a moment to talk about police auxiliary units. Last Saturday night I had the opportunity to go to the gala dinner that the city of Brantford Police Services Board and police department put on for their police auxiliary. These young men and women—they have spots for 45 of them, but as the chief said to me, “We hire the best, and so we lose the best.” They have spaces for 45, and in 2018 alone they lost 15 members to full-time police employment.

I just want to take my hat off to those young men and women around the province who take time out of their personal lives, who leave their significant others and their children at home and who volunteer their time to their community to be on the police auxiliary.

We have them in my riding in both the county of Brant with the Brant county OPP auxiliary, and also with the city of Brantford with the Brantford city police auxiliary units there. They show up at Canada Day. They show up at special events. They're there to direct traffic for the Santa Claus parade. These are the people that really make the

difference by coming and showing their support for our communities.

On behalf of the province of Ontario, to everyone who is in an auxiliary police unit, thank you.

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

INTRODUCTION OF BILLS

HOME CARE AND COMMUNITY SERVICES AMENDMENT ACT (DAN'S LAW), 2019

LOI DE 2019 MODIFIANT LA LOI SUR LES SERVICES DE SOINS À DOMICILE ET LES SERVICES COMMUNAUTAIRES (LOI DAN)

Mrs. Gretzky moved first reading of the following bill:
Bill 73, An Act to amend the Home Care and Community Services Act, 1994 in respect of funded services for new residents / Projet de loi 73, Loi modifiant la Loi de 1994 sur les services de soins à domicile et les services communautaires en ce qui concerne les services financés pour les nouveaux résidents.

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

First reading agreed to.

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

Mrs. Lisa Gretzky: The bill, which in its short form is called Dan's Law, was put together around a gentleman, Dan Duma, who was a Windsor resident and a GM employee until GM closed in Windsor. He had to move out west to work. He found out that he had cancer and had to relocate to Windsor in order to spend his final days with his family, only to find out that we do not actually have a universal health care system and that most of the supports and services that he would need, his family would have to pay for.

This bill would directly address that issue to make sure that anybody from within Canada can access the health care system in the province of Ontario when they're talking about end-of-life care.

PETITIONS

SCHOOL BUS SAFETY

Ms. Bhutla Karpoche: I'd like to thank my constituent Lise Anne Gougeon for the petition. It's titled “Support Seat Belts on School Buses.”

“To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“Whereas approximately 830,000 students are transported in school buses every school day in Ontario; and

“Whereas the safety of Ontario's students should be the top priority of the government of the day, to ensure that every preventative measure is taken to protect them from

harm or death on our roads and highways while travelling on school buses; and

“Whereas recently revealed evidence has demonstrated that compartmentalization is ineffective in protecting children in school bus side collisions, rollovers and vertical lifts, and that the use of three-point seat belts has been scientifically proven to mitigate the risk of potential injury or death in such events; and

“Whereas the number of 6,696 injuries and 19 fatalities across Canada since 1999 as a result of school bus accidents and collisions demands immediate action to prevent any further casualties; and

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“Whereas the US National Transportation Safety Board and the US National Highway Traffic Safety Administration have released reports and statements recommending the installation of lap and shoulder bands on all school buses due to improved occupant protection; and

“Whereas several states in the US already have legislation in place that requires three-point seat belts on school buses; and

“Whereas Ontario has both the responsibility and an opportunity to be a national leader in ensuring that no student is unnecessarily at risk of injury or death in a school bus accident or collision; and

“Whereas numerous education, transportation and parent groups have voiced their support in making sure no effort is spared in protecting Ontario’s students;

“Therefore we, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to engage in any required consultation process with all relevant stakeholders, and to mandate the installation of three-point seat belts on school buses.”

I want to thank Lise, and I will endorse this petition by adding my signature to it as well.

ALZHEIMER’S DISEASE

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Petitions? The member for Windsor–Tecumseh.

Mr. Percy Hatfield: Thank you, Speaker. I’m wearing my Alzheimer’s tie today, so it may give you a hint on what I’m about to read.

“To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“Whereas Alzheimer’s disease and other dementias are progressive, degenerative diseases of the brain that cause thinking, memory and physical functioning to become seriously impaired...; and

“Whereas there is no known cause or cure for this devastating illness; and

“Whereas Alzheimer’s disease and other dementias also take their toll on hundreds of thousands of families and care partners; and

“Whereas Alzheimer’s disease and other dementias affect more than 200,000 Ontarians today, with an annual total economic burden rising to \$15.7 billion by 2020; and

“Whereas the cost related to the health care system is in the billions and only going to increase, at a time when our health care system is already facing enormous financial challenges; and

“Whereas there is work under way to address the need, but no coordinated or comprehensive approach to tackling the issues; and

“Whereas there is an urgent need to plan and raise awareness and understanding about Alzheimer’s disease and other dementias for the sake of improving the quality of life of the people it touches;

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

“To approve the development of a comprehensive Ontario dementia plan that would include the development of strategies in primary health care, in health promotion and prevention of illness, in community development, in building community capacity and care partner engagement, in caregiver support and investments in research.”

Speaker, I fully agree. I’m going to sign this and give to my friend Jacky to bring down to the table.

FISH AND WILDLIFE MANAGEMENT

Ms. Jill Dunlop: I have a petition that reads:

“To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

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

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

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

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

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

I support this petition and I will hand it to page Julian.

AFFORDABLE HOUSING

Ms. Sandy Shaw: This petition is entitled “Affordable Housing,” which is a significant issue for the residents in my riding of Hamilton West–Ancaster–Dundas.

“To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“Whereas for families throughout much of Ontario, owning a home they can afford remains a dream, while renting is painfully expensive;

“Whereas consecutive Conservative and Liberal governments have sat idle, while housing costs spiralled out of control, speculators made fortunes, and too many families had to put their hopes on hold;

“Whereas every Ontarian should have access to safe, affordable housing. Whether a family wants to rent or own, live in a house, an apartment, a condominium or a co-op, they should have affordable options;

“We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to immediately prioritize the repair of Ontario’s social housing stock, commit to building new

affordable homes, crack down on housing speculators and make rentals more affordable through rent controls and updated legislation.”

I'll affix my name to this and I will give it to page Daniel to bring to the table.

FISH AND WILDLIFE MANAGEMENT

Mr. Stephen Crawford: I have a petition to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario.

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

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

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

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

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

I fully endorse and support and will sign this petition.

SERVICES EN FRANÇAIS

M. Michael Mantha: J'ai une pétition à présenter :

« Ensemble, résistons!

« À l'Assemblée législative de l'Ontario :

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

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

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

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

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

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

MINISTRY OF NATURAL RESOURCES AND FORESTRY

Mr. Will Bouma: I have a petition here to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario.

“Whereas the Ministry of Natural Resources and Forestry (MNRF) should work with and for the people of Ontario;

“Whereas clear and manageable timelines need to be provided by MNRF for all requests from Ontarians in order to provide certainty, clarity and reasonable expectations;

“Whereas MNRF should be a partner in helping the people to open up Ontario for business;

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

“That the Minister of Natural Resources and Forestry reform the current service standards of MNRF to work with and for the people of Ontario.”

I am pleased to sign this petition and will give to page Hidayah.

MIDWIFERY

Ms. Catherine Fife: “To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“Whereas midwives provide expert, women-centred care before, during and six weeks following birth; and

“Whereas midwifery is a female-dominated profession, with women comprising over 99% of the field; and

“Whereas midwives have been providing cost-effective care since 1994, despite not receiving a pay increase until 2005; and

“Whereas a 2016 report found that the health care industry in Ontario has a 37% gender wage gap, contributing to this provincially systemic issue; and

“Whereas the final report and recommendations of the Gender Wage Gap Strategy Steering Committee recommend, ‘the government should consult with relevant workplace parties on how to value work in female-dominant sectors using pay equity or other means’;

“We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to direct the Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care to work with the Association of Ontario Midwives to reinstate a pay equity lens for the profession of midwifery, and compensate midwives appropriately for the expert, women-centred, continuum of care that they provide to pre- and post-natal mothers and infants.”

It's my pleasure to support this petition, and I will affix my signature and give it to page Keya.

AFFORDABLE HOUSING

Ms. Bhutila Karpoche: “To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“Whereas for families throughout much of Ontario, owning a home they can afford remains a dream, while renting is painfully expensive;

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“Whereas consecutive Conservative and Liberal governments have sat idle, while housing costs spiralled out of control, speculators made fortunes, and too many families had to put their hopes on hold;

“Whereas every Ontarian should have access to safe, affordable housing. Whether a family wants to rent or own, live in a house, an apartment, a condominium or a co-op, they should have affordable options;

“We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to immediately prioritize the repair of Ontario’s social housing stock, commit to building new affordable homes, crack down on housing speculators, and make rentals more affordable through rent controls and updated legislation.”

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

INDIGENOUS AFFAIRS

Mr. Michael Mantha: “Stop the Cuts to Indigenous Reconciliation” is the title of this petition.

“To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“Whereas Ontario is situated on the traditional territory of Indigenous peoples, many of whom have been on this land for at least 12,000 years;

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

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

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

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

“—reinstate the Ministry of Indigenous Relations and Reconciliation;

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

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

“—support Indigenous communities across the province” such as Cat Lake and Grassy Narrows.

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

POET LAUREATE

Mr. Percy Hatfield: “To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“Whereas poets laureate have been officially recognized at all levels of Canadian government and in at least 15 countries around the world; and

“Whereas the establishment of our own poet laureate for the province of Ontario would promote literacy and celebrate Ontario culture and heritage, along with raising public awareness of poetry and of the spoken word; and

“Whereas Gord Downie was a poet, a singer and advocate for Indigenous issues, and designating the poet laureate in his memory will serve to honour him and continue his legacy; and

“Whereas Bill 6, An Act to establish the Poet Laureate of Ontario in memory of Gord Downie, will establish the Office of Poet Laureate for the province of Ontario as a non-partisan attempt to promote literacy, to focus attention on our iconic poets and to give new focus to the arts community in Ontario;

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

“To support the establishment of the Office of Poet Laureate as an officer of the Ontario Legislature and that private member’s Bill 6, An Act to establish the Poet Laureate of Ontario Act (In Memory of Gord Downie), 2018, receive swift passage through the legislative process.”

I fully agree. I’m going to sign it and give it to Shumyle to bring up to the front.

AFFORDABLE HOUSING

Ms. Catherine Fife: “To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“Whereas for families throughout much of Ontario, owning a home they can afford remains a dream, while renting is painfully expensive;

“Whereas consecutive Conservative and Liberal governments have sat idle, while housing costs spiralled out of control, speculators made fortunes, and too many families had to put their hopes on hold;

“Whereas every Ontarian should have access to safe, affordable housing. Whether a family wants to rent or own, live in a house, an apartment, a condominium or a co-op, they should have affordable options;

“We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to immediately prioritize the repair of Ontario’s social housing stock, commit to building new affordable homes, crack down on housing speculators, and make rentals more affordable through rent controls and updated legislation.”

I fully support this petition, will affix my signature to it and give this petition to Josie.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

COMPREHENSIVE ONTARIO POLICE SERVICES ACT, 2019

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

Ms. Jones moved second reading of the following bill:

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

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): I look to the minister to lead off the debate.

Hon. Sylvia Jones: I’d like to inform the House that I’ll be splitting my time with the Attorney General, as well as the members for Brampton South and Durham,

Before I begin, I'd like to thank Deputy Minister Di Tommaso and his excellent team of public servants who worked so diligently to prepare Bill 68's introduction. In particular, I'd like to mention Sean Tout, Brian Loewen, Debbie Conrad, John Malichen-Snyder, Rebecca Ramsarran and Michelle Astill. Your long hours and detailed work allowed us to debate a truly comprehensive overhaul of policing legislation, and I believe it will ensure our communities are safer and stronger. Thank you.

I'd like to take this opportunity to express my support for law enforcement and reinforce our government's unbending commitment to the health and well-being of our province's first responders. Ontario is home to some of the finest and best-trained police officers anywhere in the world. There is no doubt that the incredible contributions police officers make keep our streets and families safe.

Every day, our police do incredible work to keep our families safe. Often this work is silent, preventative and unseen. Sometimes it requires police to put themselves in harm's way. Occasionally it requires police to make difficult life-or-death decisions in the blink of an eye. But no matter what, our police can be counted on to protect us.

Often this work goes unnoticed and unseen, but last July the world watched in real time on the busy Danforth one warm summer night in July when police confronted a gunman. Two people were killed in this tragedy, and many more were injured, some seriously. They remain in our hearts and in our minds. Or last April, when a single police officer faced down a man who had turned a van into a weapon and killed 10 innocent victims on a North York sidewalk: To us, these are acts of heroes; to the police, it's their job.

Fixing Ontario's police legislation was an election promise for our government, and indeed, this legislation makes good on our promise. Last week, I outlined why we believe we need to fix police legislation in Ontario:

- investigations that needlessly put police under the cloud of investigation for months and years on end;

- fear that police services would be privatized and outsourced and that a private company would show up when you call 911; and

- a wedge between police officers and communities they serve by treating police officers as though they were guilty until proven innocent.

These are issues that were identified by police officers, police chiefs, police services boards, community activists, municipal leaders and, most importantly, the people of Ontario. As legislators, we now have the opportunity to address these challenges. That's what we are sent here to do.

It was Sir Robert Peel, the architect of modern policing, who said, "The police are the public and the public are the police." Only the most extreme anti-police activist would argue against a relationship of trust between the police and the public. Indeed, police officers tell me time and time again that trust is the most essential ingredient to effective policing.

But trust doesn't just happen. Trust is a result of many things, including habits, patterns and the systems in which we operate. Imagine a police officer being called to a

home. They've been called there before, and each time, they're met with hostility, aggression and sometimes assault. We can all understand why that level of trust when called to that home would be low.

Now imagine being a police officer asked to operate in a system that doesn't trust you. You face automatic investigation for doing your job, including trying to save a life. Those investigations hang over you for months on end. You're not entitled to a fair hearing when facing discipline. Fairness is not even a principle of the system. That system is opaque, convoluted and lacks transparency, and you don't have the same rights as other professionals, such as nurses and teachers, when interacting with the system. How would you feel as a police officer in that system? Would you feel closer to or further away from the people that you serve?

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Now think of the people who are served by the police operating within this system. Does this system cause you to trust your police officers less? Unfortunately, it would.

This type of system serves no one. It makes police officers' jobs more difficult. It makes police chiefs' jobs more complicated. It makes police service boards' jobs more complex. And it makes the people feel less safe, less secure and further from their police. It drives a wedge between the police and the public.

I think we can all agree that we share an interest in fixing the system. Let me set out how we intend to do it with the Comprehensive Ontario Police Services Act.

First, we will enhance police oversight. The current system is plagued with delays and is far too complicated. This is stressful for police and undermines the confidence of the public. We will fix it. A robust oversight system is not anti-police, Speaker; it's just the opposite. As I said, police will be the first to say that public trust is essential for them to do their jobs effectively. My colleague the Attorney General will go into further detail on this topic.

I will point out, however, that our proposed bill restores trust in police oversight by stripping away the bureaucratic layers that were weighing down the oversight process and by presenting a system that the people can easily understand and access.

A key piece of the oversight model will be the appointment of an inspector general of policing to monitor, inspect and ensure compliance regarding the delivery of adequate and effective policing in the province of Ontario. Whereas, under the Police Services Act, 2018, the appointment of the inspector general was open-ended, with no specified term or term limit, we are proposing a term of five years, with the option for one renewal for another five years. By introducing fixed-term renewals, we strengthen the independence of the inspector general and at the same time ensure that there will always be room for renewal and diversity of perspectives by giving other qualified individuals the opportunity to serve.

Second, our proposed legislation addresses serious concerns with Bill 175's discipline provisions. Our police don't mind being held to a high standard. They are, after all, highly trained, skilled professionals with the utmost

integrity. But when that standard is unfair and based on a presumption of guilt, it undermines the relationship between the police and the public. The professional misconduct and disciplinary provisions in the previous legislation were overly punitive and weakened procedural fairness. On any given day, a police officer must be ready to make split-second decisions that save lives and protect families. So when faced with allegations of misconduct, a police officer also must be confident in being investigated thoroughly and in a timely manner, and judged fairly. The disciplinary framework for professional misconduct must be balanced. Tip that balance unfairly and we open the door to police officers becoming more risk-averse while performing their duties, thus undermining public safety. None of us want that.

Our proposed bill holds policing personnel accountable to a fairer process based on a standard of proof known as “clear and convincing evidence,” which is part of the current Police Services Act. Our changes ensure due process for police and have built in a principle of fairness. They continue to hold police to a high standard, a standard I know they will continue to meet and exceed, but ensure that our officers are treated as we treat other professionals like teachers and nurses.

When Sir Robert Peel said, “Police are the public and the public are the police,” I doubt having someone other than a police officer responding to an emergency call for help is what he had in mind, but that was the direction we were headed under the previous legislation. The Police Services Act, 2018, was long on its list of policing functions that could be outsourced and short on assurances that it would be a member of a police service who responds to an emergency or who is in charge of maintaining the peace. Our proposed bill reverses that. It will scrap the laundry list of functions that can be outsourced and clarify those policing functions that must be provided by a member of a police service. When the people call 911 in an emergency, a police officer will show up. We will not compromise on that.

Keeping families secure and communities safe is job number one for our government. Ensuring that police have the resources, tools and supports to protect people and rid our streets of crime is an essential part of that job, and strengthening the trust between police and the public is perhaps the most important step the government can take toward achieving this goal. I hope it’s a step that parliamentarians on all sides of the House are willing to take.

By repealing and replacing the Police Services Act, 2018, the Ontario Special Investigations Unit Act, 2018, and the Policing Oversight Act, 2018, and repealing the Ontario Policing Discipline Tribunal Act, 2018, we have set a new course to develop better and stronger policing legislation and oversight that works for police officers and the people of Ontario. That legislation chipped away at our police officers’ ability to perform their duties and questioned their integrity and professionalism. Our government’s proposed Comprehensive Ontario Police Services Act, 2019, has many components, including amendments to the Coroners Act and the Mandatory Blood Testing Act.

My parliamentary assistant, the honourable member for Brampton South, will touch on some of the specifics of the bills shortly.

Week after week, month after month, policy after policy and through a bill such as the proposed Comprehensive Ontario Police Services Act, 2019, our government has established unwavering support and confidence in the police and their dedication to keeping us safe. I am proud of the support that Bill 68 is already receiving from the policing community. Stakeholders who have highlighted positive aspects of the legislation include Rob Jamieson of the Ontario Provincial Police Association, Bruce Chapman of the Police Association of Ontario, Chief Kimberley Greenwood of the Ontario Association of Chiefs of Police, Mike McCormack of the Toronto Police Association, and Phil Huck of the Ontario Association of Police Services Boards.

We are opening a new era in policing in this province, where front-line policing personnel are supported, where public confidence in the police is strengthened and where police oversight is streamlined and more accessible to the people of Ontario. Our government will never waver on our promise to keep our streets and communities safe, stand up for victims and hold criminals accountable for their actions. This proposed bill, if passed, will work for our front-line police, our community and policing partners, and the people of Ontario.

I’d like to close by reiterating our government’s thanks to the police heroes who serve our province, whose actions, big and small, make a difference each day.

The Attorney General and her team were partners in drafting Bill 68. I would now like to turn it over to my colleague the Attorney General to provide some additional comments on the Comprehensive Ontario Police Services Act.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Lisa Gretzky): I recognize the Attorney General.

Hon. Caroline Mulroney: I would like to thank the Minister of Community Safety and Correctional Services for touching on these very important matters. I also wanted to remind the House that I will be sharing my time with my colleague the member for Brampton South, the parliamentary assistant to the Minister of Community Safety and Correctional Services, as well as my parliamentary assistant, the member for Durham.

It’s a privilege and an honour to have worked with the minister on this very important legislation, the Comprehensive Ontario Police Services Act, 2019. I am proud to serve alongside the minister and all of my colleagues on this side of the House, where we see front-line police officers of Ontario as everyday heroes in our community.

I also want to thank the member for Hastings–Lennox and Addington for his insightful contributions as this bill was developed, and of course for his ongoing commitment to keeping communities safe across Ontario. It is a commitment that began long before he ran for office, one that he honoured every time he put on his uniform as a member of the OPP.

This is how the people of Ontario see these brave women and men, and now they have a government that shares this same vision and commitment to public safety. In every corner of Ontario, from our biggest cities to our smallest towns, our police officers are there for us, keeping us safe. The rule of law depends on having professional, dedicated and responsible police who will help us uphold that law. On this count, Ontario is very fortunate indeed.

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Our government firmly believes that police oversight should not be anti-police. Public trust is essential, in fact, for police to do their work to keep communities safe. Unfortunately, the previous Liberal government and its NDP supporters allowed this trust to erode in a system that did not work for front-line officers or the people they serve and protect. When the previous government looked at our police officers, all it apparently saw were potential offenders. Far too often, the Liberals saw our police as part of the problem. Worst of all, the previous government codified that suspicion into law when it introduced the previous Liberal government's policing legislation, Bill 175, a so-called policing bill that was, in fact, anti-police and that would have continued to leave the public and the police in the dark while public safety was at stake.

We listened to our front-line officers when they raised serious concerns about Bill 175. Nous avons écouté lorsqu'ils ont pris la parole pour faire entendre leurs inquiétudes au sujet du projet de loi 175, qui ignorait les réalités de tous les jours inhérentes à ces métiers et professions qui assurent notre sécurité commune. These everyday heroes told us that the Liberals' bill was out of touch, that it disrespected police and ignored the everyday realities of the job they do to keep us all safe. That is why, when we were elected, one of our first orders of the business was to pause implementation of this reckless, unbalanced legislation so that we could fix it in a way that continues to ensure oversight but does so in a way that is balanced, respectful and fair. We took the time to listen to the concerns of all sides, including the points of view of critics of our police services. We committed to restore transparency and fairness to a system that had previously left the police in and the people in the dark for too long.

Madam Speaker, we see the police, the people and their government as partners in public safety. Nous voyons dans la police, la population et le gouvernement des partenaires en vue de créer un Ontario plus sécuritaire.

A police oversight system that is difficult to understand and navigate does not contribute to the people of Ontario want, which is safer communities to call home. Unlike the Liberals and the NDP, who supported their Bill 175, we recognize the bravery and heroism of our front-line police officers. The legislation introduced by the Minister of Community Safety and Correctional Services reflects our government's unwavering commitment to restoring the confidence of the brave women and men in uniform who keep our cities, towns and villages safe.

The bill would also address nearly every recommendation from Justice Tulloch's independent police oversight

review. I want to thank Justice Tulloch for his thorough review of a contentious and controversial topic.

Our bill recognizes that there is a deficit of trust in police within some communities. As my colleagues have stated and will continue to state today, our bill is sensitive to these concerns. But our proposed legislation makes our first principles clear: Our police deserve our respect.

One of the most important improvements our bill makes is to streamline and strengthen the SIU process. A concern that we have heard over and over from both families and police is that the SIU wastes time and energy investigating the wrong things, that these investigations take too long and that these investigations drain resources that could be focused on stopping actual criminal activity.

The SIU process is also opaque. Both police and the public are left in the dark for months on end with no answers. The unavoidable outcome is that trust is constantly eroded. We are addressing this problem. Under the proposed changes, the SIU would be required to conclude an investigation within 120 days or provide an explanation if that benchmark cannot be met.

We are also proposing changes that would ensure the SIU's mandate is focused on what it was originally created to do: investigate suspected criminal activity. This would streamline the investigative process and maximize the impact of investigative resources on public safety in our communities.

That's actually not the case today. If a police officer tries to stop a suicide attempt but is unsuccessful, he or she is treated like a suspect. If a police officer is on the scene of a crime when someone else on the scene suffers a heart attack, then they are treated like a suspect even if there was no contact between the police officer and the heart attack victim. If a police officer responds to a violent crime and tries to perform CPR but is unable to save the life, he or she is treated like a suspect. This is not what the SIU should be doing.

Afin de fournir transparence et clarté aux agentes et aux agents de première ligne, aux chefs de police et à la population de notre province, la législation propose de clarifier le mandat de l'Unité des enquêtes spéciales.

That's why our bill, if passed, would provide transparency and clarity to front-line officers, police chiefs and the people of our province.

To accomplish this, the bill proposes to clarify the mandate of the SIU. Notification would continue to be required in set circumstances we would all reasonably expect, such as when use of force, custody or detention, or motor vehicle pursuits result in serious injury or death. In addition, notification will be required in all cases when there has been a discharge of a firearm at a person or a reported sexual assault. In all other circumstances, notification of the SIU would only be required where police chiefs or other designated authorities reasonably believe the official's conduct may have been a contributing factor in the incident—simple, common-sense and focused on public safety.

The proposed legislation would clarify the SIU's ability to conduct preliminary inquiries in order to determine whether a full-scale investigation is necessary. This would

help ensure SIU resources are focused where they should be: on possible criminal activity. This proposed change would meet the intent of ensuring both independent oversight and that SIU investigations are focused on those cases where there is a real risk of possible criminal conduct.

Madam Speaker, I can remember meeting a young OPP officer in my community who told me how concerned he and his colleagues were about the current oversight system and its lack of transparency. He questioned how we arrived at such a system in which he was left with a feeling that everyone in Ontario could be considered innocent until proven guilty, except for our police officers.

Action was needed to ensure the trust and confidence of the police and the people are restored in Ontario. We are proposing this action with the legislation proposed by the Minister of Community Safety and Correctional Services. Bill 68 would also ensure the SIU is legally constituted as an arm's-length agency. This would strengthen the SIU's independence.

These measured and practical changes follow the same direction we took late last year to fix the problem that front-line officers faced when attempting to administer life-saving treatments of naloxone to individuals in crisis. We listened to the concerns of police and health care advocates and passed a new regulation to recognize this everyday reality of police work in our communities. We said that officers who were attempting to provide first aid or the life-saving medication naloxone should not be subject to an automatic criminal investigation, and now they won't be.

This legislation would also recognize that there needs to be a clear route for filing public complaints against law enforcement and commencing an independent investigation if necessary. The Law Enforcement Complaints Agency, continued from the existing Office of the Independent Police Review Director, would fulfill this need. The proposed name change would clarify the purpose of the independent agency, as recommended by Justice Tulloch.

Lorsqu'il y a des préoccupations par rapport aux services de police dans cette province, les Ontariennes et les Ontariens devraient savoir vers où ils peuvent se tourner.

When there are concerns with policing in this province, Ontarians should know where to turn. Under this proposal, we would have a single independent body, the Law Enforcement Complaints Agency, reviewing all public complaints about police. The inspector general would deal with regulation of policing, while the SIU would be maintained. Police disciplinary hearings would be heard by independent adjudicators, as recommended by Justice Tulloch.

This streamlined approach would eliminate the need for the Ontario Civilian Police Commission, which would be wound down after an appropriate transition period.

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Together, these changes deliver on our promise to fix the policing legislation, to restore the balance and to ensure the oversight system is transparent, fair and effective

while addressing the very significant delays that currently exist in the system.

We ask police to potentially put themselves in harm's way each and every day to keep our loved ones and our communities safe. In return, we only see it as right to treat them with the fairness and the respect they deserve.

The legislation we have proposed to fix the previous Liberal government's unbalanced Bill 175 is built on the same premise of fairness and respect. We urge the members of this House to put public safety first and support this bill, which would restore respect to police and strengthen their partnership with the people they are asked to protect.

La législation que nous avons proposée pour corriger le projet de loi 175, qui était déséquilibré et qui avait été produit par le gouvernement libéral précédent, est conçue selon cette même équité, ce même respect et cette même transparence.

The proposed legislation would focus investigative resources where they are needed, on criminal activity, within a police oversight system that is transparent, fair and effective. This approach is designed to rebuild the confidence of the people and the police in an oversight system that will ultimately help build safer communities on a shared foundation of restored trust and accountability.

Madam Speaker, thank you for the chance to speak on our government's commitment to restoring respect to police and standing up for public safety in our communities. I look forward to hearing from my colleagues the member for Brampton South, the parliamentary assistant to the Minister of Community Safety and Correctional Services, and my parliamentary assistant, the member for Durham.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Lisa Gretzky): I recognize the member for Brampton South.

Mr. Prabmeet Singh Sarkaria: Just before I begin, I want to say how honoured I am to be serving as parliamentary assistant to Minister Jones in community safety and correctional services—and for the amazing work the Attorney General has done on this piece of legislation as well. It's so important for us and for the police officers that I've had an opportunity to meet to hear their concerns. It's really important for our government to have their backs. It's important that we appreciate that these police officers put themselves at risk every single day—in front of harm's way.

I think sometimes we take that for granted. We live in the best country in the world, where, if you're ever in danger, you're only a phone call away from help from a first responder. Whether it's trying to save somebody from a burning building, whether someone is in trouble on the streets, a phone call away will get you out, and we owe it to our police officers. We owe it to the men and women who serve this country, that a government has their backs as well because they're out there protecting our interests. They're out there protecting and safeguarding our security, so it's the least we can do. It's amazing that we have two ministers who have taken on that responsibility, and a Premier who sees that a government should be working with the police, not against the police.

I really hope the members opposite support this piece of legislation because it will send a great message to the men and women in uniform, that the Legislature really has their backs, and that they also have an opportunity to support the police officers who are putting themselves in harm's way.

It's a pleasure once again to speak on the government's proposed Comprehensive Ontario Police Services Act. Trust and confidence are the bedrock of effective policing, Madam Speaker. The people of Ontario must trust the police to keep our communities safe, and police officers must have confidence that they are supported in doing their jobs by the people they serve and the governments that those same people elect. Both trust and confidence have been eroded by the previous government's Bill 175, probably one of the most anti-police legislations that has ever been brought forward in this Legislature.

We have heard the concerns from police associations; from police officers, who every day go out and do dangerous work; from their families, who want to see them return home safe; and from citizens. I've heard concerns from the people of Brampton South, and I share those concerns, Madam Speaker.

The president and CEO of the Ontario Provincial Police Association identified these concerns in a statement last week. He said that challenges in the previous legislation made it more difficult for the police to do their jobs and that our proposed changes intend to empower police across Ontario to ensure community safety.

Since day one, the government has worked hard to earn the confidence of the people, and of our police officers, by saying what we mean and doing what we say. Our approach to policing was defined last summer with our response to escalating gun and gang violence. We unveiled the first piece of a multi-phased guns-and-gangs strategy to help law enforcement protect innocent families from the menace of gun- and gang-related violence, and to introduce measures to ensure that violent gun criminals are denied bail, taken off the streets and placed behind bars, where they belong.

We as a government are investing in new infrastructure and technology to support law enforcement. We are replacing aging Ontario Provincial Police facilities with nine new state-of-the-art detachments across this province. We are also rebuilding Ontario's long-neglected Public Safety Radio Network. Whether you are in an OPP cruiser, an ambulance or a helicopter combatting an out-of-control forest fire, the Public Safety Radio Network is the backbone of emergency response across Ontario. It is now a full generation out of date.

Last November, the Minister of Community Safety and Correctional Services announced a regulatory change to empower officers to administer naloxone to save a life without second-guessing whether they could face a criminal investigation should the victim die or suffer a serious injury. It did not make sense to us that a trained police officer should face unfair repercussions for trying to save a life, especially when paramedics and firefighters were not subject to the same oversight for taking identical action.

On the cannabis file, we acted quickly to fill a void left by the federal government by ensuring that police have the appropriate training and that municipalities are given the financial support they need to protect Ontarians from the impacts of legalized cannabis. This included addressing anticipated increases in drug-impaired driving and keeping cannabis out of the hands of young people under the age of 19.

None of this, Madam Speaker, was conducted in a vacuum. We reached out to police and community safety stakeholders and asked, "What do you need to combat guns and gangs, ensure that equipment and infrastructure keep pace with the demands of modern policing, keep our streets safe from drug-impaired drivers and better protect police officers, who are simply doing their jobs and saving lives? What do you need?" That same principle is what drives our commitment to fix the province's flawed policing legislation. What do front-line police personnel need?

They told us. To quote just one example, the Police Association of Ontario's president said last week, "Ontario's front-line sworn and civilian police personnel require the appropriate tools and adequate funding to keep our communities safe, and we have remained clear that we support effective oversight, accountability and transparency to build the public's trust in our profession." If the government's proposed Comprehensive Ontario Police Services Act is passed, Ontario will restore, as an article of faith, the people of Ontario's expectation that a trained and professional police service will respond to an emergency.

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Having spent so much time with many police officers and speaking to them, this was a very important aspect of this legislation. For example, under the previous legislation, had someone called 911, it wasn't guaranteed that a police officer would show up. Our legislation ensures that if any individual in the province of Ontario calls 911, a police officer will show up. We're redefining which policing functions must be provided by members of a police service, we are reassuring the public with a streamlined and responsive oversight system for complaints of police misconduct, and we are rebalancing the disciplinary process.

One of the main focuses of this act is to ensure that we're restoring public expectations. As the minister discussed earlier, the previous government's list of policing functions to be outsourced would be scrapped. Under the proposed legislation, if the policing function is law enforcement, emergency response or maintaining the public peace and requires the exercise of powers of a police officer or peace officer, then it must be delivered by a member of a police service who is a police officer or peace officer. On this, there is absolutely no compromise.

Moving over to our government's commitment for independent oversight: The minister briefly outlined the position of the inspector general of policing. That role is also an important part of the government's proposal for a more independent oversight process. For example, in cases

of misconduct by a member of a police services board, we propose that it be the independent inspector general who would impose remedial action. The inspector general would notify the minister and the authority responsible for the member's appointment of any action taken and publish a report of that action online.

Consistent with the government's approach to transparency, the inspector general and the inspectors would have the right to attend police service board meetings. Our legislation also proposes that the inspector general be given the authority to review, assess and approve plans to reduce the size of police service workforces or abolish a police service.

We are setting a high bar, Madam Speaker, to ensure that a municipality or community has the necessary arrangements in place to ensure the delivery of adequate and effective policing. That's also why we are committed to better police training and transparency. We are proposing a framework to strengthen police and police service board training in areas such as human rights, systemic racism, diversity, and the rights and cultures of First Nations, Inuit and Métis people. Such a framework is an early response to the training recommendations presented by Justice Tulloch in his Independent Street Checks Review.

We must continue to encourage and applaud recruitment efforts that move Ontario closer to a place where our police services and oversight infrastructure reflect the very communities they serve. At the same time, we have an obligation to continue to bridge the awareness gap between the police and the population they have sworn to serve and protect.

If our proposed legislation is passed, police service board members, the inspector general, inspectors, and all new police officers and special constables will be required to complete human rights, systemic racism and diversity training, and training on the rights and cultures of First Nations, Inuit and Métis peoples.

Police service board members will be required to complete basic training on roles and responsibilities before taking their seat and performing their duties. This training will improve professionalism on police service boards, make boards more responsive to the diverse communities they serve, and increase public trust.

I am also especially proud of the new training framework the government is proposing and the positive impact it will have on building stronger relationships with all Ontarians, including those communities that continue to experience a disproportionate level of arrests and convictions.

Last week, the Ontario Association of Police Services Boards said that by mandating board training on roles, responsibilities and critical skills, our new legislation will significantly enhance every police board's ability to make the best possible decisions about local policing, strategic plans and budgets. They also said that this would directly lead to ever-improving policing and community safety. Everyone will benefit.

I'd also like to touch on another very important piece of this legislation, which is an aspect of the First Nations

policing. It is important to the government that First Nations communities are assured greater choice in how their police services are delivered. The Comprehensive Ontario Police Services Act, 2019, would, if passed, maintain policing options from the Police Services Act, 2018, for First Nation communities. It would:

- establish a First Nation board to maintain their own police service;

- establish a First Nation OPP board to provide governance for policing provided by the OPP pursuant to a written agreement; and

- enter into agreements with municipalities or the minister responsible for policing to be provided by a municipal police service or the OPP without creating a board.

These are some of the highlights of the government's new policing bill. However, community safety goes beyond policing itself, and so does our proposed legislation.

One part of that legislation is the Coroners Act. In addition to new policing and oversight legislation, we are proposing additional amendments to the Coroners Act to address gaps and inefficiencies in the existing legislation, specifically:

- ensuring that all items seized as part of a coroner's death investigation are securely stored by requiring the coroner to offer these items to a member of the police service for safekeeping. Currently, the storage of seized items remains at the discretion of the coroner rather than the police;

- establishing an investigative screening provision that would provide a coroner with the authority to obtain records, including medical records, that would help in their decision on whether to conduct a full coroner's investigation;

- addressing recruitment challenges by removing the requirement that regional coroners must live in the area of their appointment; and

- clarifying that the chief coroner has the authority to conduct historical death reviews, including reviewing findings from closed coroner's investigations. We know that retrospective analysis of deaths over time can prevent further deaths.

Lastly, we will also be specifically talking about the Mandatory Blood Testing Act. We are proposing amendments to the Mandatory Blood Testing Act to better support and provide peace of mind to victims of crime. First responders and others at risk of coming into contact with bodily fluids of others will also be covered under this legislation. If passed, the amendment will result in a faster mandatory blood testing process and increase penalties for non-compliance.

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In closing, Madam Speaker, I am confident that, if passed, the Comprehensive Ontario Police Services Act, 2019, will not only restore trust in and the confidence of the police; it will improve public safety and work better for the people of Ontario.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Lisa Gretzky): The member for Durham.

Ms. Lindsey Park: It is my privilege to stand today in the House for the second reading of the Comprehensive Ontario Police Services Act, 2019. Speaker, this legislation, which proposes to restore respect to the women and men who protect our communities with honour and integrity, is important. I am proud to be part of a government that recognizes the importance of a strong, fair and transparent partnership between the police, the people and the government to ensure public safety in our communities. I'm honoured to have the opportunity to contribute to that important partnership as the parliamentary assistant to the Attorney General.

In my riding of Durham, we are so fortunate to be served by committed front-line officers who are always prepared to put themselves in harm's way to protect our friends, our families, our neighbours and all those in our community who rely on their bravery and professionalism.

In December, I joined the Minister of Environment, Conservation and Parks—the member for Ajax—as well as the member for Whitby, who I see across the chamber, to announce funding to help the Durham Regional Police Service combat human trafficking in our communities. These men and women are on the front lines of this fight to protect the most vulnerable in our communities from the threat that these crimes pose to the people of our province. Our front-line officers are everyday heroes, and when they speak up about concerns they have that put public safety in our communities at risk, it is our responsibility as a government to listen and to act to ultimately keep the people of Ontario safe.

This past Friday, I had the opportunity to spend the afternoon with the men and women of the human trafficking unit of the Durham Regional Police Service and to see first-hand the work they do, day in and day out to fight this form of modern-day slavery taking place right in front of us in our community.

I also heard about the dangers they face while trying to rescue and protect these vulnerable young women being sex-trafficked. It was an eye-opening experience, and I encourage all members of the Legislature, if you haven't already, to go and meet with your local police service to see and hear about the work they do and the challenges they face in the name of community safety and security. In particular, I want to thank Superintendent Connolly and Detective Davies for the opportunity to learn more this past Friday.

As you know, Speaker, when our government was elected, one of our first orders of business was to pause the implementation of the previous Liberal government's Bill 175, which was supported by the NDP. One of the issues identified with the Liberals' Bill 175 was its failure to address issues plaguing effective, transparent and fair police oversight.

We heard a message over and over again from police officers at their doors; they live in our communities. They recognized the importance of an independent and effective oversight system but wanted that system to treat them with respect and fairness and to recognize the realities of the dangerous work they do.

We promised to fix the legislation in a way that would ensure effective police oversight while also respecting the dedicated front-line officers of our province and the work they do. Our government is working hard to keep that promise.

As the Attorney General noted earlier—and I think it's worth repeating—this bill would also address nearly every recommendation from Justice Tulloch's Independent Police Oversight Review. I want to thank Justice Tulloch for his extensive work in this area.

If passed, the Comprehensive Ontario Police Services Act, 2019, would help to strengthen the partnership between the police, the government and the people of Ontario in creating a safer, more secure province. We know that people across our province, whether they live in North Bay or Kingston, Thunder Bay or Ottawa, Kenora or Kitchener, see public safety as a priority in their community. They want a police oversight system that they can rely on as part of a larger justice system that holds criminals accountable and gives police the tools they need to keep our communities safe.

Now that I've spoken about the genesis of this bill and what it aims to achieve, let me speak about the response it has received over the last week. Policing partners from across the province are speaking up about our government's action on restoring respect to front-line officers and our commitment to putting public safety first.

Rob Jamieson, president and CEO of the Ontario Provincial Police Association, welcomed this announcement of the legislation last week. He said, "The work OPPA members do every day keeps the people of our province safe. Unfortunately, challenges in the current legislation make it more difficult for the police to do their jobs. The changes proposed by the government today intend to empower police across Ontario to ensure community safety."

Bruce Chapman, president of the Police Association of Ontario, had this to say, "The PAO has maintained that Ontario's front-line sworn and civilian police personnel require the appropriate tools and adequate funding to keep our communities safe, and we have remained clear that we support effective oversight, accountability and transparency to build the public's trust in our profession. Ontario's front-line police personnel welcome" the "announcement by the Ontario government and are hopeful that this new Comprehensive Ontario Police Services Act will serve to restore fairness and respect for professional policing, make oversight more effective and improve governance, training, and transparency. The PAO is committed to working with the provincial government to ensure Ontario continues to be a safe place to live, work and visit."

London police chief John Pare has also spoken in favour of the Comprehensive Ontario Police Services Act. In an interview with Global News, he said, "I think it was necessary to meet some of the changing public safety needs across Ontario."

He referred to how the mandate and focus of the SIU has expanded over time and said, "You look at the delay in some of the investigations, on the efficiency of that. It

wasn't really doing much good for anyone including victims, the community, or police officers."

Finally he stated, "Refocusing their mandate and the parameters around that, I think, will improve some of those outcomes."

There's more, Speaker. In a press release reported on by the Guelph Mercury last week, the Guelph Police Association stated, "The PAO and the Guelph Police Association are hopeful this new act will provide clear processes for police to conduct inquiries, and will decrease delays in investigations that can currently take years to complete, causing undue stress for both the officers involved and the affected parties."

Halton regional police Chief Steve Tanner told the Globe and Mail he is "extremely happy there will be changes made to the SIU."

According to CJOH television news, Ottawa Police Chief Charles Bordeleau also welcomed the legislation, noting that it would help to restore faith back into the SIU and ensure "investigations are done in a timely manner."

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Kimberley Greenwood, the chief of Barrie Police Service and president of the Ontario Association of Chiefs of Police, said that modernizing police legislation will enhance public safety in her community and across Ontario. She said, "The Ontario Association of Chiefs of Police has long advocated for significant changes to the Police Services Act in order to assist us in the efficient and effective management of police services that enhance public and officer safety. We believe there are items in this new legislation that are welcome and look forward to continuing to work with the government and stakeholders, knowing that community safety is our absolute priority."

Speaker, the Attorney General spoke today about how we are proposing a more fair, transparent and effective police oversight system that will put public safety first. I'd like to highlight a few points regarding one pillar of this proposed system. This bill would maintain an independent agency for handling public complaints about law enforcement. This is something that we know is important to Ontarians. The Law Enforcement Complaints Agency would build on the existing Office of the Independent Police Review Director. If you have the bill in front of you, which I know some of you in the chamber do right now, we're looking at part VIII of schedule 1, as well as part X.

Part VIII says, "This part continues the Office of the Independent Police Review Director as the Law Enforcement Complaints Agency, headed by the Complaints Director." This is a name change that would better reflect the agency's proposed mandate to investigate complaints about the conduct of police officers and other law enforcement officials. This name change was also recommended by Justice Tulloch in his independent police oversight review, to clarify the purpose of this independent agency and to better reflect its functions. That's what we're proposing with this legislation. When there are concerns with policing in this province, any member of the public should know exactly where to turn. Under the proposed changes within Bill 68, they would.

Now I want to speak about the important balance between oversight of and respect for our front-line officers in the bill before this assembly. Our government does not believe that police oversight and respect for police should have to be at odds with one another. The Comprehensive Ontario Police Services Act, 2019, has been carefully crafted on that premise. This proposed legislation is thoughtfully designed to restore the confidence of the people and the police in an oversight system that would ultimately help to build safer communities on a shared foundation of restored trust and accountability.

Improved governance, training and transparency are some of the key goals of this proposed legislation. The Comprehensive Ontario Police Services Act aims to improve training and make decision-making more transparent at the oversight bodies. Part of that training—and this is an important addition to our bill—includes mandating human rights, systemic racism, diversity and Indigenous training for new police officers, new special constables and police service board members. Police service board members will also be required to successfully complete basic training on roles and responsibilities before exercising powers and performing duties.

I want to be clear: This is not an afterthought. You can turn to part IV, section 37, and you will see right in the section setting out the police service board duties that there's a subsection that says that the board "shall ... prepare and adopt a diversity plan to ensure that the members of the police service reflect the diversity of the area for which the board has policing responsibility." This is yet another example of the proposed bill being directly responsive to Justice Tulloch's recommendations, as set out in his Independent Police Oversight Review.

Speaker, as some of the statements I shared from policing partners earlier suggest, police will be the first to tell you that a robust system of oversight helps them to do their jobs effectively. That is why we have introduced proposed legislation that, if passed, restores respect for the police and enables them to protect our communities more effectively.

The Comprehensive Ontario Police Services Act would also ensure that the province has effective and independent police oversight while respecting the integrity and the professionalism of our province's front-line police officers. We are confident that, if passed, these balanced proposed changes would help to ensure that police oversight is reasonable, fair and effective for everyone in Ontario.

In closing, I urge all members to support this bill, and I look forward to listening to the rest of the debate on this bill.

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

Mr. Percy Hatfield: It's always a pleasure to stand in the House and talk about reforming problematic legislation. It's always a welcome opportunity.

We live in difficult times, and the times, as you know, have changed. The nature of policing has changed. Just as an education, a few years ago who would have thought we'd have teachers wearing Kevlar for protection?

Just as the teachers need protection, I think we have to work on legislation that would help the police have better safeguards in their work as well. But we don't have to play politics with it. We don't have to say, "the previous Liberal government, propped up by the NDP." It was a majority government. The third-party NDP did not prop up the majority government, but every time you say it, to me, it hurts your credibility. You don't have to go down that road. When you come to that path, take the path less travelled, as Robert Frost would say, and it will make a world of difference. Don't keep saying, "propped up by the NDP."

I know—what did Mike Duffy call them?—that the kids in short pants over there that do your writing for you may write it out for you. They may give you your speaking notes, but you do not have to say every word that they tell you you should say. We did not prop up the Liberal majority government, just as you may have noticed we're not propping up the Conservative majority government, either.

We should all work together. We should fashion the best legislation we can, but you make it so difficult when you say, "propped up by the NDP." We don't prop up majority governments; we hold you to account. We try to improve what you put before us.

Thank you for the opportunity this afternoon.

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

Mr. Will Bouma: I'd like to thank the minister, the Attorney General, the members from Brampton South and Durham and especially my very good friend from Windsor—Tecumseh. I miss him. I'm so far away from him over here—philosophically also. I just want to say hello.

I mentioned earlier that I got to go to the police auxiliary banquet in Brantford this past Saturday evening, where they take time to celebrate these young men and women who volunteer their time to the community on the police auxiliary, who show up for Canada Day celebrations, for parades, for all sorts of special events and have a seat on the committee also, with everything going on in our communities, not only in the city of Brantford but also in the county of Brant with the Brant county OPP auxiliary. I see these young people who have all this energy, and so many of them get hired into full-time service because our auxiliaries only take the best.

As an optometrist, as I see them later on in life, I don't meet too many police officers who aren't looking forward to retirement, and the reason is simply because there's this negative aspect to their job. Having had the opportunity as a firefighter to work with the police on the front line, at accidents and at critical incidents, the level of disrespect that we so often show to our police officers wears down on them.

That's why I'm so excited about this legislation. We're going back and trying to restore some of that respect that this House but also the public has for our police services, because at the end of the day, these men and women are just like anyone else in the province of Ontario, and they carry all these little traumas with them. We need to do our

part to help with the PTSD aspect also, to respect them for the job that they do.

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

Ms. Catherine Fife: I just want to say that it does appear, which is disappointing, that the government rhetoric game is very strong today on Bill 68, and I just want to say that I don't think that that's helpful. It certainly wasn't helpful when the minister of community and social services said to the autism community, "You're either on the train or get off the train." That doesn't help the debate, nor does it strengthen legislation.

In fact, New Democrats have been working to support police services for a number of years. I, myself, brought forward a motion five years ago on missing persons legislation, which is now in this legislation. It was also in Bill 175. That came to me from a parent, Maureen Trask, whose son went missing in Temagami. Police forces didn't have the tools that they needed to do a thorough investigation. This would help with human trafficking and tracking of those young girls, missing and murdered Indigenous women, and seniors who have dementia. So this has been sitting on the books now for five years; it was in Bill 175. It needs to be strengthened. Ontario is the only province in the country that doesn't have missing persons legislation.

We also worked with police services on the naloxone issue and protecting officers who administer naloxone, because they needed to be protected throughout that process as well. And we were one of the first parties who brought in resources and legislation to support officers who suffer from post-traumatic stress disorder. So it isn't an all-or-nothing situation that is before us.

When I addressed the Ontario police association before the last election, I said, "Listen, when housing systems break down, when education breaks down, when mental health resources break down, all of those issues end up in the back seat of a cruiser of our police forces." So we see it holistically. We want to make sure everyone can benefit and be safe in the province of Ontario. That includes police officers, and it includes the citizens of this great province.

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

Mrs. Daisy Wai: I thank our government and the leadership of Minister Jones and Minister Mulroney for introducing the Comprehensive Ontario Police Services Act. It will make Ontario safer, stand up for victims, and hold criminals accountable for their actions.

Our government is restoring fairness and respect for police and enhancing oversight. Our brave men and women have been working very hard to support the community, protect the people and maintain safety in our community. They really deserve gratitude and respect, not our suspicion and scorn.

I have served on the police services board for the York Regional Police and I've seen first-hand how hard they work, selflessly and faithfully. I'm happy to see that our government is providing police the tools, resources and supports they need to do their jobs.

Thank you, Minister, for supporting this and introducing this bill. I'm sure our police will be serving us much better through what we are doing.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Lisa Gretzky): Minister of Community Safety and Correctional Services.

Hon. Sylvia Jones: Thank you to my fellow minister and my colleagues for participating in this afternoon's leadoff debate.

To Windsor—Tecumseh and to Waterloo: I'm not really sure where you're landing on Bill 68, whether you support it or not—it sounded promising—but I will patiently wait as the debate continues.

At the end of the day, we have a responsibility to balance. We have a responsibility to balance the legislation against the needs of the police officers who, frankly, we empower with pretty important work to do. And it's something that is a high bar, right? We don't let everyone serve as police officers in the province of Ontario for a reason. There are high expectations, and there are high levels of commitment that have to happen when you have a career, a job, that puts you, literally, in harm's way. When we do that, we, as government and as legislators, also have a responsibility, and that responsibility is to make sure that those same individuals have the tools they need to get the job done.

I believe—I truly believe—that Bill 68 strikes that balance. There are going to be challenges as we move forward in Ontario, as we balance the needs of our community, of our families and of keeping our streets safe. At the end of the day, I think we can all agree that that is ultimately what we are attempting to do with Bill 68. If we've struck that balance here, then I hope the members on all sides will support Bill 68 in the third and final reading.

I'm happy to hear suggestions and opportunities for improvement, but please keep in mind that the goal is to protect our citizens.

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

Mr. Kevin Yarde: As always, it's a pleasure and an honour to rise here in the House to represent the people of my riding of Brampton North and as the community safety and corrections critic for the official opposition.

The government won't get any argument from this side of the House that this file is not a vitally important one to the well-being of everyone here in the province—even as we may disagree on how to get there.

I'm sure most of the members here are familiar with the movie, *This Is Spinal Tap*, at least the iconic scene where one of the members of the band is showing the interviewer how his amps “go to 11.” Well, I'm afraid it looks like this government has turned the rhetoric all the way up to 11 when it comes to discussing this bill and the issues that inform it.

Yes, Speaker, this government's rhetoric—especially the Attorney General and the minister for the file—ran hot when they announced their intention to table this bill. I've got to wonder what bill they were talking about and what bill they were introducing. You know what I'm referring

to, Speaker, as that rhetoric has continued, not unexpectedly, into the government's remarks today. That rhetoric, of course, was hard to miss: that the last bill that amended the Police Services Act and a number of related acts passed by the previous government after 25 years was “the most anti-police legislation in the history of the country.” Also, it was “a disaster,” they said, and that police would no longer be vilified and instead would be venerated by this government by scrapping that bill—the previous bill, the aforementioned “most anti-police legislation in the history of the country.”

Now, Madam Speaker, I wasn't here then; I wasn't quite yet elected into the House. But you'd think that if that were the case, the members on the government side, while they were on the side of the House, would have voted with their feet. They would have screamed and stomped and joined the throngs on the lawns to voice their outrage. They would have at least voiced strong opposition, but they didn't. Oh, sure, they voted against Bill 175, but you'd think they would have put forward a battery of amendments to stem the tide of such an anti-police piece of legislation. But they didn't. They tabled a couple of amendments, the same amendments we put forward. In short, you would have thought they would have turned it up to 11, as they did when they announced their own bill.

I wonder what's changed; why the volume's now at 11 all the time. Speaker, I kid just to make a point. I say that this government turned up its rhetoric to 11, that the rhetoric ran hot because the bill they tabled looks a lot like the previous bill, the “most anti-police legislation ever in the history of the country,” the “disaster.” All we have to do is compare it to two vehicles: a four-door Honda Civic sedan, which is the Liberal bill, and a four-door Honda Civic sedan with a sunroof, which is the Conservative bill—not much difference at all.

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To be clear, the government has overwhelmingly retained most of the previous Safer Ontario Act, Bill 175, which, I'll remind this House, the government—the Attorney General—called “the most anti-police legislation” in the history of the country. It seems like they are speaking about their own bill. It's all there—most of it, anyway. Yes, parts will be repealed and others will be renamed, or “rebranded” might be a better term.

I'll give this House an example, Madam Speaker. The Safer Ontario Act, under the Liberals, received royal assent in March of last year. This government paused, as they mentioned, the bill in July of last year. Schedule 2, the Policing Oversight Act section of the act, governed the office of the Ontario Independent Police Review Director. The office of the Ontario Independent Police Review Director was renamed in the Safer Ontario Act the Ontario Policing Complaints Agency. In fact, schedule 2 of the act didn't even receive royal proclamation before the changes made here by this government. You are largely fighting a phantom piece of legislation, in that it hasn't come into force yet. In this bill, Bill 68, you've renamed the office of the Ontario Independent Police Review Director—renamed by the Liberals in Bill 175 the Ontario Policing

Complaints Agency—and renamed it again. That's all they're doing: just renaming these bills. That's a difference without a distinction.

Sure, there are real ways the government has changed police oversight here—some consequential, but most of them just minor changes. There's a lot of this rebranding, a lot of shuffling the deck of cards around to make it a good sound bite rather than tabling a radically different piece of legislation here, which they have not done. In New York, they call that game “three-card monte.” How is it possible that this government has tabled a bill that is built entirely out of the last bill, “the most anti-police legislation” in the history of the country?

I note that, as of the day the bill was introduced last week, the Police Association of Ontario, in their public reaction to Bill 68, mentioned that they had not seen the government's legislation prior to it being tabled by the Minister of Community Safety and Correctional Services. I've had the pleasure of meeting many of our front-line officers and chiefs of police from Peel, Toronto, Hamilton, Kingston, Barrie, Sudbury, Thunder Bay, Niagara and right across this great province of ours. Speaker, I am sure that the associations and others in the policing community will see a lot that they like here, and police have every right to clear rules governing the work they do. They should be entitled to fairness and transparency in how they are policed, as other front-line workers ought to be.

No one on this side of the House thinks policing isn't hard, that it isn't important work, often thankless. New Democrats have proudly led the charge and supported efforts to have greater recognition of PTSD experienced by our front-line officers and other policing officials. In fact, we think it's so important as to have a special place among public service, and it comes with a special responsibility.

Democrats don't apologize for being in favour of greater accountability and oversight for our public institutions, especially when those public institutions have the power of liberty and sometimes life and death over other Ontarians. It's an extraordinary responsibility, and we're glad that there are men and women willing to undertake it. We should be able to raise these points—Ontarians should be able to raise these points as well—without having the minister responsible for all policing in the province and the minister ultimately responsible for all law in the province turn the temperature up to 11.

I note that one change this government has made is that they've taken a single line—if you listen to this one—away from the list of responsibilities, and that is “duties of police officer,” that all police officers in the province are bound to. The line that is now gone would require a police officer to “comply with any investigations conducted by the complaints director, the SIU director or the inspector general.” At the same time, the government has returned the fines meted out to anyone who doesn't co-operate or who obstructs the SIU investigation back down to \$5,000 for an initial offence to a maximum of \$10,000 and the possibility of jail time if it continued. This is down from the \$25,000 maximum under the Safer Ontario Act

changes that never came into force. The amount is not my point.

We now know that this government is intent on making it easier for private entities to do things in this province without the burden of government regulation. That's clearly your vision of this province. But it shouldn't be the task of this government to make it easier for one branch of government, part of the public service, to not co-operate with another branch of this government—but that is exactly what they are doing, in mostly subtle ways, in the legislation. In public, as I say, they are now at 11.

Madam Speaker, the SIU Act changes in the Safer Ontario Act were, of course, suspended by the Ford government in July. The act itself only passed in March of last year and hadn't been proclaimed. The ministers, in making their case against the SIU, gave the impression that an overbearing regime of oversight had already been applied on front-line police and that they were limiting the scope of activities the SIU director could instigate. But the list of incidents remains the same: death, serious injury, firearm discharge at someone, or sexual assault. New Democrats acknowledge that police shouldn't be chilled into not providing life-saving medical care where appropriate.

Because so much has been paused, Madam Speaker—now Mr. Speaker—suspended, stopped in its tracks by this government, and the disaster that was the previous legislation that governed the Special Investigations Unit hadn't yet come into force, New Democrats would be eager to see how many SIU investigations had been launched using the new rules.

Another change is that you're limiting the amount of time for an SIU investigation, as with other investigations spoken to in the legislation, to 120 days, roughly three months. I won't speak to this change here except to say that there may be an argument for shorter investigations, but the trouble here is that when you compound that with the fact that you're reducing the penalties to co-operate and have even suggested that police need not co-operate with the SIU at all—the public, that is, who has the right to know of serious incidents involving harm to a member of the public where police were involved—there may be a legitimate concern that the clock will simply run out. We hope that's not the intention here on the public's right to know, because we don't want to forget that the police service serves the public, as do we here in this place, by keeping them safe and keeping the peace.

We note that the public will have next to no information about SIU investigations, and only limited access to information in instances where an investigation wasn't pursued or concluded. New Democrats have called for greater transparency and for these reports, respecting all applicable privacy laws, to be available to the public.

I note that SIU stand alone in Bill 68 as not having the requirement to be posted online, not a far cry off from where we were under the Liberal legislation. We note that the Office of the inspector general created by the previous legislation, the Safer Ontario Act, continues here, only now the inspector general will no longer be able to investigate instances of professional misconduct among any

ranks other than senior staff; where any misconduct is suspected, it is brought to the chief of the police service whose member is suspected of misconduct, and in most cases this will be investigated by another, perhaps neighbouring, service.

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This is essentially the status quo and is an example of a concern raised during the years of consultation done by Justice Tulloch in his comprehensive review of policing in the province, a long-standing concern by the public that the police be seen to police themselves. The minister, or the Attorney General, made reference to how the government, in tabling the legislation, was following the recommendations of Justice Tulloch in the years-long review I just mentioned. That makes sense when, as I've pointed out, this legislation, Bill 68, mostly does what Bill 175 under the Liberals set out to do—despite, of course, the rhetoric of this government. The establishment of the inspector general role, the public complaints agency, the mandate of the SIU, First Nations policing and public reporting were all contained in the Tulloch report and made their way into Bill 175.

New Democrats supported the recommendations of Justice Tulloch and—with some reservations, which I'll get into in a minute—supported Bill 175. I note that, in fact, the government has now included a further Tulloch recommendation, which has explicit language that includes anti-racism, equity and recognition of the diverse communities they will go on to serve, and for First Nations, Inuit and Métis peoples. We hope that this positive inclusion can be extended to other active members of police services.

There are less tools available to prevent over-policing in Bill 68, the Comprehensive Ontario Police Services Act. Carding is one example of over-policing that needs to be addressed. Last week, when the minister was asked to address the issue, the minister said that she will not bring back carding or street checks in the province of Ontario. Of course, you can't bring back what never went away. Carding should be banned in the province. Carding, or street checks, were regulated but never banned. Police have an incredible responsibility in keeping our communities safe, but it is a responsibility that comes with unique powers over others.

Mr. Speaker, when I first came here to Queen's Park, one of the first things I did was that I stood up in the Legislature and I mentioned that I had been carded eight years ago. Now, unless it has happened to you, there's no way you can understand how degrading carding is. I have had complete strangers come up to me since and thank me for telling my story.

The previous government could have banned the practice of arbitrary street checks, but they didn't. This issue needs to be addressed. Everyone in this province has the right to be safe, and to feel safe and feel free of arbitrary and discriminatory stops of their person. I will always fight for fairness and equity for police and law enforcement in my critic portfolio, but oversight and transparency—and, yes, greater training—are important to

ensure that long-standing practices such as street checks don't take place.

I've mentioned community throughout my time here today, because at the heart of the considerations of the Tulloch report and calls for robust oversight and transparency over policing has to be community. It has to be at the heart of all of this. That's why police are so proud to serve: They're serving our community and, better yet, the communities where they live. That's why any discussion of the rules around policing is so important, and we won't shy away. As the official opposition, our duty is to hold this government to account, so let's ramp down the volume on the rhetoric.

Mr. Speaker, that is my time.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): I just want to ask the member: Were you sharing your time with anyone? No? Okay.

Questions and comments?

Mr. Amarjot Sandhu: I'm privileged for this opportunity to rise today and speak on Bill 68, the Comprehensive Ontario Police Services Act. Ensuring the security of the people of Ontario is our government's most fundamental responsibility.

Before the last election, the Liberal government passed the most anti-police legislation in Canadian history. I must say, it was a disaster. Our government for the people is taking action and introduced the Comprehensive Ontario Police Services Act. This legislation is a key part of our promise to make Ontario safer, stand up for victims and, most importantly, hold criminals accountable for their actions.

Our government is restoring fairness and respect for police, enhancing oversight and improving governance, training and transparency. Our police deserve our gratitude and respect, not our suspicion and scorn. That's why our government for the people is providing police the tools, resources and support they need to do their jobs.

Our legislation is based on fairness and respect for the profession of policing. That's why we are giving the public confidence that when they phone 911, a trained, accountable police officer will show up, something that was not guaranteed under the previous government's legislation.

Our proposed legislation will improve training and governance. Community safety goes beyond policing itself, and so does our proposed legislation.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker, for the opportunity.

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

Ms. Catherine Fife: It's a pleasure to comment on the opening speech from the member from Brampton North on Bill 68.

I've been around for a little while now, and it's always interesting when a government bill defines what it is. The Liberals used to do this, like the "amazing" Bill 75 and the "stupendous" Bill 63. Of course, this one calls itself the Comprehensive Ontario Police Services Act, and I think that's what the member—

Applause.

Ms. Catherine Fife: No, it's not actually something to clap about.

What the member from Brampton North pointed out is that “comprehensive overview” is the language that the government is using, where in fact the government has sort of tweaked little components of it, including the issue of suspension with pay, which became a very big issue in Bill 175.

You'll remember, Mr. Speaker, that there was a police officer in Waterloo region who had been off for two and a half years and who was tweeting from Mexico and Cuba, and on vacation while that investigation happened. There was generally a sense—and from his own members, as well—that this was not the appropriate action to be taking. If you are suspended and you're being investigated, and being paid to do so, bragging about the fact that you're having this paid leave in a southern location is frowned upon, quite honestly, and it didn't reflect well, I think, on the police officers who go to work every day and who risk their lives every day. That component is still in this piece of legislation.

For the government to call this a comprehensive review of Bill 68—I think that's a stretch. That's one of those Liberal “stretch goals”—you'll remember that, Mr. Speaker.

I think that the member from Brampton North has raised some of our concerns, and we're going to work through those concerns by listening to police, by listening to citizens and by engaging in a healthy debate on what police services in the province look like.

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

Mr. Kaleed Rasheed: There is no greater responsibility for a government than public safety, and our government has been focused on public safety since day one—since day one. This government and the Minister of Community Safety and Correctional Services are doing their due diligence for the province by restoring trust in our officers and creating a safer Ontario.

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Officers of the Peel Regional Police in my riding would appreciate this important piece of legislation. Now officers will no longer have to be deemed guilty until proven innocent. Our justice system needs to uphold the rule of law and should act on the fact that we are innocent until proven guilty. Our Canadian constitution states, in section 11(d): “To be presumed innocent until proven guilty according to law....”

So I question the House why the brave men and women who fight for our safety every single day should be presumed guilty before we presume them innocent. Mr. Speaker, that is unjust and unconstitutional.

We need to stop looking at our community heroes as criminals and start looking at them as who they really are: our heroes. We need to restore trust to have faith in the brave officers. Public trust is essential.

The previous government's Bill 175 did not work for the officers or for the people—

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

Ms. Rima Berns-McGown: I want to begin by saying that, along with everybody in the NDP, of course public trust is essential, and community trust is essential. As we think about this as a relationship, it is so important to begin by getting rid of the over-the-top rhetoric, as my colleague was discussing, because it's just completely unhelpful. If you need public trust and you need the police to be able to feel safe and to feel that they have public trust, then what you need to do is to work on a relationship such that that trust exists.

For a while, I worked with a group of Somali mothers whose sons had been killed in gun violence. They were speaking from the perspective of a community that certainly had issues with trust. It was never a question of demonizing the police. It was always a question of how we create a relationship that works. It is in the interest of the police to ensure that their relationship with vulnerable communities works, that it is one of mutual respect.

So when we look at these issues, it is never about taking hard and fast stances against or with no criticism in favour of. That is not the point. The point is, how do we build relationships that work, and how do we build them so they benefit communities and the police?

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): Now back to the member from Brampton North for final comment.

Mr. Kevin Yarde: As we all know, the world has changed. Police are dealing with vulnerable issues, including mental health and addictions, so we need to modernize how we deal with policing, and we need to be ready for the next challenges.

How do we bring in the areas of community safety in a policing context? We have to change the model from reactive to proactive and community-focused. There are substantial ideas on how we do that.

Today we all heard from the Minister of Community Safety and Correctional Services on the government's proposed legislation, Bill 68, the Comprehensive Ontario Police Services Act. The office of the government continues to bring rhetoric with it here, and it is really no different than Bill 175, the Safer Ontario Act, which they continue to say is the most anti-police legislation in the history of the country. But the first thing that jumps out upon reading the Conservative bill is how much it resembles Bill 175. so much so—

Mr. Lorne Coe: No. Not even close.

Mr. Kevin Yarde: I'm glad you came back to hear this—so much so that the government could have accomplished what they sought to accomplish with minor amendments to the existing legislation, which is in effect what they've done. Whole sections remain untouched and most amendments here are modest, Madam Speaker. However, there are enough regressive parts that we must bring it to the attention of Ontarians.

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

Ms. Jane McKenna: It is an honour for me to rise today in this House to speak in favour of the recently

introduced Comprehensive Ontario Police Services Act. My caucus colleagues Minister Jones and Minister Mulroney made the announcement last week at Halton Regional Police Service, which is, of course, the service that takes care of my riding in Burlington. I'm extremely proud of this legislation because I believe it strikes the best possible balance in terms of recognizing, Madam Speaker, (1) the often challenging day-to-day work of police officers and the difficult decisions they must make under very stressful circumstances and (2) the necessity that the police be accountable to an objective authority to ensure the rights of the community are safeguarded within a reasonable time frame.

This legislation will make good on our government's promise to fix the policing legislation the previous government broke. Our goals are threefold: (1) to enable police to keep every Ontarian citizen safe, (2) to stand up for victims of crime, and (3) to hold criminals accountable for their actions. The legislation that our government chose not to proclaim and that was debated in the dying days of the previous Liberal government was some of the worst police legislation in Canadian history. If it had been enacted, it would have caused more problems than it purported to solve.

Shortly after our government was elected, I had the opportunity to sit down with a large group of police officers from Halton region. There were about 12 of them, and we had a very candid conversation about their work. It was clear to me that they felt slightly misunderstood by the Liberal government. Police morale was low and Bill 175 appeared heavy-handed. It did little to fix the real problems in accountability, training and oversight that were needed to repair and improve policing and police accountability.

Minister Mulroney said last week that the bill addresses nearly every recommendation from Justice Michael Tulloch's review of police oversight bodies, including the Special Investigations Unit, the Office of the Independent Police Review Director and the Ontario Civilian Police Commission. She said, "Our bill recognizes that there is a deficit of trust in the police within some communities and that the bill is sensitive to these concerns."

1520

Trust: one of the biggest little words in human history. In the history of human relationships, a marriage without trust is doomed. A trust deficit between a parent and a child can break their bond and lead to irreparable tragedy. Trust is a mutual commitment based on respect and recognition of the value of the other party. It requires taking a step towards, not a step away. In the common vernacular, it requires a reaching out.

Well, a deficit of trust in our own police cannot prevail in Ontario, Madam Speaker. The people of this great province do not need to be reminded that if you are going about your business, obeying the law of the land, you are unlikely to have much interface with the police. Their job is to keep the vast majority of law-abiding citizens safe from the small minority who commit crimes, but it is absolutely imperative that the people believe and understand our police services to be well trained, ethical, well

managed, properly governed and appropriately disciplined when necessary. We must put our trust in the police to keep us safe, to arrive quickly when we call 911 because we believe ourselves to be in danger, and to act in accordance with their best judgment and the high standards of their training.

For most people in Ontario, the police are most of the time in the background. However, in times of the most serious need, when we are in danger or when we or a loved one are injured or threatened, we rely on their help, their professionalism and protection.

To be a police officer is a noble pursuit that carries high risk. Each and every day is different. A police officer has no idea who or what situation they may be suddenly called upon to deal with, often in circumstances of crisis. Their training is strict, exacting, rigorous, military. When they are dealing with unknown and dangerous situations, their reactions are carefully calibrated, the result of repeatedly simulations, in which they rely on their training, as well as mental and physical fitness, to respond appropriately, Speaker.

We revere our men and women in uniform with very good reason. Police will be the first to say that public trust is essential for them to do their job effectively. What is the key to creating trust? The key is effective oversight. Unfortunately, the old oversight system was broken. It was confusing. It was slow. It didn't work for the police and it certainly didn't work for the public.

As Bruce Chapman, president of the Police Association of Ontario, said about the SIU, "The problem is the public loses the trust of the police because of the time it takes for them to complete an investigation. It's unfair for the public, it's unfair for the affected family member(s) of the person and it's unfair to the police to wait a year, 18 months for the results of the SIU investigation."

Investigations often drag on for years. In one case that was shared with me, a police officer had tried to talk a jumper down; the person was attempting suicide. The officer didn't succeed and the jumper died. The event itself was traumatic for the officer, who was suspended for well over a year, prevented from working, while his actions, based entirely on his police training, were investigated. I wasn't surprised when he told me he didn't feel supported.

We've all heard of examples of absurd situations faced by police officers under previous legislation:

(1) When saving a life with naloxone, police officers were automatically subjected to an investigation. Our government fixed that in the fall.

(2) The heroes who responded to the Danforth shooting spent six months under the cloud of an investigation, and that's ironically considered fast compared to a lot of SIU investigations.

(3) Officers who are not successful at preventing someone from committing suicide are automatically subjected to an SIU investigation.

This type of oversight can put a chill on police actions.

The previous 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 police officers who risk their lives to keep us safe:

“If a police officer tries to stop a suicide attempt but is unsuccessful, he or she is treated like a suspect.” Minister Mulroney said, “If a police officer responds to a violent crime, tries to perform CPR but is unable to save the life, he or she is treated like a suspect.”

She said that the legislation proposes that notifying the SIU would only be required in circumstances when the use of force, custody or detention and vehicle chases result in a serious injury or death, or when there’s a report of a sexual assault or when an officer uses a firearm. “In all other circumstances, notification of the SIU would only be required where police chiefs or other designated authorities reasonably believe that the official’s conduct may have been a contributing factor in the incident.” The minister said that the change would meet the intent of ensuring that both independent oversight and that SIU investigation are “focused on those cases where there is a real risk of possible criminal conduct.”

This legislation will better focus the mandate of the special investigations unit. Under the Comprehensive Ontario Police Services Act, the special investigations unit, the SIU, would be established as a fully independent provincial agency in a new, separate act administered by the Attorney General. This is important for a very simple, plain-language reason: If you are being investigated, it should be reasonably easy for you to go to the legislation, have a look at the new law and understand what you can expect to happen.

To quote from Michael Tulloch’s report:

“An interested person should be able to read the police oversight legislation and understand how the oversight system works. That person should be able to do so without too much difficulty and without years of legal training.

“This is especially so for people who have a complaint about police conduct.

“Yet the laws on the oversight bodies in the Police Services Act are hard to find in that act and hard to understand.”

The proposed legislation solves that problem. Our legislation will require the SIU to complete investigations within 120 days or provide an explanation for delays to that timeline. This is a reasonable period of time within which to conduct a thorough and efficient investigation without causing the undue hardship of forcing people to wait for years for a decision.

1530

The government’s bill also includes a name change for the OIPRD, which would become the self-explanatory Law Enforcement Complaints Agency if the legislation passes. The new body would be responsible for receiving all complaints about police officers and others, such as legislative peace officers; assigning the complaint to a police service or agency investigator; and overseeing a 120-day timeline, requiring that investigators explain the reason for the delay.

Police deserve our gratitude and respect, not our suspicion and scorn. That’s why our government is providing police the tools, resources and support they need to do their jobs. Our legislation is based on fairness and respect for the profession of policing.

Through the introduction of the Comprehensive Ontario Policing Services Act, we are seeking to create a stronger police oversight structure, provide police officers with a fairer disciplinary process, and strengthen public confidence through more transparency and new training requirements.

As an early response to Justice Tulloch’s report on street checks, we will mandate training for all new police officers and special constables in human rights, systemic racism, diversity and Indigenous culture. This legislation will also make successful completion of training mandatory for members of police services boards.

I would like to spend a few minutes expanding on just what that means. I took the opportunity to look at the report prepared by the Honourable Justice Michael Tulloch. I recommend it highly to every member of this House. He writes:

“To provide all Ontarians with effective oversight, the oversight bodies must be both socially and culturally competent....

“During my consultations, I heard from many different groups about the distinctive challenges they face when dealing with the police and police oversight bodies. They said that, in some ways, they did not feel valued or understood by the oversight bodies.

“Some, for example, said that the oversight bodies did not understand gender-based violence or issues relating to mental health. Others complained that language barriers were not properly addressed. Still others felt that the oversight bodies were not sensitive to their communities’ historical relationships with the police.

“All such concerns limit the effectiveness of the oversight bodies.

“In my view, the oversight bodies should invest in developing greater social and cultural competency.

“Greater social and cultural competency would allow members of the oversight bodies to navigate situations where social or cultural differences may be a factor.

“Social and cultural competency begins with understanding a community’s history and its relationship with police and police oversight. It includes understanding, for example, that men and women often are treated differently, as are those affected by mental health issues. It also includes recognizing that there are power imbalances in many relationships, particularly in domestic relationships, but also in other situations involving interactions between the police and the public. And it includes recognizing the barriers to accessibility facing some communities, such as persons with mental or physical disabilities.

“Developing greater competency in these areas involves self-reflection on one’s own perceptions of certain communities and social norms, and how those perceptions may shape one’s interactions with others.

“Social and cultural competency also includes developing techniques to work in a respectful and sensitive manner with people from a broad range of communities.

“Finally, for competency development to be truly successful, it will need to involve critically assessing organizational policies, programs, operations, and general

practices to ensure a socially and culturally respectful approach.

“To accomplish greater overall competency, I therefore recommend that the oversight bodies implement ongoing training and evaluation programs that address social and cultural competency issues, anti-racism, diversity, inclusion, accessibility, gender-based violence, and mental health.

“The programs should be developed in partnership with the communities served by the oversight bodies and their supporters, such as women’s groups, race-based organizations, and mental health organizations. They should include extensive courses on the communities served by the oversight bodies, including, but not limited to, Ontario’s Black, South Asian, East Asian, Arab, Muslim, and LGBTQ communities, as well as women and persons with mental or physical disabilities.

“The competency programs should be consistent, comprehensive, and mandatory for all staff. They should be a permanent and ongoing commitment within each organization....

“In addition, I recommend that the oversight bodies make efforts to reflect the diversity of Ontario and the communities....”

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

Mr. Kevin Yarde: As we outlined earlier, Bill 68 really is no different than Bill 175. If you look at the amendments that they’re putting forth, it’s basically a band-aid—ripping it off—and it’s really not much of a difference.

We believe that carding should be part of this bill—to repeal carding. However, this government has said—last week, the minister mentioned that they have no intention of changing carding.

Madam Speaker, I mentioned when I first came here to Queen’s Park that I had been carded before. If you’ve ever been carded, it is quite the ordeal. It’s something I don’t wish on my worst enemy. However, this government does not see fit to remove it from this Bill 68.

Bill 175 did have some problems with it, but the government is calling it the most anti-police legislation in history. When they say that, they’re more or less talking about Bill 68, because there’s really no difference between the two bills. So the government needs to be careful when they start throwing out that rhetoric because people understand that Bill 175 and Bill 68 really aren’t different.

The government would also have us believe that they are following Justice Tulloch’s amendments—only a few of them; not all of them. There are many amendments that Justice Tulloch had put forward, and the ones that are more significant ones they did not put forward.

In the end, Madam Speaker, I hope the government listens to what we have to say on this side and downplays the rhetoric that they continue to put forward that Bill 175 was the most anti-police bill in history when it was not.

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

Mr. Rudy Cuzzetto: I’m proud to speak today in support of Bill 68, the Comprehensive Ontario Police Services Act, introduced by the Minister of Community Safety and Correctional Services.

The previous government treated police with suspicion, often making it difficult for them to do their jobs—many subject to months- or years-long SIU investigations, including some of the heroes who stopped the Danforth shooting.

As the minister said last year, the Liberals, with the support of the NDP, passed Bill 175, the most anti-police legislation in Canadian history. It would have limited due process in SIU investigations and even allowed officers to be fired after job-related injuries, including mental health issues like PTSD.

Bill 175 would have put public safety at risk—like police duties like collision investigations, crime scene investigations, surveillance and even bomb disposal. As Robert Jamieson, president of the OPP, said, “It’s hard to believe how much the previous government despised our profession.” He also expressed his disappointment that the NDP would vote for a bill that would allow for the privatization of policing in Ontario.

1540

Our government takes a different approach. We will focus resources where they’re needed: criminal activities. At the same time, Bill 68 will enhance police oversight by creating one window for public complaints, and a reduction of delays in SIU investigations and ensuring greater accountability. We will treat our police officers fairly. Bill 68 will ensure the government, the police and the people remain partners to create a safe and more secure Ontario.

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

Ms. Sara Singh: It’s a pleasure to rise here. It’s been really interesting listening to the debate on both sides of the House. I think that we have a very important piece of legislation in front of us. We have heard from colleagues here, from our caucus as well as from members on the government benches, of the need to modernize and transform police services to ensure that we are restoring trust and accountability between our communities, the government and the police that serve us.

We heard a lot about the fact that there’s this anti-police rhetoric that keeps being put forward. I’m going to argue that, actually, it’s the Conservative government that’s putting forward an anti-police rhetoric because, on this side of the House, we are very supportive of our police and we want to work with them and ensure that they’re protecting our communities and that they too are also served and protected.

In my meetings with many police officers, they have indicated to me that they do require additional resources and tools in order to be able to do their jobs. One of those tools, which I didn’t see in this legislation, was additional mental health supports for those front-line officers and the need to make sure that they, too, are taken care of after they’ve rushed in and saved someone’s life or pulled them

out of a burning building, that that post-traumatic stress that they have to deal with will be addressed. Frankly, there isn't anything here that does that.

As someone who also wanted to be a police officer when I was younger, I think police officers get into this field because they want to serve their communities and they want to help their communities. But I also understand that taking on that responsibility means that we should be held to a higher regard than an everyday average citizen, because we're putting on a uniform and putting on tools that equip us to, essentially, police our community and take away people's rights. So those people who have that additional power should be subject to additional measures that allow us to ensure that they're doing their jobs effectively and they're protecting the communities. It isn't to take things away from them; it's to ensure that they are also being protected.

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

M^{me} Nathalie Des Rosiers: It's a real pleasure for me to join, briefly, this debate. I will have a chance to speak a little bit more. I want to just re-emphasize a little bit the danger of the rhetoric of "anti-policing" and "pro-policing," and I want to say, to my reading—and I've done the analysis paragraph by paragraph—there are a lot of similarities, almost a complete overlap, between Bill 175 and COPS, the new bill presented.

The danger in engaging in this polarizing rhetoric, that you're either for the police or against the police, is that you create within the discourse of some communities, who feel that they need to be heard as well—they may have been under- or over-policed. You are, in essence, dismissing their voices.

The other part is, when we are supporting the police—and we all are. We honour the police with our demands for greater accountability. Wanting a good oversight, wanting a perfect oversight, is honouring the policing that is going on in our society. Police know that. They want good oversight, and that's what they've been asking for for a long time.

The modernisation of policing that we've been talking about, that was in Bill 175 that is reflected here was, again, a responsibility to be done. We should do it outside of polarizing political discussion, recognizing that it is often difficult in this House to actually try to bring people together, both the people who were concerned and came forward with concerns about policing and the police officers themselves. Your job, as a government, is to bring people together; it's not to push them apart. I worry that this constant rhetoric of polarization may not help in that regard.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Lisa Gretzky): Back to the member from Burlington.

Ms. Jane McKenna: Michael Tulloch's report outlines in clear and thorough detail the rationale behind the legislation: Ontario's society is changing. If we are to be successful in maintaining the joys of a safe and law-abiding society, it's absolutely vital that our institutions and the laws governing them keep up. In this way, we will

ensure that understanding and trust between the police, police oversight and the communities they are tasked to protect are strong and enduring.

In closing, I'd like to quote the Honourable Justice Michael Tulloch from his May 2017 report to the government on street checks. He wrote, "The public's trust in police is the bedrock on which police legitimacy is built."

The importance of this legislation cannot be overstated. Our task is to ensure that legislation is dynamic and resilient and responsive to change. Our institutions that have served us so well for so long, and our people, deserve nothing less.

I'd like to just take a moment for all the wonderful police officers that we do have in Burlington, and our OPP Auxiliary. Everyone is very friendly with Richard Brennan, who is affectionately known as "Badger." He has been posted in Burlington, and I see him quite regularly there.

We're always so grateful for the hard work and dedication. It takes a certain kind of person to go out every day, not knowing what is going to come forth to them in that day. We're always so grateful. We feel so safe, especially in Burlington.

I want to thank all police officers, but especially the ones in Burlington.

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

Ms. Peggy Sattler: It is a pleasure for me to rise this afternoon to participate in the debate on Bill 68, the Comprehensive Ontario Police Services Act, or COPS, on behalf of the people I represent in London West.

I want to say at the outset that New Democrats welcome a debate on improving police oversight. We certainly recognize, from Justice Tulloch's report, the urgency of improving oversight and ensuring that public confidence in police remains strong.

However, we do have some significant concerns about the way that this government has presented Bill 68.

These comments have been repeated several times today. I'll quote once again from the Minister of Community Safety and Correctional Services, who said, when she tabled Bill 68, that Bill 175, its predecessor, was "the most anti-police piece of legislation in Canadian history." She said, "It was a disaster. It actively undermined policing efforts. And it undermined public confidence and trust in the work police do."

Speaker, we have some other thoughts about what contributes to undermining public confidence and trust in the work police do. For one, hiring a close family friend as the OPP commissioner to provide oversight over policing in the province of Ontario does undermine public confidence and trust. It certainly makes people question the independence and impartiality of that OPP commissioner if he has this long-standing family relationship with the Premier of this province. We see that as a very real measure that's going to erode public confidence.

Instead, Bill 68 is actually very, very similar to Bill 175, the Liberal bill that came before it, and it didn't take long before media observers of this place pointed this out. A

Globe editorial of February 20 says, “The government is pitching it as a radical overhaul of Liberal police oversight, to make it more fair to police. Spoiler alert: It’s mostly not.”

1550

The Globe and Mail editorial goes on to point out some minor changes between the Liberal legislation and this legislation. It identifies the lowering of the fine for not co-operating with an SIU investigation for police officers. Under the Liberal bill, refusing to co-operate could have meant a fine of up to \$50,000 plus jail time. Under this Conservative bill, that fine is reduced to just \$5,000 plus jail time. That does certainly raise the question about how effective that fine might be in terms of preventing officers from not co-operating with an SIU investigation. That’s one change.

The new bill also raises the evidentiary bar for what would be required to dismiss a police officer. It changed it from “balance of probabilities” to “clear and compelling evidence.” That is a second change. However, on the whole, Bill 68 is what the Globe describes as “largely a rebranding of Bill 175 as police-friendly legislation.”

There are a couple of other places where the bill is virtually identical. There’s a similar requirement for the SIU to try to complete investigations of police in 120 days, to reduce the time that officers are under suspicion. It’s noteworthy, however, that the timeline isn’t binding.

I did want to just make a reference to something that happened in London, which certainly highlights the importance of completing these SIU investigations in a timely way. Three London police officers were involved in the shooting death of Londoner Samuel Maloney in December 2016. It took almost 15 months for the SIU to release a report in March 2018, clearing the officers in connection with that shooting. The report found that the officers had fired in response to the actions of the deceased. Speaker, we understand that it can provoke a lot of anxiety for the officers who are involved in an SIU investigation. Delivering a report in a much more timely way, I think, is respectful of the needs of those officers.

Another issue that is addressed in the COPS bill: complaints that are brought forward about the police. Currently, there is the Office of the Independent Police Review Director, or OIPRD. The Conservative bill renames this body as the Law Enforcement Complaints Agency, but this new body would perform very similar functions to the OIPRD.

There is one significant departure. That is that the Law Enforcement Complaints Agency would have the ability to refer a complaint back to a police service. We know that that had been identified as a major concern by Justice Tulloch. He had pointed out that the vast majority of complaints that were brought to the OIPRD were referred back to the police service for investigation. He had cautioned that it is that that erodes public confidence in the complaints process.

Justice Tulloch found a deep mistrust of the public complaints process and noted that referring complaints back to police services was seen as a major impediment to

a good-faith and impartial investigation. So to maintain this public complaints body but to allow it to refer back to police services is not helpful to building that public trust that we want to maintain.

Another change in this bill is around when an SIU investigation would be launched. This bill allows some discretion in when an SIU investigation will go forward, so that officers who arrive at the scene of a suicide or who to revive a mortally injured civilian but are unsuccessful are no longer automatically subject to an investigation. Certainly I want to say that we absolutely support the measure that were taken to remove the requirement for an SIU investigation when police officers administer naloxone.

Again, I want to highlight London Police Services: In seven months over 2018, when police officers were first trained to use naloxone, London police officers were able to save 57 people in 2018. They administered the drug on 59 people; unfortunately, two were not able to survive. However, 57 lives were saved because the police administered naloxone. We would agree that in the case of those two people who weren’t able to be revived by naloxone, it would be unfair to trigger an SIU investigation because of the police officers’ efforts to save a life.

There are definitely cases where an SIU investigation may not be necessary, as in the administration of naloxone. However, I think we have to be careful when we give a lot of discretion as to whether an SIU investigation should be called or not. Oftentimes, it’s better to err on the side of caution and proceed with an investigation than to remove that discretionary power over whether to launch an investigation.

I also want to acknowledge the other reporting on this legislation that we saw in the Toronto Star. The Toronto Star repeats the comments that I had mentioned earlier, that this legislation is not, despite what the Conservatives are trying to present it as, a complete rewrite of the previous Bill 175. In fact, some key parts of this bill are exactly identical with what was in Bill 175.

The article in the Toronto Star on February 22, last week, highlighted several key issues in this bill that represent departures from Bill 175. I’ve mentioned a couple of them already: that there is discretion for police officers to call in the SIU for certain kinds of death, that there are some changes on the suspension without pay provisions of the bill—oh, sorry; actually, there’s no departure on the suspension without pay. Those sections of this bill are virtually identical to Bill 175.

The transparency of SIU reports, again, had been highlighted by Justice Tulloch as absolutely essential if we are to have a proper system of police. This resulted from the death of Andrew Loku. But the provisions in Bill 68 regarding the transparency of SIU reports are also very similar to what had been in Bill 175.

1600

Public complaints about police are another issue that I have already remarked on, where public complaints can be referred back to a police service.

Finally, the fifth issue that the Toronto Star highlights is around the SIU’s power to charge civilians. Now, this is

a pretty important issue, because we know from the assault on Dafonte Miller in Toronto in 2016 that there was a civilian involved and there was an investigation of a civilian, even though the SIU's core mandate is to investigate police officers. That investigation was really, really important to understand the circumstances that led to the very serious assault against Dafonte Miller, so the fact that Bill 68 removes the power for the SIU to investigate civilians is problematic.

Speaker, in the time I have left, I want to again focus a little bit more on the London Police Service and the work that is being done in my community to build that trust with the public. I also wanted to talk about what a bill that was really supportive of police would look like. A shout-out to the London Police Service: In the summer, they released their 2019-21 business plan, which is really what the legislation refers to as a community safety and well-being plan. That plan has a couple of key points that I really want to focus on today.

First, they talk about the fact that first responders, including police, are at least twice as likely as the general population to suffer from post-traumatic stress disorder due to the nature of the work that they do. Second, they also point out that over the last decade in London, the London Police Service has experienced a 67% increase in mental health calls. The chief of police, John Pare, who is retiring this year—sadly, because he has been an incredible mental health advocate in our community—points out that \$7 million of the police budget was used in 2000 to respond to mental health calls. The figure is \$16 million in 2015, so over a period of just five years, there was more than double the amount of money that was needed to be spent by the police to deal with mental health calls.

There are two issues that I just addressed. One is the mental health of officers, and the other is the complex mental health needs of our community. I want to recognize a new member of the London Police Services Board, Dr. Javeed Sukhera, who is one of the only 100 child psychiatrists in the province of Ontario, who is overwhelmed by the needs of children and youth mental health. Dr. Sukhera, a new member of the police services board, brought forward a motion that was passed in the fall to hire a psychologist to provide front-line support for officers who are dealing with PTSD and who are on the front lines in terms of responding to the mental health needs of our community. I think that that is something that we all have to be aware of: that if we really want to support police, we have to ensure that their mental health needs are addressed. We also have to recognize the amount of time that police are facing to deal with mental health needs in the community.

I also wanted to mention another initiative of the London Police Service, both the service and the board. This was a motion that was passed in December, just a couple of months ago. It pointed out the fact that there was a protocol approved by the province, by the Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care, to facilitate the transfer of people with mental health needs in the community to the hospital. Right now, we have police who transport people

to the hospital, and they have to wait sometimes as long as 12 hours until that person receives care. So there was a police-hospital transition framework protocol that was developed by the provincial Human Services and Justice Coordinating Committee that was focused specifically on improving transitions and coordination among health and police partners for these kinds of incidents. That protocol is stalled, and so that would be one concrete thing that this government could address in order to support the police, given the nature of the services that they provide in the community.

There are so many other great things that London Police Service is doing to build public confidence. I just wanted to acknowledge the efforts that have been made to deal with unfounded sexual assault cases. London had been found to have a very high number of sexual assault cases that were deemed as not enough evidence to proceed. The police have introduced a completely new protocol and new training. They've reviewed all of these previously classified unfounded cases and have moved forward to really support sexual assault survivors in the community.

Speaker, my time has run out a lot quicker than I thought. With that, I will wind up. I look forward to hearing people's comments about this bill.

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

Mr. Toby Barrett: I listened to what the member from London West had to say with respect to Bill 68, the COPS act.

As I see it, quite simply, in repealing this legislation, we're really just trying to address some problems from the previous government that we've been hearing about. Much of what we heard is that the climate that was created by Bill 175 made it increasingly difficult for officers to do their job.

I know there was mention made of the SIU, which oftentimes would put officers under an unnecessary cloud of suspicion. This translates—within the view of the public, it would erode trust. It would erode confidence in our officers.

We saw a process emanating from the previous legislation that generated confusion. It was a process that also was very, very slow. So in our view, it really wasn't working for police, and most importantly and by extension, it's not working for the public.

With Bill 68, the COPS act that was mentioned, the goal is to streamline the SIU investigative process, a process that was felt to lack fairness and to lack due process for officers to the extent there was a perception that an officer was felt to be guilty until proven innocent. That's just not how our justice system is meant to operate. Many officers were forced to labour for months, even years, under an investigation with a case where they really had had no contact with the individual involved.

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

Ms. Judith Monteith-Farrell: I am happy to speak on this bill, and I come at it from a place where I was privileged to represent three First Nations police services:

Treaty Three Police Service, Nishnawbe-Aski Police Service and Anishinabek Police Service. I really saw their struggles when there was no specific legislation to address their needs and the composition of their police services boards.

1610

When I read this legislation—I know there has been some comprehensive work done in consultation with those police services, but I fear that there is a lot of reference to regulation. These police services have struggled without structure for quite some time. So when I read this, I sincerely hope, if this legislation is passed, that they are not again burdened with this uncertainty of funding and regulation.

The second part that I note in here is the amalgamation of rural police services. Small municipalities can apply to have amalgamated police services. Where we have small population space but large geographic areas—this is something that the municipalities surrounding my riding have brought to my attention. They want to ensure that they are not stopped from having representation from each municipality that is on that police services board. In the past, they were told that they'd have to choose between the four; they could only have three. I brought that to the minister's attention. They were hoping, had the other piece of legislation gone forward, that that could be addressed. Again, this is a delay caused by fine-tuning, I guess, by this government of this legislation.

Thank you. I hope you take those comments into account.

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

Mr. Stephen Crawford: I'd like to thank the members from London West, Haldimand-Norfolk and Thunder Bay for their discussion on the topic.

I'd like to start also by thanking all the members of the police forces here in Ontario for the great work they're doing in protecting us, the people of Ontario.

I'd also like to shout out to the Halton regional police, who have done a great job in serving the people of Oakville. I was pleased that Bill 68 was actually announced in my riding of Oakville, just in the last week or two, at the new Halton police headquarters.

I've always believed that we need to support the police, and with the focus of them protecting the public, it's paramount. Unfortunately, the previous government, with the support of the NDP, put in place the most anti-police bill in history. For example, when police were saving lives with naloxone, police officers were automatically subjected to an investigation. The heroes who responded to the Danforth shooting spent six months under investigation. Imagine that: Heroes responded and did the job that they're expected to do, putting their lives on the line, saving lives, and they're subject to an investigation. Officers who are not successful at preventing someone from committing suicide are automatically subjected to an SIU investigation.

These are just a few examples of the Liberal bill and the disrespect that it did. I've always thought that the

handcuffs should be on the hands of criminals, not the police.

We're creating a new bill, a bill that will give opportunity for respect for the police. We are creating a new window for public complaints, to ensure public confidence, and we will improve training and governance. We will mandate human rights, systemic racism, diversity and Indigenous training for all new police officers, and we will also arrange mandatory training for members of the police services boards.

Our goal is to treat police officers with the respect and dignity that they deserve and, at the same time, ensure safe communities with proper oversight.

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

Mr. Gilles Bisson: Well, Madam Speaker, it's quite the bill, if you take a look at it. This is a resurfacing of the bill that the previous government had brought over, some of which was problematic. We would agree with the government that there were sections of the bill that the former Liberal administration had brought forward that were problematic—a number of the sections in the old bill.

If you look at this particular bill, it's probably one of the biggest bills, volume-wise, that the government has brought in. The difficulty, I think, that most members have when that type of thing happens is when a government limits debate. I suggest, Madam Speaker, that this government, within the not-too-distant future, is going to be coming to us with a time allocation motion accelerating the passage of this bill. In this particular case, the bill—I'm looking at both the French and the English version here—is about 200 pages long. It has quite a bit of detail dealing with all kinds of different issues that we need to refer back to the main legislation. If you take a look at some of the stuff they have in here, there's section 38 that deals with the Lieutenant Governor in Council in regard to regulations and about how regs are going to happen. You've got to go back and relate that to the actual bill.

My point is this: Although some parts of this bill may be necessary, and some might be a bit of an over-grab on the part of the Conservative government, I think they're not giving the members of this House and, ultimately, the public the amount of time they need in order to look at this bill to say, "Did we get it right?"

I think the mark of a good government is a government that knows when to slow things down a bit, especially on bills such as this, to make sure we get it right. Because if you get it wrong, the cost is pretty large.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Lisa Gretzky): Back to member for London West.

Ms. Peggy Sattler: I would like to thank the members from Perth-Wellington, Thunder Bay-Atikokan, Oakville and Timmins for their remarks.

I think that, in line with what the member for Timmins has said, we need to make sure that we have a system of oversight in place that is fair to the police but that serves the public. The public must have confidence that the police are acting in the public interest, and that requires an oversight system that makes sure that is happening.

We have pointed out that many, many of the provisions that are included in Bill 68 mirror the provisions that were in Bill 175 and that were based on Justice Tulloch's recommendations. In my remarks, I highlighted a couple of cases where there are some differences from Bill 175, and those differences have undermined the level of oversight that's provided.

I also want to say that police services can do a lot of work to build that public trust by how they operate in the community. Again, I just want to say three things about the London Police Service. Over this past week, Deputy Chief Daryl Longworth held a 24-hour vigil to draw attention to homelessness over a period of a number of days and invited community members to stand with him and other officers in highlighting the issue of homelessness. We had the Lewis Coray Trailblazer Award to recognize the first Black officer in the London Police Service. We had—

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Lisa Gretzky): Thank you.

I beg to inform the House that the following document was tabled: a report concerning the review of cabinet ministers' and opposition leaders' expense claims completed as of February 22, 2019, from the Office of the Integrity Commissioner of Ontario.

Further debate?

Mr. Parm Gill: As always, it's an honour and a pleasure for me to rise in this House and to represent my great constituents in my riding of Milton and especially to speak about such an important, relevant topic that we're debating today.

Last week, my colleague the Minister of Community Safety and Correctional Services introduced this bill, the Comprehensive Ontario Police Services Act. The reason for this is because the previous government had passed—obviously, what we've been hearing all day in this House—some of the most anti-police legislation, and our government is going to fix that.

The Comprehensive Ontario Police Services Act will make good on our government's promise to fix the policing legislation that the previous Liberal government got wrong.

Keeping our streets and our communities safe is one of the top priorities of our government. You can count on us to respect police officers and to keep Ontario families safe from guns and gangs.

1620

This bill, if passed, would repeal and replace the Police Services Act, 2018, and the Ontario Special Investigations Unit Act, 2018. The bill would also repeal the Policing Oversight Act, 2018, and the Ontario Policing Discipline Tribunal Act, 2018.

The proposed legislation would transform the Office of the Independent Police Review Director into an improved and enhanced body known as the Law Enforcement Complaints Agency. Its responsibilities would include:

—receiving and screening public complaints involving police officers, special constables employed by the Niagara Parks Commission and peace officers employed by the Legislative Protective Service, and forwarding

complaints about members of a community board to the Inspector general; assigning these complaints; and requiring investigative entities—for example, the chief of police—to explain delays in the completion of an investigation after 120 days, and every 30 days thereafter.

It will also establish the role of the inspector general within the Ministry of Community Safety and Correctional Services to monitor, inspect and ensure compliance with the act and its regulations. It would ensure the delivery of adequate and effective policing. It will also empower the IG to receive and review policy service complaints.

I would like everyone in this House—and, obviously, people that are watching at home—to just imagine calling 911 expecting a police officer to show up, but instead you have a private company show up at your door. Many Ontarians had this concern with the previous government's legislation. Under the previous government's legislation, some policing functions could be outsourced. This led to concerns that a private contractor, not a police officer, would respond to a call for service. However, this legislation, if passed, will give the public confidence that core policing functions would always be performed by a trained professional who is subject to policing legislation and oversight. It will restore the public's trust in their safety system.

Our government is also introducing changes to the Coroners Act to enhance public safety and improve service delivery. Some of these changes include:

—requiring that all items seized as part of a coroner's death investigation be offered for safekeeping to a member of a police service to ensure that seized items are kept in the most secure location possible;

—creating a new investigative screening provision to allow coroners to have access to information, including medical records, to help ensure that decisions to investigate deaths are based on a complete picture of the deceased's health history;

—clarifying that the chief coroner has the authority to conduct historical death reviews—for example, reviews that may include data and findings from completed coroner's investigations;

—retrospective analysis of deaths over time that can identify common factors and trends that could help to prevent further deaths and improve the health and safety of all Ontarians; and

—removing the requirement for regional coroners to be resident in the area named in their appointment. This change would help the Office of the Chief Coroner recruit suitable candidates and ensure effective services across our great province.

Community safety and public trust in their police system has always been a topic I've been very passionate about. It is one of the main reasons that motivated me to get involved in politics in the first place. When I was a federal member of Parliament, I had the opportunity to introduce a private member's bill which also touched on community safety and which went on to become law. I had the opportunity to consult with police services across this great nation and saw first-hand the commitment they have

to keeping our communities safe. I was fortunate enough to also go on a few ride-alongs with front-line officers and witness their integrity and compassion when dealing with the public. We will always stand up for front-line police officers. Community protection is and always will remain a top priority for Conservative representatives at every level of government.

The previous government's legislation had no mention of the principle of fairness or due process for police officers. The Comprehensive Ontario Police Services Act would address the concerns that special investigations units take too long to complete and the act will better focus on a mandate of the SIU.

Last week, Minister Jones and Minister Mulroney announced the Comprehensive Ontario Police Services Act at Halton Regional Police Service's headquarters. Halton police officers and the families in my great riding of Milton who depend on them will finally be able to count on a fair and transparent police oversight process that will always put public safety first. Having had previous conversations and meetings with the police chief and the two deputy police chiefs in Halton, I know they welcome these changes, Madam Speaker. Under the direction of Chief Tanner and Halton Regional Police, the entire region of Halton continues to enjoy the title of "safest region in the country." I am very thankful to the police officers that keep our Milton community, and Ontario as a whole, safe.

In September of last year, two Halton Regional Police officers were injured during an exchange of gunfire. Thankfully, these officers are recovering. But the attention immediately after the incident was focused on protecting the man who was shooting at these two police officers. I want to quote Chief Tanner in his comments immediately following the incident: "Today and every day we should all be thankful for our brave first responders." We need to always remember the officers' commitments to keeping our community safe, especially when confronted with dangerous individuals like in this altercation I mentioned. I again want to thank the first responders in this case, who stepped in and kept our community safe that day, and they do it every single day.

More specifically, back to the Comprehensive Ontario Police Services Act before us: It will enhance police oversight. That's why we're creating one window for public complaints, reducing duplication and better focusing on the mandate of the special investigation unit.

Treating police with fairness and respect: Our legislation is based on fairness and respect for the profession of policing. That's why we're giving the public confidence that, when they call 911, a trained, accountable police officer will show up—something not guaranteed under the previous government's legislation.

Better governance training and transparency as an early response to Justice Tulloch's report on street checks: We will mandate human rights, systematic racism, diversity, and Indigenous culture and rights training for new police officers and special constables. We will also make successful completion of training mandatory for members of police services boards.

Our legislation will maintain First Nations policing provisions to provide First Nations with the ability to opt into Ontario's policing legislation. We will continue to mandate that municipalities develop and adopt community safety and well-being plans.

As mentioned earlier, we're also improving the Coroners Act to safeguard items seized as part of the coroner's death investigation, allowing coroners earlier access to records, so they can better determine if an investigation is necessary and re-opening closed coroners' cases to prevent further deaths in the future.

We also are proposing amendments to the Mandatory Blood Testing Act to better support and provide peace of mind to victims of crime, first responders and others at risk of coming in contact with foreign bodily substances of others.

1630

Before the last election, the Liberal government passed the most flawed police legislation. That is why our government has introduced this legislation as a key part of our promise to make Ontario safer, stand up for victims and hold criminals accountable for their actions. Due to the legislation put in place by the previous government, there are many challenges that the officers in our communities have had to face. A few examples of these are—and I'd like to share them—when saving a life with a synthetic drug, police officers were automatically subject to an investigation. Our government fixed that in the fall.

The heroes who responded to the Danforth shooting spent six months under the cloud of an investigation, and that's ironically considered fast compared to a lot of other SIU investigations. How is this a respectful response to officers who put their lives on the line to save lives? On February 13, Minister Jones recommended the two officers who had previously been subject to a six-month investigation by the SIU for the Ontario Medal for Police Bravery for their courage in stopping the Danforth shooter.

Previously, officers who were not successful at preventing someone from committing suicide were automatically subject to an SIU investigation. This is disrespectful and degrading to our officers who put their community before themselves, who take the oath to protect Ontarians from any and all dangers that loom over us. To be treated this way after all the effort is upsetting, and this needs to change.

Our police officers will be the first to say that public trust is essential for them to do their job effectively. Effective oversight is key to that trust. Unfortunately, the old oversight system is broken. It is confusing and slow. It doesn't work for police and it certainly doesn't work for the public.

Currently, complaints made by the public against a police officer are handled by the Office of the Independent Police Review Director. Under our legislation, if passed, members of the public will be able to bring all complaints forward to the new independent Law Enforcement Complaints Agency. Under the Comprehensive Ontario Police Services Act, the Special Investigations Unit—SIU—would be established as a fully independent provincial

agency in a new, separate act administered by the Attorney General.

The Inspector general is responsible for investigating board member and advisory council complaints, as well as service and policy complaints. Under the new legislation, the Inspector general would impose remedies for board/advisory council member misconduct and non-compliance with our legislation, rather than the minister. Both the Inspector general and special investigations unit director will be independent from the ministers and will be appointed through order in council by the LG in council. In addition, for the inspector general, a proposed statute will prohibit the Ministry of Community Safety and Correctional Services from being able to direct the Inspector general and other inspectors appointed.

I would like to refer to a recent tragedy that took place in our province. The saddening death of Riya Rajkumar shook many citizens in our province. The details of the events are heartbreaking. I would like to first acknowledge that this House held a moment of silence to remember her last week. As a father of three, I cannot express how my heart breaks for Ms. Riya's mother.

Much conversation has taken place since this tragedy, and what's upsetting is that in all of these conversations, we're forgetting about lessons learned and more about the fact that the Ontario police decided to send out an Amber Alert at late hours of that night. It saddens me to think that there were people complaining about our province's protection system sending out a message that could have saved an innocent child's life. Riya's father was indeed spotted by a member of our community due to this province-wide alert.

I would like to commend the officers who dealt with this case for their prompt thinking and action to try to save an innocent life. It is important that the negative backlash from parts of Ontario communities about this late-night alert does not stop the police force from sending future alerts, if needed. These alerts are put in place to help prevent tragedies like these from taking place. They're a necessity for our community to be a safe place to reside in.

The police system is set up to protect our individual regions, as well as protecting the province as a whole. These officers put their lives on the line to help the people of our community, and they deserve the utmost respect for their efforts each and every day. Without their presence, we would not be able to sleep peacefully at night, feel safe in our homes and have safe roads to drive on—among many other services that we sometimes take for granted.

Through the introduction of this Comprehensive Ontario Police Services Act, our government is seeking to create a stronger police oversight structure, provide police officers with a fair disciplinary process, and strengthen public confidence through more transparency and new training requirements. Our government feels that community safety goes beyond policing itself, and so does our proposed legislation. We will continue to mandate municipalities to develop and adopt community safety and well-being plans.

This piece of legislation is extensive and one that is needed by our province to clean up the disastrous legislation set in place by the previous Liberal government. The legislation is divided into seven schedules, each one dealing with an essential part of the legalities dealing with our police forces.

I am proud to be part of a government that knows how to respect the people who keep our communities safe for us to live, work and enjoy. Our regional and provincial officers deserve respect for their efforts, and it is about time they get that. Our government has brought forward this legislation to start treating police officers fairly, and it will ensure that the police, the government and the people of Ontario remain partners in creating a safer province.

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

Ms. Jennifer K. French: I am pleased to offer what I hope will be thoughtful comments in response to the speech from the member from Milton, as we are here today unpacking a significant piece of legislation, a massive piece of legislation: Bill 68, the Comprehensive Ontario Police Services Act, 2019.

Speaker, you will remember that it was my privilege to serve as the critic for community safety and correctional services with the last government, and I had the opportunity to get a sense of the issues faced across our communities by our officers in those communities.

The unbelievably complicated and changing nature of policing really ought to drive legislation as we see it.

This is a huge piece of legislation. I don't have the opportunity in two minutes to delve into all of it, but I do have questions. Of course, this is supposed to get rid of Bill 175, which was a controversial piece of legislation. This is supposed to make all the difference. So much of it is the same, which is surprising with how it has been branded, but some of the specific details I still have concerns with.

1640

It was the NDP that said, should we form government—which, spoiler alert, Speaker, we didn't—we would have repealed the section around privatizing of core police functions. While we don't see that in the statute, I worry about some of the regulation and the opportunities. I would like to delve into that a bit more. I would like the government to put my mind, and the minds of police officers across the province—that that is not still an opportunity that will not serve police in our community.

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

Mr. Billy Pang: A couple of weeks ago, I had a fruitful meeting with senior officers of York Regional Police, with the chief and the deputy chiefs. We have concerns with the robberies and break-ins in my riding that I brought to their attention. York Regional Police and I are working closely and co-operatively to make our community a safe and peaceful place to live and do business.

To combat crimes, police need our support to bring forward legislation that will support them to do their jobs. One of the tools is to bring in fair and effective police

oversight that will result in a stronger community and a safer “partnership”—I want to stress the word “partnership” because we need to work hand in hand, closely, in a relationship between the government, the police and also the people.

Police deserve our gratitude and respect, not our suspicion and scorn. That’s why our government for the people is providing police the tools, resources and supports to them to do their jobs. This is the reason why I support Bill 68, the COPS Act.

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

Mr. Wayne Gates: It’s always a pleasure to stand in the House. I’m dealing with a bill; it’s called Bill 68. Look at the size of this thing. I got it on February 19.

It says here: “Clause 3(d) of the Labour Relations Act, 1995 is amended”—and they ask you to try and put something together.

I want to talk about the comments from the MPP from Milton. One thing that I understand quite clearly from my role as a president of a local union is when you say that no job will be privatized that you’re currently doing, but what he said in his comments—I’m going to read it out so it’s very clear. He said that no core police function job will be touched under this bill. What does that mean? What’s a core job of a police officer? Because, in the other bill, Bill 175—which you didn’t change that much, by the way—the key issue was the privatization of the police’s job in the roles that they do completely. It’s not about core jobs, because who defines core jobs? Does management do it? Does the province do it? Does the minister do it? It doesn’t say anywhere in that bill that I can find—and I’m trying to read it, although it’s huge.

I’m saying to the member from Milton that when you stand up and say “core,” you’re not saying that the jobs that they currently do will be continued. What you’re saying is that you’re going to find exactly what core work is and then, if you’re lucky, they’ll keep some of that work. I’m asking you: Are you going to say that the current jobs that the police officers are doing today—all of them—will stay that way in this bill? I don’t see that in this bill.

I want to say, because I listened to all the stuff from PCs, that I have the utmost respect for the police officers in the Niagara region. I have driven with them on ride-outs. I have gone on jogs with them. I’ve talked to them about mental health. I’ve talked to them about post-traumatic stress disorder. So when you stand up and try to say—I guess my time’s up, so I’ll have to do maybe another hit.

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

Mr. Rick Nicholls: I’m honoured to stand here this afternoon and have an opportunity to speak to our Bill 68.

There’s been a lot of discussion with regard to the former Liberal Bill 175. I believe it was called the Safer Ontario Act, which probably should have been called the anti-police bill, 2018.

I was the former critic prior to us being in government. I was the former critic for community safety and correctional services for four years. I strongly supported the

Ontario Provincial Police Association, the OPPA. I strongly supported our police officers. I’ve been on ride-alongs; I’ve done many things with them and learned a lot. I recently conducted a seminar on human trafficking in Chatham, Ontario, where we had over 600 people attending. Again, I give credit to our Chatham-Kent Police Service and the OPP detachment.

My point also is that the member—I have great respect for him, but the member from Brampton North continually says that carding and police checks are the same thing. You talk to any police officer, and they will tell you it is not. We have continually stated in this Legislature that carding and police checks are not the same. I’m sick and tired of the NDP trying to handcuff our police officers from doing the job that they are supposed to do in terms of keeping our communities safe. We’ve got to start changing that dialogue. We’ve got to bring it back and say, “I’m all for police checks,” because that’s how they can do their job. That’s how they can do their job, so they can keep our communities safe. Remember, their motto is, “To serve and protect.”

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

Mr. Parm Gill: I want to thank my colleagues from both sides and, of course, my colleagues from Oshawa, Markham–Unionville, Niagara Falls and Chatham-Kent–Leamington for the kind words and their comments.

Madam Speaker, there is no doubt that all of us come in here to do the best we can for our constituents, for our community, and all of us have a great deal of respect for police officers around the province and for everything that they do every single day.

I can tell you, certainly in my community of Milton, the officers from Halton regional police, Chief Tanner and the two deputy chiefs have a tremendous amount of experience in everything that they do to keep our communities safe.

I mentioned in my remarks that Halton region is known as the safest region in the country. It’s not for anything else but, obviously, everything that these individuals do every single day. The least we can do is provide them the resources, provide them with the support that they need and they deserve.

I mentioned in my remarks also the two Halton Regional Police officers that were involved and were shot at last fall. One ended up in the hospital and was there for a number of days. Imagine what their families go through after they’re put through the wringer and then they are under a microscope and they are being investigated as if they were criminals. In some cases, criminals, unfortunately, in our province are treated better than our police officers, who put their life on the line every single day, as I mentioned.

I’m really thankful to my colleague the minister for putting this piece of legislation forward. I would really encourage all members in this House to support this piece of legislation. It’s important.

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

M^{me} Nathalie Des Rosiers: Ça me fait grand plaisir de me lever pour discuter du projet de loi numéro 68. It's always a pleasure for me to be here.

I want to say that throughout my career, I had occasion often to discuss the issues of police oversight and certainly to work with police officers in multiple capacities.

As I said earlier during the day, it is surprising to hear this bill described as being a complete overhaul and completely different than Bill 175, because, indeed, many of the provisions are exactly the same. I spent the weekend comparing the two legislations and, indeed, most of Bill 175 is found in Bill 68.

Je veux remercier—I want to thank the government for pursuing the work that had been begun on Bill 175, which aimed to modernize the policing organization and also support the establishment of good and strong oversight for the police.

1650

I have to say, I resent a lot being called anti-police, in light of all of the work that I've been doing over my life. I think it's unfortunate that polarization continues to be part of the discourse. The rhetoric of "anti-police" or "pro-police" actually does not help reach a balance that is appropriate. Some people do feel that they are under-policed or over-policed. They need to be reassured that this bill presents a balance. Some people on the policing side need to be reassured that, actually, it presents a balance. The balancing act is what the government has to do. So I invite them to move away from polarizing rhetoric to more specifically talking about the big objectives that we all share, which are to ensure that police officers are well supported but also are subject to the appropriate scrutiny that is necessary for public confidence.

Alors, d'une certaine façon, ce que je vais faire avec vous, c'est parler de deux choses : je vais parler, évidemment, de tous les enjeux qui sont soulevés dans le projet de loi, des enjeux qui reflètent presque exactement ce qui était dans le projet de loi 175, et je vais noter quelques petites différences.

At the level where we are, when we're talking about second reading, we're talking more about, generally, are we supporting the bill? Yes, obviously, generally, we are supporting the bill, because it reflects exactly what we had done in Bill 175. I want to thank the government again for at least pursuing the work that had begun, and I want to highlight how this, indeed, is more a continuation of Bill 175, a rebranding—the names have changed, but essentially, it's the same vision.

There are a couple of aspects of the bill that are particularly dear to my heart that I want to highlight and that were in Bill 175 as well. I think the possibility of having First Nations policing and First Nations policing boards is something to be celebrated. I hope that not only will it be in the bill, but that the government will be there to encourage the creation and the support of First Nations policing boards.

I am pleased to see, as well, that there are many aspects of the police complaint mechanisms that existed under the previous bill, Bill 175, continued under this bill. Complaints against police officers are important, like they are

in all of the places where we are. Sometimes it's important to have a place where people can express how they felt they were treated. The OIPRD, which was our previous police complaints commissioner, will be replaced, but the same idea is there: An independent person must look into when someone has a complaint about the way they were treated. They need an independent person to look at the event, the incident, and decide whether or not they were treated fairly, and whether or not the police officer engaged in conduct that was appropriate. This is a safeguard for the system.

We all admire police because we depend on them. As Sir Robert Peel said so eloquently, "We are the police because the police are us." We do admire police officers, but we want to ensure this it's always done properly. When we ask for police accountability, we honour the great value of good policing work.

I think I've told this House before a great comment that I heard from a police chief a few years ago, at the time we were celebrating the anniversary of the charter. He came up, and we were both on the same panel, talking about the impact of the charter on policing work. This police chief starts by saying, "When the charter began in 1982, I was very worried. I was worried that police work was going to be undermined, that we were going to have to do all of this work to protect the rights of the accused and there was going to be nothing for police officers in that. But after 25 years"—it was the 25th anniversary of the charter—"I am convinced that the charter has led to better policing work."

I think that's what we want to do with accountability. It's not to undermine policing; it's to lead to better policing, for police officers to feel proud of their work, to know that if someone is not doing the right job, they will be found and they will not be allowed to continue on the force, because that undermines the respect and undermines the credibility of the force.

For policing to work well, people have to trust the police, because we depend on the fact that they can get information from people and people want to talk to them and they're not afraid of them. This was the reason why we needed to look at a stronger accountability framework: not because we are suspicious of police officers, because we are not. It's because we want to make sure that the public has trust and confidence in the way policing is done in Ontario.

The second aspect was very much to modernize the policing framework. I'm glad to see that Bill 68 actually takes pretty much the entire framework we had put forward and puts it in place, and repeats pretty much all the same language. It is about ensuring modernization of the police commission. It is indeed about ensuring good training of all of our police officers.

I am very pleased to see the mandatory training for members of police commissions on Indigenous traditions, on anti-Black racism and generally on cultural sensitivity. We should all do it, because it's important if we want to live together, work together and play together. This is an important part of how we construct Ontario: not by dividing us, but by bringing us together. To the extent that

there will be this good training—and I know most police officers are in favour of it, but I think police chiefs are really in favour of this—I think that will help us all.

Throughout my career, I also had the opportunity to work on listening to people who believed that they had been treated badly by the police. I had the occasion to be the moderator in one of the first public processes where people could come and talk a little bit about what type of reform they wanted for police oversight. It was a very, very emotional night, because it's always a tragedy when someone dies, and particularly when someone dies at the hands of a police officer. When a firearm is discharged and there's a tragedy; when a mentally unstable person is being roughhoused or is killed, it's a tragedy. It's a tragedy for the police, it's a tragedy for the family and it's a tragedy for our society.

What you want to respond to this tragedy is not to have people pull apart, but really to have a good investigation, to ensure that we will have the confidence that this will not happen again. I think that's the reason why Justice Tulloch was called upon to do a thorough review: to make sure that the police continued to look at the oversight regime with confidence.

Not all of his recommendations found themselves in Bill 68. At committee, I hope, we will have the occasion to talk a little bit about the details of how indeed some wording changes may be appropriate to ensure that we reflect fully Justice Tulloch's intentions and his good report.

Because we are at second reading and I want to speak more generally about the intent of the bill, I will say that obviously we support the intent of the bill, since it reflects very much the intent of the previous bill, but I want to say as well the importance of continuing to have and commit to language that depoliticizes this issue. It's too important for our community to be brought together than to feel abandoned. If you're saying, "The previous government was anti-police and we're pro-police," to some people, it may be heard as though you're not listening to them; you're not listening to some communities who feel that they have not been heard and have been the subjects of over-policing, particularly.

I want to continue a little bit in speaking about a couple of other aspects that arose in Ottawa–Vanier.

1700

J'ai l'occasion souvent de parler aux agents de police dans mon quartier, parce qu'ils font, évidemment, un très bon travail de tenter de nous protéger. Ils veulent, de plus en plus, avoir la confiance de toutes les communautés qui sont dans Ottawa–Vanier. Que ça soit la communauté noire, que ça soit la communauté musulmane, des efforts doivent être déployés pour s'assurer que les gens de la communauté qui ont peut-être vu, ailleurs dans le monde, un régime de police qui était autoritaire, qui n'avait pas du tout de freins et de limites—il faut s'assurer que les gens dans ces communautés se sentent à l'aise de pouvoir se tourner vers les policiers et les policières et leur demander de l'aide.

A strong regime of accountability is needed at this time in our history because of some of the things that happened

in the past but also because many people that come from around the world to Ontario, to this great place that is Ontario, sometimes come from regimes where there was little accountability for police, and they are afraid. When they arrive here, it takes a long time for them to be reassured that, indeed, police in Canada and police in Ontario are bound by the rule of law and are bound by rules of good conduct, and there is an oversight regime that is there to ensure all of us that if something untoward happened, then you will be heard; there will be a place for you to explain your point of view.

I support the essence of the bill, since it reflects very much what we were after, and I will continue to try to help the government ensure that, indeed, it reflects fully what Justice Tulloch had in mind.

One of the examples, in my review of the bill, of where I thought there may be some improvement necessary is section 15(1), the SIU section. It goes as follows:

"15(1) The SIU director may cause an investigation to be conducted into any incident in which any of the following occurs, if the incident may have resulted from criminal conduct by an official:

- "1. The death of a person.
- "2. The serious injury of a person.
- "3. The discharge of a firearm at a person.
- "4. The sexual assault of a person...."

The previous bill talked about if the incident may have resulted from "conduct" of the police officer. I will suggest—and I will certainly want the government to explain why there's a change in wording. Here's the concern, I think, from someone who has been doing this for a while: If you require that it only be criminal conduct that justifies the investigation of the SIU, you're basically limiting the SIU from coming in, because you already have to have the conclusion that there is criminal conduct, as opposed to any "conduct," which was a little bit larger.

I am with the government and have been a strong advocate of the fact that you have to have thorough investigations but they cannot last forever, because justice that takes forever just diminishes the confidence of the public and of the officer. It was unfair, and that required discipline on the part of the SIU but co-operation on the part of the police department. That's the vision. The vision is it's a tragedy when a serious injury occurs and a police officer was there; it's a tragedy if someone dies and it was, unfortunately, the result of the conduct of the police officer—not criminal conduct; any conduct of a police officer. It's a tragedy if there's an allegation of sexual assault against a police officer, and it's certainly a tragedy when a firearm is being used. The reason why we want to have the SIU is because it is an independent authority. We want them to be there to reassure the public that nothing untoward will be done and no one will be protected. So do it fast, do it well, do it thoroughly, but be inviting—do not hesitate to invite the SIU.

That's my concern with the change of wording. It may be nothing; maybe there was no intent there. But I think raising the threshold—and I've been talking a little bit to my other legal colleagues, and they do think that raising

the threshold from “conduct” to “criminal conduct” will actually change a little bit the ability of the SIU to be invited on the scene. So it’s a suggestion on the part of someone who looked at this legislation very carefully and thoroughly.

The other part—and this, I think, I could be convinced either way: The previous legislation adds a burden of proof, which is what we usually have in disciplinary proceedings, which is a balance of probabilities, which essentially means it’s more probable than not that something happened. That’s what we use more generally in any proceedings in misconduct or alleged misconduct or lack of professionalism against doctors, against nurses and against others.

In this bill, we raise the threshold to a higher threshold to find misconduct on the part of a police officer. There may be some good reasons for that, but that’s a little bit of a concern. The concern is that you want the general public to feel all the time that the process is just the same as any other allegation of misconduct against any other professional. The police are professionals, and that’s why their regime must—to the extent that we can—ensure that it responds to the expectations of the public.

I will conclude my remarks by again saying that I am very pleased that many of the provisions on which we were so intent on going—the First Nations policing is still there. We are very pleased that the changes to the police commission are still there. This is all good for the government.

I would caution to just make sure that all the details of the legislation are well thought of.

I will continue to, I hope, be heard in committee and discuss this piece of legislation.

Je veux vous remercier pour votre attention. Je veux aussi remercier tous les gens qui m’ont appelé depuis la semaine dernière. Plusieurs communautés qui, par le passé, voulaient être entendues par ce gouvernement sur la question de l’imputabilité des services de police m’ont appelé. J’espère qu’ils auront l’occasion d’être entendus encore ici dans le cadre des audiences devant les comités. Ça me fera plaisir, évidemment, de continuer de traduire leurs préoccupations auprès du gouvernement.

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

Ms. Jill Dunlop: I have been a proud resident of Simcoe county for my entire life. In my riding of Simcoe North, we are home to the OPP headquarters. Having the Ontario Provincial Police headquarters in Orillia has allowed me to see first-hand the critical situations that our police officers bravely face. I am grateful for our law officers and the selfless work they do across this great province.

The communities of Simcoe North rely on the police every day to keep them protected. We trust in them and take great comfort in knowing that they are out there preventing crimes, responding to emergencies and keeping our families safe. We rely on them, plain and simple, and now they have a government that they can rely on too—a government that will restore fairness and

respect for police, while keeping our promise to make Ontario safer.

Bill 175, which was put forward by the previous Liberal government, was the most anti-police legislation created, as we’ve heard many times here today. Instead of showing respect to police officers who risk their own well-being to save the lives of others, the previous government decided to subject them to investigation after investigation, treating them as if they were criminals. When our officers have to make difficult decisions in order to save a life, such as when they respond to attempted suicides or opioid overdoses, they should not be worried that if the CPR they perform or the naloxone they use doesn’t work they will be treated like a suspect.

With our proposed legislation, Bill 68, the Comprehensive Ontario Police Services Act, we will be enhancing police oversight and focusing on better governance, training and transparency—and that’s why, with this piece of legislation, we will be enhancing police oversight in order to stand up for the people of Ontario, but we will do so in a way that is fair.

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

Ms. Jennifer K. French: I am glad to again have the opportunity to offer some remarks in response to the comments offered by the member from Ottawa–Vanier. I appreciated a comprehensive breakdown of how we got to this point, taking us back in time to some of the processes that led up to Bill 175 and that have ultimately shaped—this piece of legislation in front of us, Bill 68, the Comprehensive Ontario Police Services Act.

1710

I also had the opportunity to sit in on some of the community consultations under the last government with Justice Tulloch, hearing from the community and recognizing the need to move forward alongside our police and alongside the community to shape a path forward that was going to strengthen support for police and give them the resources they need. As the member reminded us, we are the police and the police are us—I didn’t say that quite right.

The problem with that is that now we’re expecting the police to be all of the things and all of the members of the community, that they are the front line. They are not solely law enforcement; they are also first responders in the medical sense and in the mental-health-supports sense. They are expected to be all the things, and we do need to ensure that we have an updated piece of legislation that recognizes and respects that, and ensures their protection while ensuring the protection of our community.

It’s interesting, though, that we are hearing about naloxone, as an example—and I’m glad; I want to talk about protecting our officers and community members. But the term “immediate medical care” and the exemptions were in Bill 175 and they’re missing from Bill 68. I’d like the government to clarify, because it actually isn’t explicit in this piece of legislation, whereas it had been. Please revisit.

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

Mr. Stan Cho: I'm really happy to be here this afternoon, because I think what I'm hearing is overall consent, agreement that it's important that we modernize the rules when it comes to our dedicated police officers.

As I'm sitting here in the House, I can't help but think of home, of Willowdale, and think back to the courage that our officers showed on April 23 of last year, when somebody drove a van onto the sidewalk in North York, killing many people and injuring many others. It was the actions of the officers that really prevented this tragedy from being bigger. I think of Officer Ken Lam, who showed incredible restraint as he cornered the suspect at Yonge and Sheppard and was able to defuse the situation without another casualty. And it's not just Ken Lam; it's everybody else at 32 Division and 33 Division—Superintendent Johnson and everybody who responded.

The point is that we need to make it easier for these officers to do their high-stress job, and it is an incredibly high-stress job. I think sometimes we all take for granted how important it is to have our police officers respond quickly and professionally.

Really, there are so many things in Bill 68 I'm really pleased to see. I'm happy to see the one window for complaints, for streamlining the process to avoid duplication. It speaks to the efficiencies that we are also looking to achieve here in government. I'm also pleased, as the member from Ottawa–Vanier talked about, to see the modernization of the training program. I think about Willowdale when I hear of that, which is a microcosm for our multicultural world that we live in. I believe our police should be trained on that.

I think this is a step in the right direction. I'm glad to hear the debate is going well, and I look forward to passing this and making it law quickly. Thank you so much, Madam Speaker.

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

Ms. Peggy Sattler: I rise in response to the comments from the member for Ottawa–Vanier about Bill 68, the Comprehensive Ontario Police Services Act. I wanted to again bring forward some of the concerns I raised earlier this afternoon. Yes, we absolutely need an appropriate oversight mechanism—that's fundamental to public confidence and police services—but we also need to ensure that police are supported, given the changes in policing and the nature of the communities in which police operate.

I know that in London our police services board has moved to hire a full-time psychologist and administrative staff to support police who are experiencing increasing levels of PTSD, and also are dealing on the front lines on a regular basis with people who are experiencing significant mental health challenges. This is the reality. That's also why our Police Services Board in London has called on the province to move forward and approve a protocol that would make a better, more dignified transfer of patients from police custody to the hospital.

I did want to give a shout-out to the London Police Service for some of the things that they are doing to build

public confidence. The Lewis Coray Trailblazer Award, named in honour of London's first Black police officer, recognizes a young person who is doing great work. I want to say congratulations to Fauzia Agbonhin from Oakridge Secondary School in my riding, who won the award last week.

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

M^{me} Nathalie Des Rosiers: I want to thank the members from Simcoe North, Oshawa, Willowdale and London West for their comments. Thank you very much for reminding us of the courage of the police officers and of their needs, as well, for PTSD.

I want all of us to know that we are also in Black History Month, and part of my comments must be read also in the context of wanting to make sure that the Black community feels heard in this debate. I think they deserve to be heard as well.

I was sorry to hear, again, the member from Simcoe North call us anti-policing. I thought the best part of my speech was to say how unproductive it seems to me to call one side anti, one side pro. I think policing is about balancing and responding fully to the needs of a society. If you're pro or if you're against, that's bad. You should certainly ensure balance in the way you develop an accountability framework.

I will end a little bit by saying it's very important—I hope that eventually we will get to a place where it's not necessary to say whatever the Liberals did was so terrible that we need to be different, where we can say we are building a society; there were some good things, there were some bad things. We're picking the best, and we're moving forward. That would be a better way, it seems to me, more rassembleur—un ton plus rassembleur—for the future of our debates. I look forward to continuing to work with this government.

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

Mr. Kaleed Rasheed: Today I stand here to speak on a key part of our promise to make Ontario safer by standing up for victims and holding criminals accountable for their actions. Our government for the people has introduced robust legislation to restore trust and justice in our province. There is no greater responsibility for a government than public safety, and our government has been focused on public safety since day one. I want to thank the Minister of Community Safety and Correctional Services, alongside the Attorney General, for introducing Bill 68, the Comprehensive Ontario Police Services Act.

Every day our police officers in Ontario and Mississauga East–Cooksville come to work with a simple goal: to keep our families safe.

Through the introduction of the Comprehensive Ontario Police Services Act, we are seeking to create a stronger police oversight structure to provide police officers with a fairer disciplinary process and to strengthen public confidence through more transparency and new training requirements.

Madam Speaker, just last week, I was blessed with my third daughter, Aisha Aleena Rasheed.

Applause.

Mr. Kaleed Rasheed: Madam Speaker, as I held her, I felt the grip of her tiny hand around my finger. In that instant, more than anything else, I wanted this world to be the safest haven for all our children. As a father of four, I need to ensure that our community is safe for them and for all our loved ones.

1720

So let us put aside our differences today as politicians, and let us all look at facts as parents, as brothers, as sisters and as families.

As families, we would want to be able to trust in those individuals who risk their lives every single day to protect us. Bill 68 is all about restoring trust. Through its regulatory changes, police officers, and families in Ontario and in Mississauga East–Cooksville who rely on our brave officers, will finally be able to count on a fair and transparent system.

I want all of our loved ones to feel safe, not just my children, and I believe that Bill 68 is a stepping stone in creating a safer community for all.

There has been a feeling of fear prevailing when it comes to police in Ontario. Why the previous government created this fear is beyond me. These men and women are risking their lives, trying to help create a safer community, and we are becoming more and more afraid of them, which should not be the case. We should be trusting these individuals, not be afraid of them. Creating and restoring trust in our first responders, especially with police officers, is crucial. I know first-hand that there are so many who do not trust the police anymore. This needs to change. This fear, and Bill 175, did not help to create a safer province. The fear, through Bill 175, prevented officers from doing their job.

As a visible minority and an individual who himself has been subjected to racism on several occasions, I know the need for more awareness and training for all, including police officers, on methods and ways to deal in certain circumstances.

I am confident that the mandatory training “that promotes recognition of and respect for the diverse, multi-racial and multicultural character of Ontario’s society” being prescribed for officers will benefit the province and officers, not just by mitigating but by eventually eliminating the fear for the police. In foresight, it will help pave a path to a prosperous community, celebrating diversity and all-inclusiveness as its core values.

Bill 175 created a lot of challenges and barriers for police officers. Some examples of the challenges that police officers were facing under the previous legislation are:

(1) When saving a life with naloxone, previously, police officers were automatically subjected to an investigation for administering it. Our government fixed that.

(2) We can all recall one of the most tragic events from last year: the Danforth shooting. The heroes who responded to the shooting spent six months under the

cloud of an investigation. Ironically, that’s considered fast compared to a lot of SIU investigations. Six months is a long time. It’s almost as long as we have been in office, and we accomplished so much in that time.

(3) Officers who were not successful at preventing someone from dying by suicide are automatically subject to an SIU investigation. Suicide is not a choice; it is related to mental health, and we know that mental health is health. Those who have died by suicide or attempted should have received the help they needed, which the previous government failed to provide. That’s why, Madam Speaker, our government is investing more in mental health. The previous legislation, like my colleagues mentioned today, showed that it was not working for the officers.

The minister and the Attorney General led a total review of the previous act and identified problems that needed to be fixed. The Comprehensive Ontario Police Services Act restores fairness and respect for police, enhances oversight and improves governance, training and transparency.

To enhance police oversight, we are creating one window for public complaints, reducing duplication and better focusing the mandate of the special investigations unit. Fair and effective police oversight will result in a stronger community safety partnership between the government, the police and the people.

Unfortunately, Madam Speaker, the old oversight system was broken. The Policing Oversight Act, 2018, was confusing and slow. It doesn’t work for the police, and it certainly doesn’t work for the people, and so our government for the people has repealed the Policing Oversight Act, 2018.

Effective oversight will not only help focus investigative resources where needed, on real criminal activities, but it will further help in building communities that are safer and with their strong foundations shared through trust and accountability. Public trust is the key for our brave officers to do their jobs effectively.

Our legislation is based on fairness and respect for officers. Police officers deserve our gratitude and respect, not our suspicion. That’s why our government for the people is providing police the tools, resources and support they need to do their jobs.

The previous government’s legislation did not address the principles of fairness or due process for police officers. Not only was this unfair, it was disrespectful to the police officers, who risk their lives to keep us safe.

Currently, complaints made by the public against a police officer are handled by the Office of the Independent Police Review Director. Under our legislation, if passed, members of the public will be able to bring all complaints forward to the new, independent Law Enforcement Complaints Agency.

To ensure transparency, both the inspector general and the special investigations unit director will be independent from ministers and will be appointed through an order in council by the Lieutenant Governor in Council. In addition, for the inspector general, a proposed statute will prohibit the MCSCS minister from being able to direct the inspector general and other inspectors appointed.

This legislation is rebuilding that trust and restoring public confidence. Previously, when you called 911, you did not know who would show up, Madam Speaker. Just think about it: You did not know who would show up if you were calling 911. One would expect that a police officer would show up, but based on the previous government's policies, you didn't know who would show up. Through our legislation, when you phone 911, a trained, accountable police officer will show up—something not guaranteed under the previous government's legislation.

The proposed legislation will improve and create better training, governance and transparency. Justice Tulloch recommended that the OIPRD be renamed to facilitate better understanding by the public of its functions. As suggested, the OIPRD would be renamed the Law Enforcement Complaints Agency.

1730

The Ontario Civilian Police Commission functions would be taken over by the Ontario Police Arbitration and Adjudication Commission.

As a result of Justice Tulloch's report on street checks, we created Bill 68 to fix our broken system. In this legislation, we will mandate human rights, systemic racism, diversity and Indigenous culture and rights training for all new police officers and special constables. We will also make successful completion of training mandatory for members of police services boards. This training is so crucial. Many new officers were not equipped with the training and knowledge they needed to serve their community.

This legislation will maintain First Nations policing provisions to provide First Nations with the ability to opt in to Ontario's policing legislation. Our government understands the importance of this and will continue to uphold this.

Through Bill 68, Madam Speaker, we will continue to get the input and help of municipalities to develop and adopt community safety and well-being plans that will work for that area. Through this process, communities can focus on areas where they need more security and safety.

An aspect of this bill is to improve the Coroners Act to safeguard items seized as part of a coroner's death investigation, allowing a coroner's earlier access to records so they can better determine if an investigation is necessary, and reopening closed coroner cases to prevent further deaths in the future.

The amendments proposed to the Mandatory Blood Testing Act will warrant better support and provide peace of mind to victims of crime, first responders and others at risk of coming in contact with the foreign bodily substances of others.

The act would streamline the SIU investigation process, which would have persisted under the previous Bill 175 and forced many officers to labour under months- or years-long investigations, even in cases where they had no contact with an individual.

The Attorney General stated last week: "When we were elected one of our first orders of business was to pause implementation of Bill 175, so that we could fix it in a way

that continues to ensure oversight—but does so in a way that is balanced, respectful and fair. Our legislation, if passed, will focus investigative resources where they are needed, on criminal activity, within a police oversight system that will ultimately help build safer communities on a shared foundation of restored trust and accountability."

This is true. We were elected on a promise, and this is one of the ways we are keeping it—because we believe in keeping our promises.

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

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

The proposed Comprehensive Ontario Police Services Act will ensure the security of the people, which is this government's most fundamental responsibility. Many agree this legislation is key to keeping our promise, including law enforcement officers and associations.

Bruce Chapman, who is the president of the Police Association of Ontario, said, "Over the past three years, the Police Association of Ontario ... has been focused on advocating for the thoughtful modernization of the Police Services Act with both the former and current provincial governments. The PAO has maintained that Ontario's front-line sworn and civilian police personnel require the appropriate tools and adequate funding to keep our communities safe, and we have remained clear that we support effective oversight, accountability, and transparency to build the public's trust in our profession." They are "hopeful that this new Comprehensive Ontario Police Services Act will serve to restore fairness and respect for professional policing, make oversight more effective, and improve governance, training and transparency. The PAO is committed to working with the provincial government to ensure Ontario continues to be a safe place to live, work, and visit."

Madam Speaker, it is evident that there is a need for change. That's why we were elected. We made many promises as a government, and we intend to keep them. This legislation will help create a safer Ontario for you and me and for all of our loved ones.

I do not want us to lose hope. I believe that, together, we can make our cities and province safer for all. I hope this bill will be passed so that we and our future generations will be able to live in a peaceful and prosperous Ontario.

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

Ms. Jennifer K. French: I am glad to have the opportunity to respond to the remarks from the member from Mississauga East–Cooksville.

I echo much of what he said about the important work the police do across our communities. He talked about families and neighbourhoods and the sense of security and how we do want to get to a place where our communities have faith in their police services. But we also need to get to a place that the police services and police officers have faith in provincial leadership, and so we want to take every opportunity to be thoughtful about legislation.

Bill 175 was a mess. There were pieces in there that were solid and moved us forward; others, like privatization of police services, that we said we would repeal, were immensely problematic.

The government says about naloxone: “We fixed it.” I’m going to focus on that specifically, because interestingly, in Bill 175, it was specifically referenced about immediate medical care and an exemption for its provisions, so that if an officer provided emergency medical care, they couldn’t get in trouble if something went wrong. Now here we have Bill 68 that doesn’t mention that specifically, that doesn’t use those words. So tell me where to find that, to ensure that our officers are indeed protected, because regulation 355/18 that did that has now been revoked by this bill. I’ve asked now a couple of times, but I’m putting it to the government again: Answer the question. Our officers deserve to know. But that’s just one specific example.

Again, I’m out of time—so much to say.

1740

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

Mr. Roman Baber: I’m glad to rise on this bill, this piece of legislation that I’ve been looking forward to.

A key component of the bill that hasn’t been discussed much today is the requirement to conclude SIU investigations within 120 days and, failing which, to provide a written update with respect to said investigation.

I say that against the background of the fact that policing, and the art and work of policing, require a considerable degree of morale. There is a very good reason that the charter provides the right to a speedy process and a speedy trial. It’s to ensure that citizens who are in jeopardy no longer feel in jeopardy, or that the time in which they’re in jeopardy is limited, so they can carry on with their lives.

Regretfully, in an administrative law function, such as an SIU process, we don’t have a similar charter of protection. But I would argue that when it comes to the men and women of our police forces, the requirement to conclude a speedy process should also be expeditious, because it’s very, very important that members of our police feel that they’re getting a fair process and that it proceeds expeditiously so that they can continue doing their jobs. We heard from various police forces that at times, SIU investigations would take 14 to 16 to 18 months. That is unacceptable. That is unacceptable by any

measure. I can only imagine the type of stress, the type of difficulty, that it imposes on the officer’s family.

I’m incredibly proud that this government is going to take action to make sure that we have speedy resolution of SIU complaints. It’s important for public safety, it’s important for police morale and it’s important for the citizens of this province.

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

Ms. Teresa J. Armstrong: I congratulate the member for Mississauga East–Cooksville on contributing to the debate on Bill 68. He made some comments on the bill that are important. But also, I know that he just had a new child, a baby, in his household, and he talked about how important it is to have good community police services when you have a family.

Overall, I think it’s important that we make sure that we have our policing services serve everyone. In particular, it’s precious that we have our family members. When they’re newborn babies, it always brings that to a heightened piece of what it means for protection.

This bill is about policing, policing protection and community protection. It’s a very big bill, and I think it needs a lot of debate. We just got it to the Legislature recently. We’ve had some leads on it from the government and from our side.

It truly is something that’s really important to society. I think, when we look at what the policing role is in our community, it’s a very important role. We all value, when we call 911, that we’re going to be safe and protected. They have an extremely important role in that piece, when we call the police.

We respect police and we value them. That’s why I think having this bill come to the Legislature—we need to respect and value the work that they do, and literally make sure we have the time to debate this bill properly. I hope the government won’t call a time allocation on this bill, because this is a very important bill and it’s a very big bill. We need to take that time to respect police officers and respect the community.

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

Mr. Randy Pettapiece: This bill has a special interest to me, as it should to all Ontarians, but I have a special interest in that Jane and I have three boys, and they all have trades. One of them is a police officer, and his wife is also a police officer. They met in police college in Barrie, and they’ve been officers for 19 years now. That either makes one of us quite old or—I think they’re getting older faster than I am.

When we go down to visit them, we mostly go down to play with the grandchildren. It’s not so much that we want to see them so much as we want to play with the grandkids. We have so much fun with them.

But every once in a while, we do get to talking about their work. As I said, we’re proud of what they all do, but today we’re talking about police services. They’ve been around enough—19 years is a long time to be a police officer—and they’ve both said to me, “You know, we

realize that there has to be oversight in the police forces.” They understand that. They do know that they serve the public. They’re there to protect the public, and that’s their number-one job.

But they want it to be fair. That’s what they’re after: They want it to be fair. If something happens, they want to be dealt with in a fair way. They don’t want to prolong. They want things done in a short period of time, as short as possible, so that they can get on with their lives after if they happen to get involved in something.

I think we all understand that they can do things that we can’t, and one of the things is that they have to make snap decisions. They have to make quick decisions. Sometimes, things can go wrong. I certainly hope they never get involved in something like this. It would be a terrible thing. But I think their main advice to us, as the government, is: Let’s be fair about what we do with them.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Lisa Gretzky): Back to the member for Mississauga East–Cooksville.

Mr. Kaleed Rasheed: Thank you to my colleagues on both sides of the aisle. Today my colleagues have outlined the need for Bill 68. I stand by them and this government in favour of this legislation.

One of the reasons I ran for the position of member of provincial Parliament was to create a better and safer Ontario for my family and yours. This government and I are committed to this promise. The claims of the opposition stating this legislation is the same as the anti-police bill, Bill 175, are wrong. The minister and Attorney General led a thorough review of Bill 175 and identified problems that need to be fixed, and they fixed it with Bill 68.

The bill restores fairness and respect for police, enhances oversight and improves governance training and transparency. To enhance oversight, we are creating a window for public complaints, reducing duplication and better focusing on the mandate of the special investigation unit. The Policing Oversight Act, 2018, was confusing and slow. It doesn’t work for the police, and it certainly doesn’t work for the people. That’s why we introduced Bill 68. We are bringing back trust and safety in our communities.

This bill is much better than a sunroof. This bill speaks to the core needs of all humanity collectively, and that is the need for safety. Bill 68 is all about keeping us and our loved ones safe.

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

Ms. Jennifer K. French: I am glad to be able to have the opportunity and speak on this comprehensive piece of legislation, on Bill 68, the Comprehensive Ontario Police Services Act, 2019, which is “COPS.” It’s the COPS legislation: the Comprehensive Ontario Police Services Act.

Speaker, just in case, in the interest of time, I will be sharing my time with the member from Brampton Centre, but here I go.

I had mentioned earlier that I had the privilege to serve as our party critic last session for community safety and

correctional services for part of the time, and when I say I was privileged to serve in that capacity, I was. The things that I learned, I can never unlearn; the things that I know, I can never unknow; and I have a sense of responsibility to our communities, to our officers and to those who keep us safe and protected.

Absolutely, we respect the work that our officers do, but we also know that what they are being asked to do—or not even; they’re not even being asked; it’s just assumed that they are going to do so much more across our communities as front-line officers. That is maybe the nature of policing these days, but when we hear this government talk about respecting the work of our police officers in one breath and then turning around and cutting supports to mental health or not funding our women’s shelters and making things more challenging for those who actually need police services—they are adding to the burden on those officers and on those resources.

1750

If we’re going to say we respect police, then we should actually put that into place, and it cannot be lip service. I do believe the sincerity in the room, that people value our officers, our front-line law enforcement, but we need to back that up.

Looking at this piece of legislation, it is massive. It does build on, or it is a substitute, I guess, for Bill 175. The modernizing framework is the same as Bill 175’s. The oversight changes—and that isn’t something that the police had a significant concern with, with the last piece of legislation, the need to update oversight so that it better reflects the need for focused—what am I trying to say? What is the word that I want right now? The broader community has to have faith in the police—confidence: That’s what I was looking for. For the community to have that confidence, we need to have the right oversight, but we also need to ensure that it is fair for our officers.

When the government says that this is an oversight framework that is going to streamline and make things better—I look forward to getting into the nitty-gritty of this at committee and really ensuring that it does what it is supposed to do. Right out of the gate, we see that Justice Tulloch’s recommendations were not adopted in their entirety, so I would like to hear from the government why. What were the problems with those that were left out? Many of us in this House did attend the community meetings and the hearings with Justice Tulloch and community members and know that those recommendations really did come from a sincere place of wanting to strengthen our police and public confidence in our police.

Some of the things that we’ve been hearing about in debate are around the SIU. Speaker, what a tangled system it had become in terms of the length of time. When we hear about six months—well, one of the members mentioned 14 to 16 months. These were seemingly unending times of turmoil and limbo for the officers embroiled in these investigations, but also for the families. To have a process that long does not serve anyone. For the officers to not be allowed to connect with the families, to explain any details, to fill in—what a tormenting process for the

officers, for the family and for the broader community. So anything we can do to address that, we need to do.

This bill came out just a couple of days ago. Interestingly, the police commented on the day it was tabled that they hadn't had an opportunity at that time to put eyes on it, to have a sense of what was in it. I know there are different lawyers, and all of the expert and professional eyes will be looking at this legislation. I look forward to that feedback from the police associations and organizations.

Interjection.

Ms. Jennifer K. French: Sorry, I needed the water. Could I have my water back? Thank you. Thank you very much. Okay, now we're good.

Where was I?

Ms. Judith Monteith-Farrell: You're looking forward to the feedback.

Ms. Jennifer K. French: I am looking forward to the feedback, as well as my water—but having that feedback from the officers who, in their legal departments, really can dissect this legislation and understand not just what it says, but what it will mean, because there are some tricky little wording changes, and I wonder where that came from and where that push came from. Some of it would be, of course, with the different stakeholder groups alongside the officers and the associations; other parts might be with the chiefs of police; and other parts are going to be driven by municipalities. When everyone is able to really break it down, I look forward to getting that feedback. I know that we in the official opposition will be glad to hear that from the different organizations, so that our time in committee can be super-focused on making sure that we all understand how to move forward in the best way.

One example of that—I've brought it up a couple of times today, Speaker, because everyone on the government side has been talking about the importance of protecting our officers in the event of them helping someone—administering immediate medical care, in the case of administering naloxone with an opioid overdose—and if a person dies, that the officer not be held responsible for being that first responder and for trying to help.

I'm going to read part of this that is specific from Bill 175 and explain how I don't see it in Bill 68. I'm not sounding the alarm that it isn't there, but I can't find it, so if the government would point out how we can be sure that what the government is saying is indeed the case.

The term “immediate medical care” and any exemption for its provision are nowhere to be found within the new

provisions of Bill 68, but it is specifically referenced as an exemption in Bill 175, and that is in subsection 16(7).

I'm going to read what was in Bill 175: “If the regulations made by the minister so provide, the SIU director shall not, despite anything to the contrary in this section, investigate an incident in which an official provided immediate medical care to the affected person in the circumstances specified by the regulations made by the minister.”

In fact, Ontario regulation 355/18 does exactly that, but now it has been revoked by Bill 68. It's a specific piece, but it's the example that all of the government members are using, and I can't find it in legislation. Now, it's a big piece of legislation; perhaps it's there, but it's not where one would expect. So, please feel free to clarify.

Another concern—this was a massive concern for anyone who was in this Legislature, be they serving MPPs or a policing community that was spending a lot of time at Queen's Park with Bill 175. I would say that among the contentious pieces was certainly privatization of core police services and core police functions.

There is no one that I have met in the policing world, or in the broader community, who wants any part of those core police functions to be privatized. Nobody wanted a security guard who wasn't accountable knocking at their door and having access to their privacy. People wanted the professionalism, the training, the oversight, the accountability, the expertise of an officer to do that work.

The fact that in this legislation, while it doesn't say “for-profit entity,” which would indicate privatization, as they had had in Bill 175, it does say, “If the regulations so provide and subject to subsection (3), a police service board or the commissioner may provide a policing function in an area for which the board or the commissioner has policing responsibility by entering into an agreement with a prescribed entity to have the entity provide the policing function in the area.”

Pardon? So, I'd like some clarity there. I'm sure our officers would like clarification. Does that open a door? That is immensely problematic.

Speaker, I'm going to keep going—

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Lisa Gretzky): Thank you. *Second reading debate deemed adjourned.*

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Lisa Gretzky): Seeing the time on the clock, this House stands adjourned until 9 o'clock tomorrow morning.

The House adjourned at 1759.

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Rakocevic, Tom (NDP)	Humber River—Black Creek	
Rasheed, Kaleed (PC)	Mississauga East—Cooksville / Mississauga-Est—Cooksville	
Rickford, Hon. / L'hon. Greg (PC)	Kenora—Rainy River	Minister of Energy, Northern Development and Mines / Ministre de l'Énergie, du Développement du Nord et des Mines Minister of Indigenous Affairs / Ministre des Affaires autochtones
Roberts, Jeremy (PC)	Ottawa West—Nepean / Ottawa-Ouest—Nepean	
Romano, Ross (PC)	Sault Ste. Marie	
Sabawy, Sheref (PC)	Mississauga—Erin Mills	
Sandhu, Amarjot (PC)	Brampton West / Brampton-Ouest	
Sarkaria, Prabmeet Singh (PC)	Brampton South / Brampton-Sud	
Sattler, Peggy (NDP)	London West / London-Ouest	
Schreiner, Mike (GRN)	Guelph	
Scott, Hon. / L'hon. Laurie (PC)	Haliburton—Kawartha Lakes—Brock	Minister of Labour / Ministre du Travail
Shaw, Sandy (NDP)	Hamilton West—Ancaster—Dundas / Hamilton-Ouest—Ancaster—Dundas	
Simard, Amanda (IND)	Glengarry—Prescott—Russell	
Singh, Gurratan (NDP)	Brampton East / Brampton-Est	
Singh, Sara (NDP)	Brampton Centre / Brampton-Centre	Deputy Leader, Official Opposition / Chef adjointe de l'opposition officielle
Skelly, Donna (PC)	Flamborough—Glanbrook	
Smith, Dave (PC)	Peterborough—Kawartha	
Smith, Hon. / L'hon. Todd (PC)	Bay of Quinte / Baie de Quinte	Minister of Economic Development, Job Creation and Trade / Ministre du Développement économique, de la Création d'emplois et du Commerce Government House Leader / Leader parlementaire du gouvernement
Stevens, Jennifer (Jennie) (NDP)	St. Catharines	
Stiles, Marit (NDP)	Davenport	
Surma, Kinga (PC)	Etobicoke Centre / Etobicoke-Centre	
Tabuns, Peter (NDP)	Toronto—Danforth	
Tangri, Nina (PC)	Mississauga—Streetsville	
Taylor, Monique (NDP)	Hamilton Mountain	
Thanigasalam, Vijay (PC)	Scarborough—Rouge Park	
Thompson, Hon. / L'hon. Lisa M. (PC)	Huron—Bruce	Minister of Education / Ministre de l'Éducation
Tibollo, Hon. / L'hon. Michael A. (PC)	Vaughan—Woodbridge	Minister of Tourism, Culture and Sport / Ministre du Tourisme, de la Culture et du Sport
Triantafilopoulos, Effie J. (PC)	Oakville North—Burlington / Oakville-Nord—Burlington	
Vanthof, John (NDP)	Timiskaming—Cochrane	Deputy Leader, Official Opposition / Chef adjoint de l'opposition officielle
Wai, Daisy (PC)	Richmond Hill	
Walker, Hon. / L'hon. Bill (PC)	Bruce—Grey—Owen Sound	Minister of Government and Consumer Services / Ministre des Services gouvernementaux et des Services aux consommateurs
West, Jamie (NDP)	Sudbury	
Wilson, Jim (IND)	Simcoe—Grey	
Wynne, Kathleen O. (LIB)	Don Valley West / Don Valley-Ouest	
Yakubski, Hon. / L'hon. John (PC)	Renfrew—Nipissing—Pembroke	Minister of Natural Resources and Forestry / Ministre des Richesses naturelles et des Forêts
Yarde, Kevin (NDP)	Brampton North / Brampton-Nord	
Yurek, Hon. / L'hon. Jeff (PC)	Elgin—Middlesex—London	Minister of Transportation / Ministre des Transports

**STANDING AND SELECT COMMITTEES OF THE LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY
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Standing Committee on Estimates / Comité permanent des budgets des dépenses

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Vice-Chair / Vice-président: Wayne Gates
Stan Cho, Jill Dunlop
John Fraser, Wayne Gates
Stephen Lecce, Gila Martow
Jane McKenna, Judith Monteith-Farrell
Lindsey Park, Randy Pettapiece
Peter Tabuns
Committee Clerk / Greffier: Timothy Bryan

**Standing Committee on Finance and Economic Affairs /
Comité permanent des finances et des affaires économiques**

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Vice-Chair / Vice-président: Jeremy Roberts
Ian Arthur, Stephen Crawford
Doug Downey, Sol Mamakwa
David Piccini, Kaleed Rasheed
Jeremy Roberts, Sandy Shaw
Donna Skelly
Committee Clerk / Greffier: Timothy Bryan

**Standing Committee on General Government / Comité
permanent des affaires gouvernementales**

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Vice-Chair / Vice-président: Natalia Kusendova
Jessica Bell, Chris Glover
Christine Hogarth, Logan Kanapathi
Daryl Kramp, Natalia Kusendova
Amarjot Sandhu, Mike Schreiner
Dave Smith, Jennifer (Jennie) Stevens
Daisy Wai
Clerk / Greffier: Vacant

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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
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Sara Singh, Monique Taylor
Kevin Yarde
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Goldie Ghamari, Jim McDonell
Norman Miller, Suze Morrison
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