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LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF ONTARIO

Monday 25 March 2019

ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE DE L'ONTARIO

Lundi 25 mars 2019

The House met at 1030.

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

Prayers.

INTRODUCTION OF VISITORS

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): In the Speaker's gallery this morning is Adam Lightstone, MLA for Iqaluit–Manirajak. He is joined this morning by his father, Mike Lightstone, visiting from Kingston. Welcome to Queen's Park. We're delighted to have you here.

Mr. John Vanthof: On behalf of the leader of the official opposition, Andrea Horwath, and my NDP colleagues, I would like to welcome the Ontario Chamber of Commerce here today and all their chamber members from across the province for their advocacy day.

Mrs. Nina Tangri: Intact Insurance representatives are here today to discuss their Ontario operations and the province's auto insurance marketplace. Intact is interested in eliminating red tape and fraud that drives up costs in Ontario's auto insurance marketplace. Further, Intact will be holding an evening reception from 5 to 7—

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Thank you. Once again, I need to remind members we have to make the introductions as brief as possible because we have other business to get to.

The member for Spadina–Fort York.

Mr. Chris Glover: Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and just following up on your introduction of Adam Lightstone, the MLA from Nunavut, he will be joining us in the dining room for lunch, so if anybody would like to learn about the Legislative Assembly of Nunavut, you're welcome to join us.

Ms. Mitzie Hunter: I am pleased to welcome representatives here from Intact Insurance whom I met with today—Mike Kosturik, Pascal Dessureault and Jonathan O'Brien; Domenic Naccarato, who is from belairdirect; and Gabriela Gonzalez from Crestview Strategy.

Hon. Lisa MacLeod: I'd like to introduce today two of my constituents who I flew in with and drove in with today: my long-time friend John Baizana, as well as Bill Davis, who are here from Nepean today.

Ms. Judith Monteith-Farrell: I'd like to introduce Charla Robinson from our Thunder Bay Chamber of Commerce. Welcome, Charla.

Mr. Rudy Cuzzetto: I would like to welcome three residents from Mississauga–Lakeshore: Joanne Becke,

Deb Stephensen and Kathleen Henning. Thank you for being here.

Ms. Marit Stiles: I'd like to welcome Jamie Stuckless, executive director of Share the Road Cycling Coalition, to the House today.

Mr. Mike Schreiner: On behalf of the Green Party, I'd like to welcome all the members of the Ontario Chamber of Commerce who are here today. I'm looking forward to meeting with you later this afternoon.

Hon. Victor Fedeli: I want to welcome two great friends from the city of North Bay and our chamber of commerce: Peter Chirico, who served with me on council as deputy mayor of the city of North Bay, and Charles Elliott.

Ms. Jennifer K. French: I am also pleased to welcome folks from the Greater Oshawa Chamber of Commerce. I welcome our president, Jeff Robinson, and our CEO, Nancy Shaw. Welcome to Queen's Park.

Ms. Jane McKenna: Today I would like to give a warm welcome to our president, Keith Hoey, who is actually finishing as president for Burlington. He's the best darn president the chamber of commerce could ever have. Nice to see you, Keith.

Ms. Sara Singh: I would like to introduce Manpreet Mann, who is visiting. He is the chair of the Brampton Board of Trade. Thank you for being here, and welcome.

Mr. Parm Gill: I want to welcome Scott McCammon, president of our Milton Chamber of Commerce. I see him in the members' gallery. Thank you, and welcome to Queen's Park.

Mr. Daryl Kramp: I am pleased today to be here on a chamber of commerce day to welcome, from the good riding of Hastings–Lennox and Addington, Bancroft chair Mr. Greg Webb.

Hon. Bill Walker: I would like to welcome Peter Reesor from the Owen Sound Chamber of Commerce. Welcome, Peter.

Hon. Todd Smith: I would like to welcome some chamber folks from Bay of Quinte. We have Suzanne Andrews from the Quinte West Chamber of Commerce; Lesley Lavender and Sandra Latchford from the Prince Edward County Chamber of Commerce; and from Belleville Chamber of Commerce, Jill Raycroft and Peter Kempenaar. Welcome to Queen's Park.

Mr. David Piccini: Good morning, Mr. Speaker. I would like to extend a very warm welcome to one of the finest presidents the Port Hope chamber has ever had: Brenda, who's here, and Maria, as well, who has joined her. Welcome to Queen's Park, and thanks for coming down from Port Hope.

Mrs. Daisy Wai: Good morning, Mr. Speaker. I want to welcome all our chamber friends, especially, from the Richmond Hill Board of Trade, Karen Mortfield, the president and CEO, as well as a board member, Jason Cherniak. Welcome to the Legislature.

Ms. Andrea Khanjin: I wanted to welcome my good friend Natalie Weed to the Legislature today, and the executive director for the Barrie Chamber of Commerce, Richard Brooks. Welcome.

M^{me} France Gélinas: I would like to welcome Michael Macnamara, the chair, and Bryan Welsh, the first vice-president, as well as Debbi Nicholson, from the Greater Sudbury Chamber of Commerce. Welcome to Queen's Park.

Mr. John Fraser: I would just like to welcome all the members of the Ontario Chamber of Commerce and their affiliates here today to Queen's Park. They have a reception here tonight; everyone's welcome.

Mr. Dave Smith: I would like to welcome two members from the Greater Peterborough Chamber of Commerce: Sandra Dueck and Stu Harrison.

Ms. Jill Dunlop: I have representatives here from Oro-Medonte Chamber of Commerce, Greg Groen and Nadia Fitzgerald, as well as Orillia Chamber of Commerce, Allan Lafontaine. Thank you for being here today.

Mr. Sam Oosterhoff: I have the great privilege of welcoming to the Legislature today Hugo Chesshire from the Greater Niagara Chamber of Commerce. Welcome to Queen's Park.

Mrs. Belinda Karahalios: It is my pleasure to introduce, in the members' gallery, the long-standing, hard-working president and CEO of the Cambridge Chamber of Commerce, Greg Durocher, and Nicole Pereira, our fabulous board chair, also from the Cambridge Chamber of Commerce. Welcome to Queen's Park.

Mr. Gilles Bisson: I would like to welcome my good friends from the Timmins Chamber of Commerce who are here today in order to participate in this wonderful day of what they do here best.

Hon. Monte McNaughton: I am really honoured to introduce the president of the Ontario Chamber of Commerce, Rocco Rossi, who is here today watching question period, as well as two members from chambers in my riding of Lambton-Kent-Middlesex: Kathy from the Strathroy and District Chamber of Commerce, and Gail from the Chatham-Kent Chamber of Commerce. Welcome to Queen's Park.

Mr. Ian Arthur: It's my pleasure today to introduce Karen Cross from the Greater Kingston Chamber of Commerce.

Mr. Piccini, it is truly greater.

Mr. Rick Nicholls: It's my pleasure this morning to introduce to the Legislature two friends of mine: Bruce and Judy Duncan from the great city of London; as well as, from the thriving metropolis of Leamington, the general manager of the chamber of commerce, Wendy Parsons; and from the even greater metropolis of Chatham-Kent, Gail Hundt, president and CEO of the Chatham-Kent Chamber of Commerce. Welcome.

1040

Ms. Sandy Shaw: On behalf of Andrea Horwath, the Leader of the Opposition, and all the area MPPs from Hamilton, I would like to welcome the Hamilton Chamber of Commerce, under the leadership of Keanin Loomis. I look forward to speaking with them later on this afternoon.

Ms. Donna Skelly: I also would like to welcome all the members from the Hamilton Chamber of Commerce and from the Flamborough Chamber of Commerce—Matteo Patricelli, who is also here, one of the best directors of all the chambers.

Mrs. Gila Martow: I would like to welcome the fantastic Brian Shifman from the Vaughan Chamber of Commerce. Welcome, Brian; nice to see you.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): That concludes the time we have available for introduction of guests.

Mr. Gilles Bisson: Point of order.

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

Mr. Gilles Bisson: On a point of order, I seek unanimous consent to move a motion to allow the Standing Committee on Justice Policy to review all issues related to the appointment of Ron Taverner as OPP commissioner.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): The member for Timmins is seeking unanimous consent to move a motion to allow the Standing Committee on Justice Policy to review all issues related to the appointment of Ron Taverner as OPP commissioner. Agreed? I heard some noes.

WEARING OF RIBBONS

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): I understand the member for Davenport has a point of order.

Ms. Marit Stiles: I seek unanimous consent to allow members to wear yellow ribbons to commemorate Endometriosis Awareness Month.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): The member for Davenport is seeking the unanimous consent of the House to allow members to wear a yellow ribbon to commemorate Endometriosis Awareness Month. Agreed? Agreed.

ORAL QUESTIONS

GOVERNMENT ACCOUNTABILITY

Ms. Sara Singh: My question is to the Acting Premier. Overwhelming evidence in the Integrity Commissioner's report highlighted the flawed process by which Ron Taverner was installed as OPP commissioner. However, the government continues to tout this process as an open and transparent one. A hearing at the standing committee on justice would give them an opportunity to prove these claims and prove to the people of Ontario that they have nothing to hide.

Why is this government blocking efforts to let the justice committee examine the process they claim to be so proud of?

Hon. Christine Elliott: Minister of Community Safety and Correctional Services.

Hon. Sylvia Jones: Through you, Speaker: Our government has proudly and consistently stood with the people who stand behind our police. The NDP can choose to chase headlines. We are going to respect the police and we are going to make sure we have an OPP commissioner in place who's going to serve the people of Ontario, and I'm proud of the choice we've made. Thank you.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Supplementary.

Ms. Sara Singh: Mr. Speaker, if the Ford government is truly confident in the process, they should be thrilled at the opportunity to let the people of Ontario hear from the backroom operators who worked overtime to deliver the appointment the Premier wanted.

This is an opportunity for the government to demonstrate their commitment to transparency and to the people of this province. Why won't they take it, and what are they hiding?

Hon. Sylvia Jones: Government House leader.

Hon. Todd Smith: It's a shame that we have to continue to speak to this matter after it has already been decided by the Integrity Commissioner of the province of Ontario. It's shameful that the NDP have now resorted to attacking those independent commissioners because they don't accept the results of the investigation that came from his office. The report made it pretty clear last week. We said from the beginning that this complaint was frivolous and it was without merit, and the independent officer of the Legislature, the Integrity Commissioner, confirmed that last week.

This is the same party, Mr. Speaker, the NDP, that used to actually defend the independent officers of the Legislature when the Liberals used to attack those independent officers. What has happened to the NDP? Are they just simply concerned about politics? Because there's nothing with this line of questioning.

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

Ms. Sara Singh: The fact is, the commissioner revealed that the process by which—and I'm going to reiterate that it's the process we're asking about; we're not attacking anyone here. The process by which Mr. Taverner was appointed was flawed, and the people of Ontario have been left with far more questions than answers. We, on this side of the House, believe that they deserve real answers, far more than it was technically not illegal.

Why does this government continue to think that they can evade providing transparency to the people of Ontario? Why do you not feel that you need to launch this justice committee on policy?

Hon. Todd Smith: With the greatest respect to the member opposite, the Integrity Commissioner of Ontario, the office in which the complaint was filed by members of that party, has come back and vindicated the Premier of Ontario for having any kind of involvement in this process. It's right there in black and white, Mr. Speaker.

What I'm hearing from the people of Ontario, including in that member's riding and certainly in Essex—I was in

Essex last week and on the weekend—what they want to know is, what is the government doing to make sure that Ontario is open for business, creating good jobs, getting the economy back on track and providing transparency and accountability in government? I was happy to inform the members in Essex on Friday and Saturday what our government is doing, and they were quite happy to hear the actions that this government has taken, creating 95,000 jobs in the last three months—

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

Interjections.

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

Restart the clock. Next question.

GOVERNMENT ACCOUNTABILITY

Mr. John Vanthof: My question is to the Acting Premier. For months, the Premier stated repeatedly that the process of selecting Ron Taverner was completely independent. In fact, at one point, he even said he had no idea his family friend was being handed the top job “until the day [the decision] was made.”

Can the Acting Premier tell us, if the Premier didn't know his friend was being appointed until the day the decision was made, why did his chief of staff, Dean French, testify that both he and the Premier suggested Taverner as a candidate before the job was even posted?

Hon. Christine Elliott: To the House leader and Minister of Economic Development.

Hon. Todd Smith: You know, it's a shame that the NDP continue with this line of questioning. I think it's pretty clear to anybody who read the report and certainly understands that the one thing that is happening with this line of questioning is they're just trying to make political hay. It really is shameful that the NDP have resorted to attacking the independent commissioner and refuse to accept his results on this investigation. The results came back pretty darn clear last week. We've said this from the beginning, that the complaints here were without any kind of merit. They were frivolous.

How many times do we have to have these types of complaints filed? I know they're great friends with Democracy Watch. They originally called for the Integrity Commissioner report here, as well. They've called for eight different Integrity Commissioner reports, or at least made eight different complaints since we became the government of Ontario—

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

Supplementary.

Mr. John Vanthof: The Premier's own chief of staff contradicted the Premier in his testimony, and text messages from Steve Orsini, the secretary of cabinet, contradicted his claims as well. While the Premier was bragging in the House daily about the “completely independent” process, Orsini wrote the Premier's office saying, “Independent of who? ... I would drop the word ‘independent.’”

Wouldn't the Acting Premier agree that we should have a chance to hear from Mr. Orsini about his concerns?

Hon. Todd Smith: I just can't believe that the opposition won't respect the decision that was made by the independent officer. Do you know where the complaint to the Integrity Commissioner actually came from, Mr. Speaker? It came from the member from Brampton North; Kevin Yarde is the member who made the complaint.

1050

We know that this is all about politics. In this case, it's about gutter politics. It wasn't actually about the process here. We know that that member had actually wanted to run, under Premier Ford, as a PC candidate during the last election—

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Again, I'm going to caution the member with that sort of line of statement. It doesn't help to elevate the debate. Please conclude your response.

Hon. Todd Smith: Mr. Speaker, I think it's pretty obvious what's going on here when it comes to the official opposition and their tactics. The official opposition party in Ontario is nothing but a protest party.

The independent Integrity Commissioner has come back with his report, which completely vindicates the Premier from any wrongdoing in this case.

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

Mr. John Vanthof: Here are just some of the issues we need some answers on: The Premier said he had no idea his family friend was a candidate, even though his chief of staff said he'd already decided he was the best candidate for the job. The Premier said the process was independent, even though a secretary of cabinet was begging him not to call it independent.

It's time for us all to get some answers. Why is the government opposed to having the backroom operators speak for themselves at committee?

Hon. Todd Smith: Clearly, the NDP, the opposition here at Queen's Park, is very satisfied with the policies of this government, because they never ask about them, Mr. Speaker. I can understand why. Here we have the Ontario Chamber of Commerce in the building today. We have business representatives from their ridings and our ridings all across Ontario. You would think that maybe the NDP would want to ask a question about business. You would think that maybe they would want to know what the government is doing to create jobs in their ridings and create wealth, and make sure that people in their ridings are able to get good employment so they can put their kids through college or they can make sure that they're putting food on the table. We're seeing great results on that front: 95,000 jobs created in Ontario in the last three months. We're doing pretty darn well, so I can understand why the official opposition—

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

Interjections.

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

GOVERNMENT ACCOUNTABILITY

Mr. Kevin Yarde: My question is—

Interjections.

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

Start the clock. Question: the member for Brampton North.

Mr. Kevin Yarde: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My question is for the Acting Premier. Since the Ford government is refusing to allow their backroom operators to take questions directly at the justice committee, I'd like to ask them some questions.

Can the Acting Premier explain how Chris Froggart, a partner at a lobbying firm with extensive interests in the Ontario government, came to be tasked with providing media training to the Premier's preferred candidate for the OPP commissioner, and what role Froggart played in preparing Mr. Taverner for the recruitment process?

Hon. Christine Elliott: To the House leader.

Hon. Todd Smith: If we're going to drag private citizens through the mud here, the least we could do is get their names right. His name is Chris Froggart.

I find it interesting, though, that the member opposite is asking his question on a piece of blue paper. Maybe there's more to that.

Mr. Speaker, the member opposite is the one who filed the report with the Integrity Commissioner. That report came back exonerating the Premier of any wrongdoing in this case.

Let's move on. Let's move on to the actual policies of the province of Ontario. I know that the NDP believe they can make political hay here, in the gutter, dragging private citizens through the mud, and the work that they're doing, but that is not acceptable to this government. We're going to focus on making sure that Ontarians get good jobs and that we're getting Ontario back on track after 15 years of Liberal mismanagement.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Supplementary?

Mr. Kevin Yarde: Once again to the Acting Premier: This is not the first time that Mr. Froggart's name has come up in the Legislature recently. He was also named by the member from Lanark-Frontenac-Kingston as one of the backroom operatives who saw to his abrupt expulsion from the government caucus.

Will the Acting Premier explain why Mr. Froggart, a professional lobbyist who currently heads up the Premier's election readiness campaign, continues to play such an important decision-making role in the Premier's executive office here at Queen's Park, and why she feels we should not be able to hear from him directly at committee?

Hon. Todd Smith: Mr. Speaker, I can't understand why the member opposite, who asked for the investigation from the Integrity Commissioner, won't accept the Integrity Commissioner's findings in this report. The member from Brampton North is the same member who wanted to run for the PC Party in the 2018 election. He purchased his—

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): I've already cautioned the member not to bring that up. Don't do it again.

Conclude your answer.

Hon. Todd Smith: I could just say that the people of Brampton must be a little bit confused about some of the questions that they're getting from this member.

Do you know what, though, Mr. Speaker? We're trying to put Ontario back on track after 15 years of Liberal waste, scandal and mismanagement. We're putting in policies that are actually reversing the downward trend in this province. I wish that the members of the official opposition, including the member for Brampton North, would actually ask a question relevant to the policy of Ontario and making sure that Ontario is—

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

ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION

Mr. Stephen Crawford: It's good to actually ask a question about government policy.

My question is for the Minister of the Environment, Conservation and Parks. Our government promised the people of Ontario that we would make life more affordable. Under the leadership of Premier Ford, our government has been working non-stop to ensure that the hard-working people of Ontario are feeling real relief.

As part of our commitment, on October 31 our government brought an end to the Liberals' ineffective, job-killing cap-and-trade program. Today, the minister announced his next steps in the wind-down of the cap-and-trade program. Can the minister share with this House what next steps he'll be taking?

Hon. Rod Phillips: Mr. Speaker, through you to the member: Thank you to the member for Oakville for his hard work and for raising a question—we're here with the Ontario Chamber of Commerce—a question that matters to business and a question that matters for jobs.

The member is right: We made a solemn commitment, and one of the core parts of our mandate was to eliminate the cap-and-trade carbon tax, a carbon tax and cap-and-trade program that were hurting jobs. When we said we'd do that, when Premier Ford said he would do that during the campaign, the NDP, trying to make people frightened—fearmongering—said that it could be billions and billions of dollars in compensation. That's what they said.

When we introduced Bill 4 to eliminate cap-and-trade in July, we said that it would be \$5 million in compensation, that looking at it sensibly, we could get rid of the program for \$5 million. Mr. Speaker, I'm pleased to announce today, and we've announced it publicly, that in eliminating the program, the compensation for business has been \$5 million, not billions of dollars. That's to eliminate a program that's killing jobs and hurting families.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Supplementary?

Mr. Stephen Crawford: Thank you to the minister for the answer. The cancellation of the cap-and-trade program is finally bringing the relief to the people of Ontario that we so deserve.

Ontario is blessed with spectacular forests, lakes and rivers. Those of us who call Ontario home could not ask for a better place to live, raise a family and work. The

quality of life enjoyed by our people as well as the success of our businesses depend on having clean air to breathe, safe water to drink, and well-protected lands and parks. Ontario recognizes the role we play in the responsibility we all share to protect and preserve the province we all know and love. Can the minister share with this House what our next steps are for protecting Ontario's environment?

Hon. Rod Phillips: Mr. Speaker, through you to the member: I look forward to visiting with some of the member's constituents next month as we proceed with rolling out our made-in-Ontario plan.

1100

We promised in Bill 4, when we introduced it in July, that we would also bring a made-in-Ontario environment plan—a plan that would deal with climate change, that would move from the 22% reduction that Ontarians have already contributed to, to reach the 32% target that we've committed to, that our federal government has committed to in terms of reducing greenhouse gases, but that would also deal with clean air, clean land and making sure that our water was clean. In that regard, so far, we've released our emissions standards proposals which are now for consultation, we've released our program around increasing the ethanol content in gasoline, and we have released our paper around reducing waste and litter.

Again, I look forward next month to meeting with the member's constituents to talk more about how we're going to make sure we keep Ontario clean, but we do it without a job-killing carbon tax.

GOVERNMENT ACCOUNTABILITY

Mr. Gilles Bisson: My question is to the Acting Premier. The reason New Democrats want to hear from witnesses at the justice committee is simple: It's because there are still so many questions left unanswered.

One such question is: What really happened the night of Steve Orsini's resignation as secretary of cabinet? We know from the Integrity Commissioner's report that Orsini demanded the Premier delay Taverner's appointment until after the Integrity Commissioner conducted his investigation, and if the Premier didn't do that, he would resign. If the process that Mr. Orsini oversaw was so defensible, why did he feel compelled to make such a drastic ultimatum?

Hon. Christine Elliott: Government House leader.

Hon. Todd Smith: It's a pleasure to respond to the question from the opposition House leader this morning. The independent Integrity Commissioner made his ruling last week. He came out with the report. The NDP used to recognize the independent officers of the Legislature and appreciate their efforts. We used to protect those independent officers together, actually, when the Liberals were dragging them through the mud and telling them that their services weren't necessary or that they didn't believe what was coming from them.

But I can tell you, Mr. Speaker, that this opposition House leader must have something that he could ask about

what's going on in Timmins in his riding, something to do with government policy around health care, possibly around education or possibly around business, considering the fact that it's Ontario Chamber of Commerce—I would just hope that he's not going to continue to drag—

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Supplementary.

Mr. Gilles Bisson: This from a government that fired three commissioners from this assembly.

My question again is to the Acting Premier. Mr. Orsini said it quite plainly in his email to the Premier: "If you feel that the installation must proceed, it is with a heavy heart that I recommend the appointment of a new secretary of the cabinet who will fully support your decisions as the Premier of Ontario. While I am deeply saddened to make this recommendation, I feel it is the only appropriate course of action in the circumstances."

It's clear that there is more to the story than what we've been hearing so far, and this is why we need to hear from Mr. Orsini and others at committee. Why is your government opposed to that?

Hon. Todd Smith: Mr. Speaker, apparently the member opposite just can't take yes for an answer on this issue. The independent Integrity Commissioner of Ontario has come out with a report, exonerating the Premier of any involvement in this issue, that was requested by the would-be PC candidate from Scarborough-Markham and now as the NDP candidate in Brampton—

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): We're moving on. Next question.

PUBLIC TRANSIT

Ms. Goldie Ghamari: Mr. Speaker, before I begin, I'd just like to quickly introduce Diane Flanagan, Maryann Besharat, Bill Davis and Nick Frattaroli from Intact, and I look forward to meeting with them later today.

My question is for the Minister of Transportation. Recently, our government for the people has made some significant transit announcements that reflect our commitment to get the people of Ontario moving. We have expanded GO service in Kitchener and Niagara, and we announced that kids under 12 ride free on GO services.

Mr. Speaker, it is clear that our government for the people is serious about our commitment to get the people of Ontario back on track. We are facing serious gridlock problems all across Ontario due to the financial mismanagement of the previous government. Instead of fixing the problems, Ontarians were left with a \$15-billion deficit.

I know that my constituents in Carleton and across the Ottawa region are looking for relief of the gridlock issues. Can the Minister of Transportation tell us what his ministry is doing to get the people of Ontario moving?

Hon. Jeff Yurek: I'd like to thank the member from Carleton for that question and for her ongoing work representing her constituents. Last Friday, the Premier and I were in the great city of Ottawa to announce that our government for the people is giving \$1.2 billion to Ottawa to build stage 2 of the LRT. This is on top of the \$600 million that the province has already committed.

Mr. Speaker, over the last few months, working up to this announcement, I've worked hard with members from Ottawa West-Nepean, Nepean, Kanata-Carleton and Carleton. These members came to me, day in and day out, pushing for the finality of our decision to fund the Ottawa LRT, and that is what we did.

I also would like to congratulate my parliamentary assistant, Kinga Surma, who helped steer this project further. As a team, we are making Ontario transit better. We're working together to make Ottawa LRT a reality for the people of the region.

I will have more to say in my supplementary.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Supplementary.

Ms. Goldie Ghamari: Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and through you, thank you to the Minister of Transportation for the excellent response. This is very, very exciting news for the people of Ottawa, and especially for my constituents in Carleton and the Riverside South and Findlay Creek area.

Mr. Speaker, you have no idea of the significant impact the Ottawa LRT expansion will have in Carleton, especially given that in the area of Riverside South, the population is going to double in the next 10 years to almost 20,000 people. This project is going to assist our government's goal to reduce traffic and congestion, and our government is assisting in building a world-class transit system in the great city of Ottawa.

Can the Minister of Transportation tell us more about phase 2 of the Ottawa LRT?

Hon. Jeff Yurek: I'm proud to continue my answer. The new LRT will shorten commute times and help people get to work, school or appointments quickly and conveniently. By the time the project is finished, almost 80% of the people in Ottawa will live within five kilometres of transit. We're opening up neighbourhoods like OrLéans, Westboro Barrhaven and the ByWard Market. This incredible LRT network, when fully completed in 2025, will be able to move 24,000 people an hour in each direction.

Our government for the people is making it easier for commuters to get to their jobs, run errands and visit families and friends, with shorter commute times. The project will reduce congestion on the road, making it easier for those who commute by car to get from point A to point B much quicker.

Our government is focused on making sure communities across the province are open for business. Mr. Speaker, we are improving transit throughout the entire province. Ontario is on the road to a better business climate. We are going to get the economy rolling. I hope the NDP joins on board as we improve the transit throughout this province. Greater regional transit—

Interjections.

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

Start the clock. Next question.

CURRICULUM

Ms. Marit Stiles: My question is for the Minister of Education. Questions continue to be raised about the

government's plan to shuffle teachers out of classrooms and replace them with online classes. Last week, the Ontario Student Trustees' Association called on the government to hit the brakes on this scheme, saying that "different learning styles cannot be accommodated by an all-encompassing change in graduation requirements."

Speaker, students will bear the brunt of this government's education cuts, yet their voices continue to be ignored. We know that the minister hasn't listened to parents. We know they haven't listened to teachers or education workers. Will she listen to students and stop these cuts?

Hon. Lisa M. Thompson: Thank you very much, Speaker, for the opportunity to set the record straight. The reality of today is that we need to be embracing technology for good. When it comes to online opportunities for our students, I think we should all agree in this House: We want to make sure that they have every opportunity to put their best foot forward.

I find the question coming from the member opposite so peculiar, because if she was really in touch with school boards across this province like she feigns she is, she would know that there are already online courses being utilized from jurisdiction to jurisdiction, so what on earth is she asking? Is she asking Ontario school boards across this province to take a step back? If she is, shame on her. She needs to get with the times. We're moving forward with our students in a positive way.

Interjections.

1110

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Stop the clock. Once again, once the standing ovation started, I couldn't hear the minister conclude her remarks. I had to stop the clock and interrupt her.

Start the clock. Supplementary?

Ms. Marit Stiles: Online opportunities, Mr. Speaker? Online opportunities? This is not about 21st-century learning. This is not about technology. This is about making students take courses online that are now mandatory. This is about removing 10,000 teachers from our classrooms.

Students are right to be worried about their future. They are right to be worried. They're wondering how they will concentrate in classes as large as 40. They're afraid they and their siblings will fall behind when they're forced to take a class online with no support. And they're worried about how they'll navigate the transition to college or university or be ready to contribute to the economy when their guidance counsellors are cut.

Mr. Speaker, will the minister have the courage to stand up for students, or will she simply carry on with the Premier's endless quest for cuts?

Hon. Lisa M. Thompson: I stand up for students every single day, as opposed to the no-digital party. Honest to goodness, Speaker, I can't even believe how disconnected that member opposite and her entire party are. My goodness, we should be celebrating how we're already leading the way. TVO, TFO—people and jurisdictions around the world are coming to them for the online advances that they're making with online courses. The fact of the matter

is, if the party opposite was actually truly connected with our school boards across this province, they would know online courses are already happening. Again, what is wrong with making sure that our students, at minimum, once a year, embrace technology for good? Having so many opportunities that the Internet provides, we are going to continue to push the bar and make sure Ontario education is—

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

Next question.

CURRICULUM

Ms. Kathleen O. Wynne: In 2003, 68% of high school students were graduating in Ontario. Today, 86% of students are graduating, and that improvement did not happen by accident. There are thousands more adults in the nearly 5,000 publicly funded elementary and secondary schools today than in 2003. Where Mike Harris removed adults from schools, our government replaced them. For example, students—

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): I apologize to the member. Please stop the clock. The government side will come to order so I can hear the member who is asking the question. She is—

Hon. Lisa MacLeod: She didn't say who the question was to.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): She can say during the course of her one minute-presentation who her question is to. I hear what her question is about.

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Again, the government side will come to order.

Interjections.

Mr. Michael Coteau: That's very rude.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): The member for Don Valley East will come to order.

You can start the clock now. I apologize again to the member.

Ms. Kathleen O. Wynne: My question is for the Minister of Education, Mr. Speaker.

For example, student success teachers are in place specifically to support students who might otherwise fall through the cracks. While there is absolutely no research to support the notion that high class sizes foster resilience in students, there is solid research that confirms that students need connection to caring adults in order to succeed. That is exactly what fosters resilience. We also know that if students don't accumulate credits early on in grades 9 and 10, then the likelihood that they'll graduate is reduced.

How will the minister guarantee that those student supports—those vital student supports—will remain in place as she removes thousands of adults from secondary schools?

Hon. Lisa M. Thompson: Thank you very much, Speaker, for the opportunity to again speak to the amazing pathway we're on in terms of getting Ontario education back on track.

I can tell the member opposite that the number one thing we're not going to do is to follow the dismal record that the Liberal administration absolutely chose to take over the last 15 years, which saw math scores plummet and student success plummet as well.

For goodness' sake, when you reflect upon what happened under that Liberal administration—I can tell you that through our online, in-person and submission consultation that we conducted last fall, 84% of parents said they were spending their own time helping their children learn math outside of the classroom. That means a failure, a big F, on that Liberal government's part. Forty per cent of the parents said they were spending their own money to help their children learn math because of that dismal failure of that dismal administration. That was a dark age for—

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

Ms. Kathleen O. Wynne: You know, Mr. Speaker, I would be the last person to say that there isn't a need for constant improvement in our education system. I would be the last person to say that we don't need parent involvement and parent support. Of course we do.

What I'm asking the minister is how she can justify taking thousands of adults out of schools. She knows full well—or she should, Mr. Speaker—that 22 kids in a secondary class is an average number. What it means if she takes thousands of adults out of the schools is that boards and schools across the province will be scrambling to make sure that the core curriculum has reasonable class sizes. How can she guarantee that courses like drama and music and visual arts and industrial design and co-op programs will have any sections at all, that kids will be able to take those courses, when thousands of adults have come out of the schools?

I am not making a partisan statement. I am asking the minister to address the students of this province and tell them how she is going to protect them.

Hon. Lisa M. Thompson: Well, what I choose to do in this House is to set that member opposite straight, because our focus on education is going to see zero changes from kindergarten to grade 3. From grades 4 to 8, we're looking at no more than maybe one student per class. And when it comes to high school, I'm telling you, we're going to get it right. We're looking at an increase of perhaps six students, but what we're also focusing on is the success and the actual effectiveness of the teacher in the classroom, and we're excited by that. We're investing in our teachers like never before. We're looking at outcomes that will ensure that we are following through and being measured on our goals, our vision, which is student success.

Let's talk about that education reform. We're looking at a new math curriculum, not only for the students, but we're going to be supporting our teachers as well. We're looking at a refocused effort and theme in STEM. We're taking a look at modernizing—

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

LONG-TERM CARE

Ms. Jill Dunlop: My question is for the Minister of Health and Long-Term Care. Mr. Speaker, we were elected to strengthen and fix our public health care system. Sadly, after 15 years of Liberal mismanagement, we have over 30,000 people on wait-lists for long-term care. In my riding of Simcoe North, we have families and caregivers come into the constituency office concerned about the lack of long-term-care beds in our area.

Could the minister please update the members of this Legislature on what our government for the people is doing to end hallway health care, shorten the wait-list and get the seniors of this province the care they so desperately need?

Hon. Christine Elliott: I'd like to thank the member from Simcoe North for her question, which is important to all of us. Our government believes that all Ontarians should have access to high-quality health care and a safe, comfortable space to live in, and that's exactly why we took early action on our commitment to add 15,000 new long-term-care spaces within five years by announcing 6,075 last fall. Now I'm pleased to say we are moving forward with another 16 long-term-care projects that will add another 1,157 new beds. These new beds will bring our total allocated long-term-care beds to 7,232, which is nearly half of our commitment, created within our first nine months in office.

1120

This is part of our plan to ensure that Ontario seniors needing long-term care have access to high-quality care when and where they need it.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Supplementary?

Ms. Jill Dunlop: Thank you to the Minister of Health and Long-Term Care for that answer.

Mr. Speaker, the seniors population is exploding. There are 100,000 more seniors in Ontario every year, and by 2041, there will be approximately 4.6 million seniors in this province. This is why this announcement was such great news for our seniors. In Simcoe North, we were thrilled to learn we would receive 192 new beds, including one of the 16 new centres.

Can the minister please explain why increasing the number of long-term-care beds is important for seniors in this province?

Hon. Christine Elliott: To the Minister for Seniors and Accessibility.

Hon. Raymond Sung Joon Cho: Thank you to the honourable, hard-working member from Simcoe North for raising a great question.

Our government is committed to putting seniors and their families at the centre of our health care and long-term-care plans. Increasing the number of beds helps our Ontario seniors and their families as they receive culturally and linguistically appropriate health care services, enhancing their quality of life.

Our government promised more beds. We have now announced, I repeat, an additional 1,157 beds. Promise made, promise kept.

AUTISM TREATMENT

Miss Monique Taylor: My question is for the Minister of Children, Community and Social Services. Last week, the minister announced changes to the autism plan—changes that parents do not believe go far enough. The OAP is still age-based and not based on need, so it still discriminates against girls, who are often diagnosed at a later age than boys.

The minister has committed to consultation over the summer after the changes are rolled out, but, Speaker, the trust is already broken. Parents feel that the only way to be heard in this province is to protest.

Will the minister commit to an open, transparent and collaborative consultation process?

Hon. Lisa MacLeod: Speaker, it's a great opportunity to rise today to talk about our plan to clear the wait-list in the next 18 months for boys and girls across the province who have been diagnosed with autism. There are 23,000 children we would like to clear in the next 18 months. We are committed to doing that.

In addition to that, we have opened up the choice for what parents can use their childhood budget on. We have operationalized that to include occupational therapy as well as speech and language therapy. We listened to parents; they told us it's what they wanted.

We have also decided to eliminate the income test. We are going to extend contracts for an additional six months for those 25% of the children who were already on the program, and we've made a commitment to consult with parents on the levels of severity and needs that children have across the province.

Let me be perfectly clear: We support peaceful demonstrations. What we do not support are personal insults, personal attacks and death threats.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Supplementary?

Miss Monique Taylor: It's really unfortunate that this government put parents in crisis and that it led to that, Speaker.

Parents of children with autism want to have faith in their government. They don't want to be out on the street every week in order to be heard.

What I'm hearing is, families don't think the announcement last week went far enough. They want a needs-based autism program, not age caps and not a program that only funds a fraction of the therapies that kids need.

Will the minister conduct an open and transparent consultation process this summer?

Interjections.

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

The minister to reply.

Hon. Lisa MacLeod: Under the current program, we are extending the funding between \$256 million up to \$321 million. Based on the enhancements I announced last week, that could be up to double that. I think that this is going to be the most generous autism program in North America for children on the wait-list.

What I don't understand from the member opposite is why she supported direct funding and now doesn't, why

she supported eliminating the wait-list until she didn't, why she didn't support an income test until we eliminated it.

Speaker, the mixed messages I'm getting from the NDP prove that they're in this for political gain and political gain only. A professional protest party that wants to rile up parents is irresponsible. That's what I've heard from this member and that party for the past number of weeks. They are not responsible; they are not responding to the needs of parents.

We, on the other hand, will clear that wait-list in the next 18 months. All children will—

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

As all members know, we don't impute motive with our questions or responses.

Interjection.

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

Next question.

AUTOMOBILE INSURANCE

Mr. Parm Gill: Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Finance. Over the past few months, we've heard a lot about challenges faced by Ontario drivers. After 15 years of Liberal mismanagement, and deals brokered by the NDP, Ontario's nearly 10 million drivers face the highest auto insurance rates in the country.

We know that action must be taken to reverse this trend. The Liberal and NDP system of so-called stretch goals on auto insurance is broken, and drivers need relief. That is why I introduced my private member's bill, the Ending Discrimination in Automobile Insurance Act, and was pleased to debate its importance last Thursday.

Could the minister please share with the House how our government plans to improve Ontario's auto insurance system?

Hon. Victor Fedeli: Thank you to the member from Milton. We congratulate him on his private member's bill passing second reading last week. We're incredibly proud of his leadership and his hard work. We know, because he got this right. He took the time to consult, to listen to drivers and to bring forward a plan that, if passed, won't have any unintended consequences. His legislation, if passed, will bring more fairness to the auto insurance system and will allow the system to better meet the needs of drivers.

We can all agree that a good driver in the GTA should face similar rates to a good driver in other parts of the province. Let us once again congratulate the member from Milton on his important work in this file, as we continue to build an auto insurance system that puts the drivers first.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Supplementary?

Mr. Parm Gill: I want to thank the minister for his response. However, we know that combatting rate discrimination is just one aspect of improving our province's auto insurance system. We must continue to work together to fix the broken system we inherited from the previous Liberal government. After the failed stretch goals of the

Liberals and NDP, drivers across Ontario demand better. They deserve better, Mr. Speaker.

I've heard from countless people in my great riding of Milton that auto insurance rates are simply too high, unfair and discriminatory. People are demanding change in the auto insurance system.

Could the minister please reiterate our government's commitment to improving our auto insurance system to help drivers across our great province?

Hon. Victor Fedeli: Again, Speaker, our government is committed to building a more accessible and affordable auto insurance system that puts drivers first. For 15 years, the Liberals, supported by the NDP, dragged their feet and could not provide real relief to drivers. Those members would do well to learn from the member from Milton.

They would also be wise to follow the lead of my parliamentary assistant, Doug Downey. He continues to engage with the industry and consult with drivers in order to find solutions to the Liberals' broken system.

There are nearly 10 million drivers in Ontario, who expect us to do everything we can to ensure the auto insurance system is working for them. We will continue to work towards ensuring that Ontario's auto insurance system serves the needs of all the people.

ENERGY POLICIES

Mr. Peter Tabuns: Speaker, my question, through you, is to the Minister of Energy.

Last week, the Minister of Energy announced his new hydro scheme that will simply slap a new label on the old Liberal \$40-billion hydro borrowing scheme.

1130

This scheme will cost Ontarians an additional \$2.4 billion this year alone. Even worse, instead of lowering hydro costs, the minister's plan will actually increase them, first by a little and then by a lot.

Why is the minister wasting billions on the same failed hydro borrowing scheme as the Liberals that will only send bills skyrocketing?

Hon. Greg Rickford: Listen to the NDP chasing their tail on this one. I thought they used to stand up for the trust fund cover-up, Mr. Speaker. I thought that they believed in transparency, in modernizing the Ontario Energy Board, which is something that stakeholders have said loud and clear needs to be done. Even our friends here with the chamber of commerce said something has to be done with our energy system for more affordable rates for small businesses and large employers.

Our conservation program is targeting on the most vulnerable in Indigenous communities, seniors and small businesses.

I've figured it out: They've got no darn plan, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Supplementary?

Mr. Peter Tabuns: I thought Conservatives didn't believe in borrowing money for operating costs, but I misunderstood them, clearly.

When the Liberals introduced their so-called Fair Hydro Plan, the former Conservative critic for energy,

now the Minister of Economic Development, Job Creation and Trade, condemned the hydro borrowing scheme: "It is deceitful, it's dishonest and it's shady." But the government's new plan is the old Liberal borrowing scheme with a new label on it, nothing more. Hydro costs are going up, not down. First they will rise by a little, and then they will go up by a lot as we pay back that debt and that interest. Ontarians will be stuck with billions in debt with literally less than nothing to show for it.

Will the minister explain why he would adopt a wasteful Liberal hydro borrowing scheme that his party once condemned?

Hon. Greg Rickford: The member opposite's nursery rhyme ain't working for me. The fact of the matter is that we had an outstanding energy critic, Mr. Speaker. He told the truth about that unfair hydro plan, about its lack of transparency—something we thought that the NDP would stand up and support. We've moved that out to a place where people understand what their subsidy is. Moving forward, we're going to endeavour to cut hydro rates as much as we possibly can. Ontario families deserve it. Ontario businesses deserve it.

The trust fund cover-up can be part of the Liberal Party's legacy, and theirs if they want to perpetuate it, but we're committed to reducing the cost of hydro for small businesses, for families and large employers across this province so that we can have an energy advantage and make Ontario open for business.

JOB CREATION

Mrs. Amy Fee: My question is for the Minister of Economic Development, Job Creation and Trade. Today we are joined in the gallery by representatives of chambers of commerce from across our province, including Greg Durocher from the Cambridge chamber. They're here at Queen's Park to speak to the importance of Ontario businesses and the contributions that they make to our communities.

In my riding of Kitchener South–Hespeler, chamber members like ATS Automation employ hundreds of people. They give to charities, they host educational events and so much more.

Could the minister please outline for this House what our government is doing to support chambers of commerce across the province?

Hon. Todd Smith: I want to thank the member from Kitchener South–Hespeler for the outstanding job that she's doing for the members and residents in her riding.

I want to thank all of the local chamber representatives who are here with us today, including those from Kitchener, and Rocco Rossi and all of those from Bay of Quinte as well. I want to thank you for the work that you do in your communities. It's incredibly valuable. I'm thankful to have the chance to recognize everything that you do for your communities and the businesses in your communities.

Since forming government, we've been meeting with job creators right across the province. We want to hear

from them how we can make it easier for them to create jobs for the people of Ontario. I know my two parliamentary assistants sitting right there, Donna Skelly and Michael Parsa, have been hosting round tables, many of them facilitated by members of chambers of commerce across Ontario. We want to let our job creators know that Ontario is open for business and open for jobs.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Supplementary?

Mrs. Amy Fee: Back to the minister: I know the chamber representatives here with us today are glad that we have a Premier and a government who understand business. I spoke with a business owner in my riding just the other day and she told me the difference between our government and the previous Liberal government is like night and day. I know the Premier, the minister and our entire team have been working hard to create an environment where businesses can thrive, grow, and create great jobs.

Can the minister please outline for the House how we're making life easier for Ontario's job creators?

Hon. Todd Smith: Thanks to the member for the great question. We've listened, as she said, to our local businesses. We haven't just listened, Mr. Speaker; we've acted on what they have told us. They said that the Liberals' Bill 148 was a complete disaster, so we scrapped it. They told us that Ontario needs to be more competitive; we need to get rid of the red tape and overregulation that's in the way. That's why we brought in the Restoring Ontario's Competitiveness Act, which is before the Legislature today.

We're doing everything we can to create good jobs in Ontario, Mr. Speaker. We've been successful, and we've only just started. In the last three months, as I've mentioned a couple of times already this morning, we've created 95,000 jobs for the people of Ontario. We doubled, last month, the output of the entire United States, and it's because our job creators are telling us what we need to do to create more jobs here in Ontario.

SOCIAL ASSISTANCE

Mrs. Lisa Gretzky: My question is for the Minister of Children, Community and Social Services. Today, participants in Ontario's Basic Income Pilot will receive their final payment. The Conservatives made an explicit campaign promise to participants of the pilot that they would see it through: yet another promise unkept. Some 4,000 Ontarians made plans for their future with the understanding, the promise, that this government would complete this four-year study. Then, weeks after coming into office, without publishing any evidence whatsoever, this Conservative government betrayed Ontarians by cancelling the program.

Will the minister reverse her callous decision, honour her promise and apologize on behalf of her government for so cruelly playing with people's lives?

Hon. Lisa MacLeod: This government made a decision upon taking office, in light of the \$13-billion deficit, that we were going to wind down the Basic Income Pilot project. The member opposite knows that this is a matter

before the courts, so I cannot speak about the Basic Income Pilot project in particular.

But what I will say, more broadly, is that this government has made a decision to reform social assistance. We inherited a disjointed, patchwork system that wasn't really supporting Ontarians. You have to consider this: Almost one million Ontarians are on social assistance. It's a \$10-billion program, yet still one in seven people live in poverty, meaning we needed to do something better. That is why we're moving to a more multi-ministerial approach on social assistance where we will provide wraparound supports, whether that's with the Minister of Health in mental health, whether that's training, colleges and universities to make sure that we've got the skills moving forward, or whether that's the Ministry of Economic Development and Trade so we can find those jobs and make sure that we can put people who are able to work into those jobs.

Speaker, make no mistake: We believe in the best of Ontarians and we believe that we can reform this system so that we have better outcomes for all Ontarians.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Supplementary?

Mrs. Lisa Gretzky: I just want to be very clear: When ministry officials were actually asked about any data available, they said, "To our knowledge, there aren't any." In fact, this government made this callous decision on a feeling. It is very important that everyone here understand that the Basic Income Pilot program was not a handout; it was a hand up. It allowed people living in poverty to improve their quality of life. They could buy healthy food, afford their medications, and go to the dentist. It afforded new entrepreneurs a level of security while they set up a new business venture. It gave people of all ages the opportunity to pursue higher education or finish a degree. As Conservative Hugh Segal said, "A lot of people are going to be in great distress."

Will the minister apologize—actually apologize—for the 4,000 Ontarians whose lives her government has callously upended for not honouring her promise?

1140

Hon. Lisa MacLeod: This government will never apologize for being pro-jobs, being open for business and making sure that every Ontarian that we can lift up has an opportunity towards self-reliance. We will never apologize for the creation of the 95,000 new jobs. We will never apologize for developing the skills in people who are willing and able to work.

We're going to continue to make sure that we work as a government together—not like the previous Liberal administration that marred people and trapped them in poverty.

We believe that the best social safety net is a compassionate society, which is why we're working together with the private and philanthropic sectors. We believe the best social circumstances are when those who can work are working. No one in this government will ever apologize for the best social program, which is a job.

CHILD PROTECTION

Mr. Will Bouma: My question is also for the Minister of Children, Community and Social Services. I'd just like to take a moment to commend her for the great work she has been doing on some of our most difficult files.

Last week, the Toronto Star reported that Brant Family and Children's Services is facing financial pressures and that case workers are trying to manage high caseloads with tight timelines. I have heard from my constituents in my riding of Brantford–Brant that they are concerned.

Protecting vulnerable children in my riding is a priority for me and many members of my community. Can the minister explain why Brant Family and Children's Services is facing financial pressures and what our government is doing to support vulnerable youth in my riding?

Hon. Lisa MacLeod: Thanks very much to the member from Brantford–Brant, who has been a strong advocate since arriving here at Queen's Park in July. I want to thank him for all of the work that he has been doing to draw to my attention the needs of all children and youth and those who are affected by my ministry within his community.

Let me be perfectly clear: This issue predates us taking office in June 2018. Since 2015, the former Minister of Children and Youth Services, under the previous Liberal administration, was working with the Brant children's aid society to identify cost reductions. Those consultations, those efforts were unsuccessful, and the Brant children's aid society has continued to deliver services.

In addition to that—and this is what I think most members of this assembly should be extremely proud of—is the fact that we are expanding the Indigenous child welfare system in the province of Ontario, including in his community, with the Ojwadeni:deo First Nation. We are transferring—

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

Mr. Will Bouma: Mr. Speaker, through you: Thank you, Minister. Back to you, I'm pleased to know that our Indigenous children are receiving culturally appropriate care in my riding.

My riding of Brantford–Brant includes the Six Nations of the Grand River, the largest First Nations reserve in Canada. Their contributions to our community are immeasurable. We know that Indigenous children are over-represented in Ontario's child welfare system. Can the minister please tell this House what our government for the people is doing to improve the child welfare system for our Indigenous children?

Hon. Lisa MacLeod: As I mentioned last week in the assembly, I had the opportunity to go to the United Nations a couple of weeks ago as women's minister, but also as children's minister, where I was able to meet with Indigenous leaders throughout Canada about what we're doing in Ontario and how we can help the rest of Canada move forward with children in custody and in care who are Indigenous. We're building on what I think was a success—if I may give the previous Liberal administration

some credit, for once—in moving into this customary care model.

As mentioned, 18% of the children in your community are moving to an Indigenous-led model, which is customary care. I think we should be very proud of that. That's why money is moving to that Indigenous-led children's aid society. I'm very proud that our government is going to continue to expand that work and we're going to continue to include the Indigenous voices within our ministry as we create three tables: one for Indigenous children in care, one for children who are Black in care, as well as for children in custody. We're going to embed within our ministry a children's advocate, in addition to giving more enforcement powers and investigative powers to Ontario's Ombudsman—

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

LABOUR DISPUTE

Mr. Percy Hatfield: My question is to the Minister of Health. Good morning, Minister. Nurses at the Windsor-Essex County Health Unit have been on strike now for more than two weeks. These 86 women walked out on March 8, International Women's Day. All they want is the same wage increase that the men were given in Windsor's male-dominated municipal sectors.

Speaker, will the minister stand up for these women and their fight for equitable wages and tell the health unit to get back to work, back to the bargaining table and work out a fair and equitable deal? Because these nurses are highly trained professionals. They don't want to be on strike. What they do want is the same wage increase as the men were given. Historically, our health unit has been underfunded by the province, but that is no excuse for men in the municipal sector to get a higher increase than the women in our public health unit. It's an issue of fairness, it's an issue of respect and the health unit needs to return to bargaining.

Speaker, will the minister pick up the phone, make that call and get these women back to work?

Hon. Christine Elliott: I thank the member for that question. I agree with you that nurses are really the backbone of our health care system, and I respect the work they're doing. But as you also know, this is a matter that is between them and the health unit. It's not something that I can be involved in. That would not be appropriate.

But as with you, I would hope that both parties would come back to the table so they can resolve the situation in fairness to everyone involved.

VISITORS

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Point of order: the member for Perth–Wellington.

Mr. Randy Pettapiece: I would like to introduce Eddie Matthews, here from the Stratford and District Chamber of Commerce.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Point of order: the member for Mississauga–Streetsville.

Mrs. Nina Tangri: I'd just like to welcome two constituents of Mississauga–Streetsville. We have Roberto Rei, who is here with Intact Insurance, and my former member of Parliament, Brad Butt, who is also here representing the Mississauga Board of Trade.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): The member for Chatham–Kent–Leamington.

Mr. Rick Nicholls: I'd also like to introduce to the chamber this morning the past president of the Leamington Chamber of Commerce, Mr. Corey Robertson. Welcome, Corey.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): The member for Barrie–Springwater–Oro–Medonte.

Mr. Doug Downey: I wanted to introduce Michael Badham, who's with the Barrie chamber, along with Richard Brooks, and of course, Greg Groen and Nadia Fitzgerald, and my good friend Allan Lafontaine from the chamber of Orillia, of which I am a president.

NOTICE OF DISSATISFACTION

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Pursuant to standing order 38(a), the member for Davenport has given notice of her dissatisfaction with the answer to her question given by the Minister of Education concerning cuts to classrooms and Student Voice. This matter will be debated tomorrow at 6 p.m.

DEFERRED VOTES

SUPPLY ACT, 2019

LOI DE CRÉDITS DE 2019

Deferred vote on the motion for second reading of the following bill:

Bill 81, An Act to authorize the expenditure of certain amounts for the fiscal year ending March 31, 2019 / *Projet de loi 81, Loi autorisant l'utilisation de certaines sommes pour l'exercice se terminant le 31 mars 2019.*

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): We have a deferred vote on the motion for second reading of Bill 81, An Act to authorize the expenditure of certain amounts for the fiscal year ending March 31, 2019.

Call in the members. This is a five-minute bell.

The division bells rang from 1148 to 1153.

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

On March 21, 2019, Mr. Bethlenfalvy moved second reading of Bill 81. All those in favour of the motion will please rise one at a time and be recognized by the Clerk.

Ayes

Anand, Deepak	Ghamari, Goldie	Phillips, Rod
Baber, Roman	Gill, Parm	Piccini, David
Babikian, Aris	Hardeman, Ernie	Rasheed, Kaleed
Bailey, Robert	Harris, Mike	Rickford, Greg
Barrett, Toby	Hogarth, Christine	Roberts, Jeremy
Bethlenfalvy, Peter	Jones, Sylvia	Romano, Ross
Bouma, Will	Kanapathi, Logan	Sandhu, Amarjot

Calandra, Paul	Karahalios, Belinda	Sarkaria, Prabmeet Singh
Cho, Raymond Sung Joon	Ke, Vincent	Schreiner, Mike
Cho, Stan	Khanjin, Andrea	Skelly, Donna
Clark, Steve	Kramp, Daryl	Smith, Dave
Coe, Lorne	Lalonde, Marie-France	Smith, Todd
Coteau, Michael	Martin, Robin	Surma, Kinga
Crawford, Stephen	Martow, Gila	Tangri, Nina
Cuzzetto, Rudy	McKenna, Jane	Thanigasalam, Vijay
Des Rosiers, Nathalie	McNaughton, Monte	Thompson, Lisa M.
Downey, Doug	Miller, Norman	Tibollo, Michael A.
Dunlop, Jill	Mulroney, Caroline	Triantafilopoulos, Effie J.
Elliott, Christine	Nicholls, Rick	Wai, Daisy
Fedeli, Victor	Oosterhoff, Sam	Walker, Bill
Fee, Amy	Pang, Billy	Wynne, Kathleen O.
Ford, Doug	Park, Lindsey	Yakubski, John
Fraser, John	Parsa, Michael	Yurek, Jeff
Fullerton, Merrilee	Pettapiece, Randy	

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

Nays

Armstrong, Teresa J.	Harden, Joel	Sattler, Peggy
Arthur, Ian	Hassan, Faisal	Shaw, Sandy
Berns-McGown, Rima	Hatfield, Percy	Singh, Gurratan
Bisson, Gilles	Karpoche, Bhutilla	Singh, Sara
Bourgouin, Guy	Lindo, Laura Mae	Stiles, Marit
French, Jennifer K.	Mamakwa, Sol	Tabuns, Peter
Gates, Wayne	Mantha, Michael	Taylor, Monique
Gélinas, France	Monteith-Farrell, Judith	Vanthof, John
Glover, Chris	Morrison, Suze	Yarde, Kevin
Gretzky, Lisa	Rakocevic, Tom	

The Clerk of the Assembly (Mr. Todd Decker): The ayes are 71; the nays are 29.

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

Second reading agreed to.

SUPPLY ACT, 2019

LOI DE CRÉDITS DE 2019

Mr. Bethlenfalvy moved third reading of the following bill:

Bill 81, An Act to authorize the expenditure of certain amounts for the fiscal year ending March 31, 2019 / *Projet de loi 81, Loi autorisant l'utilisation de certaines sommes pour l'exercice se terminant le 31 mars 2019.*

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? I heard some noes.

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

All those opposed will please say "nay."

In my opinion, the ayes have it.

Interjections: Same vote.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Same vote? Same vote.

The Clerk of the Assembly (Mr. Todd Decker): The ayes are 71; the nays are 29.

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

Be it resolved that the bill do now pass and be entitled as in the motion.

Third reading agreed to.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): This House stands in recess until 1 o'clock this afternoon.

The House recessed from 1158 to 1300.

INTRODUCTION OF VISITORS

Mr. Doug Downey: I'll be explaining why in a few moments, but I'd like to introduce my friends Sidney Troister and Ray Leclair, who are here to observe the proceedings today and the first introduction of my private member's bill.

Mr. Jeff Burch: I'd like to introduce John Parisee and Rick Brown, who are survivors of Ontario's training schools. They are here with us today.

MEMBERS' STATEMENTS

CHILDREN AND YOUTH

Mr. Jeff Burch: I rise today to speak for my constituents John Parisee and Rick Brown, who are here with us today, and for countless others like them, who survived their time in Ontario's training schools for children and teenagers.

Mr. Parisee, who I'm happy to tell you is here with us today, is part of a class-action lawsuit against the province of Ontario. The suit alleges that the province failed to protect children who were detained in 13 government-run training schools between 1953 and 1984. The allegations of physical, sexual and psychological abuse by some of the adults hired to care for them and protect them have been widely reported in the media, including in a recent report from W5.

While the merits of the lawsuit are for the courts to decide, it is this government's job to ensure that Ontario's children and teenagers in care are kept safe. Mr. Parisee was sent to a training school when he was 10 years old because he stood up to a bully. He ended up stuck there until he turned 16. When his parents learned of some of the things that happened while their son was in care, they turned their backs on him.

We need to understand how a child could have been left in such a tragic and vulnerable situation on the province's watch. We need to hear from some of the other survivors about what they experienced so that we can consider what could have been done better, especially since this government has fired the Ontario children's advocate. We are at a crucial juncture where we can learn from the past to create a better future for Ontario's children and youth in care.

LIFELABS

Ms. Jill Dunlop: Earlier this month, I joined residents of Simcoe North in celebrating the grand opening of a new LifeLabs site in Penetanguishene.

LifeLabs is a Canadian-owned company with over 50 years of experience providing laboratory testing services to help health care providers diagnose, treat, monitor and prevent disease. LifeLabs serves more than 54,000 Ontarians every day at its locations across the province.

Before this location opened, some of my residents had to travel up to an hour away for blood collection and ECG services. With this new investment by LifeLabs, the residents of Penetanguishene will have less distance to travel for diagnostic services.

At the ribbon-cutting ceremony, patients, staff and community members learned more about the programs and services that LifeLabs is bringing about to improve patient experience and support local health care providers. One of these features is Save My Spot!, which allows patients to check in and reserve a spot in line from their phone or computer, saving time by allowing them to wait from almost anywhere. The location also offers the Serving Patients with Autism program. It has Canada's first specific and comprehensive guidelines for specimen collection for patients with autism spectrum disorder.

I'm glad that I was able to attend the opening ceremony of this new LifeLabs site. Their commitment to improving patient services aligns with our government's focus on supporting timely access to care. Its innovative and supportive new features will make access to health care easier for the residents of Penetanguishene and the people of Simcoe North.

INDIGENOUS ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Mr. Sol Mamakwa: Last week, I introduced a private member's bill to implement the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples in Ontario. I would like to thank all my colleagues for standing up and supporting this important bill. I look forward to working with you on the next steps that we need to take. As leaders in this House, we need to change the way decision-making is done with First Nations people. We can work together for real reconciliation.

The recent update and review process of the Far North Act will give the government the opportunity to provide First Nations with a larger role in decision-making. Chief Donny Morris of Kitchenuhmaykoosib Inninuwug wrote to the Premier this month and called on Ontario to respect and uphold Kitchenuhmaykoosib Inninuwug laws so that we can live in peace. "Repeal your laws, but respect our laws," he said.

Again, I respectfully remind my colleagues that First Nations are not an obstacle to resource development, nor are we are opposed to it. We just want to have a say in the very important decisions that affect our lands.

The identity of who we are as people comes from the land. The languages that we speak come from the land. And our self-determination comes from the land. But the economic development that is needed in the Far North must happen with the free, prior and informed consent of our people. Meegwetch.

HELEN MOFFAT

Mr. Randy Pettapiece: Speaker, as you know, anyone who visits Perth-Wellington knows that two things await visitors: homegrown hospitality and tasty treats. It is

fitting that Wellington county is not only home to the renowned Butter Tart Trail, but to Ontario's butter tart champion, Drayton's own Helen Moffat.

Helen's butter tarts delight sweet tooth across south-western Ontario. A regular prize winner at the annual Drayton Fair, this past fall Helen took her champion butter tart to the district 7 annual general meeting. She dazzled the judges' taste buds and placed first in the district 7 competition, competing against other award-winning recipes from across the region. And after her first place finish at the district 7 competition, Helen went on to the province-wide competition at the Ontario Association of Agricultural Societies annual meeting. Beating out contenders from across the province, she won the Ontario butter tart grand championship this past February.

I want to congratulate Helen on this tasty achievement and thank her for all the smiles she puts on the faces of young and old alike.

SIKH COMMUNITY

Mr. Gurratan Singh: April is Sikh Heritage Month. It's a time for Sikhs to celebrate our unique heritage, meditate, and really work to connect and understand this concept that we are all one, and inspired by this oneness, fight for a world where all humanity is free from oppression, a world where we are all sovereign.

It's also a time when Sikhs reflect. Sadly, many Sikhs are reflecting about how truly difficult this past year has been. The media took a very irresponsible role in painting a story about Sikhs that described us as a threat, as dangerous and as terrorists—a baseless label that has found legitimacy in the federal Liberal government's public safety report which continues to label Sikhs as a current terrorist threat to Canada, without any evidence to substantiate it.

Maninder, a mother with two beautiful kids, was sharing with me how this report made her feel. It made her angry. It made her feel upset, but more than anything, it made her feel scared. She feared for a future where her children could be discriminated against and be described as a threat purely because of their Sikh faith. The public safety report made her feel unsafe.

This Sikh Heritage Month we will recognize our achievements, but we'll also contemplate the injustices that we continue to face, and we will continue to resist those who would try to label the Sikh community or any other community as terrorists—not only because it's wrong, but because these labels threaten our very lives.

ÉVÉNEMENTS DIVERS À ORLÉANS

EVENTS IN ORLÉANS

M^{me} Marie-France Lalonde: Vendredi dernier, j'ai eu le plaisir d'assister au 13^e Rendez-vous de la Francophonie avec le maire d'Ottawa, Jim Watson, pour souligner l'importance de la francophonie et du bilinguisme dans nos communautés et leur apport à l'économie locale.

Ce fut aussi un moment bien particulier puisqu'on a célébré les 40 ans du Mouvement d'implication francophone d'Orléans, le MIFO. This centre provides French services for all ages, from daycare to seniors.

Within the beautiful riding of Orléans and resting in the heart of Carlsbad Springs is the Youth Now Farm, which I had the privilege of visiting last Friday. I cannot express how thankful I am for the work this organization is doing to ensure that at-risk youth are provided opportunities and services, through either animal care or agricultural experience. The Youth Now Farm puts theory into practice, taking this vulnerable demographic, allowing those participating to gain volunteer and work experience.

I know that I am set for time so I'm also going to talk about another event that I attended on Saturday, Mr. Speaker, with bright, young French people. It was about a contest, *Épelle-moi Canada*. I want to say thank you to all the volunteers and everyone who participated.

Félicitations à Gisèle Lalonde et les autres. À tous les organisateurs et bénévoles, merci pour votre engagement à la francophonie.

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BRUCE POWER

Mr. Michael Parsa: Speaker, today the Ontario Chamber of Commerce released an economic impact report on Bruce Power's major component replacement project, undertaken as part of Bruce Power's life extension. The results of the report clearly indicate that Bruce Power's MCR project will inject billions of dollars into the Ontario and Canadian economies by stimulating our manufacturing industry, creating good jobs, increasing GDP, generating tax revenue, and providing opportunities for local workers and industry. The size and scope of the MCR project will also benefit the province's workforce development due to the unique work experience offered and the project's demand for advanced skills.

Bruce Power currently produces 30% of the province's electricity at 30% less than the average cost to generate residential power. Their current life extension investment and operation program projects to create and sustain 22,000 yearly jobs and inject \$4 billion into Ontario's economy. When this project is completed, Ontarians will have low-cost, clean, reliable nuclear power for the next 50 years.

In my riding of Aurora–Oak Ridges–Richmond Hill, nuclear supply chain companies like Compugen and Curtiss-Wright Nuclear Canada will continue to experience opportunities for growth, hire new workers, and support families in my community close to my home.

I'm proud to bring this announcement into the Legislature and demonstrate the strong work of Ontario businesses and the Ontario Chamber of Commerce. Bruce Power and nuclear electricity is Ontario's energy advantage.

WORKERS' COMPENSATION

Ms. Judith Monteith-Farrell: I rise today to discuss an important issue for workers and their families.

Workers' compensation in Ontario, now known as WSIB, was founded on a compromise. Employers are protected from lawsuits by injured workers and, in return, injured workers receive benefits promptly for as long as their disability continues. That compromise served Ontario well for decades.

But today, those founding principles have been eroded. The PC Harris government cut the premiums that employers pay in the 1990s. The revenue collected was no longer enough to cover the annual fiscal outlay. That led to a deficit. The WSIB then spent the last decade focusing on eliminating this deficit.

In 2018, the WSIB announced they had a multi-billion dollar surplus, and this government reduced employer premiums by 30%. But over the past decade, WSIB has cut benefits to injured and disabled workers by 50%, often shifting them to social programs funded by the public. It has also denied claims and set up a bureaucracy with endless red tape. Employers have saved on premiums while injured workers had their benefits cut. This is not fair or acceptable. We can and must do better. Let's focus on helping workers and their families recover from a workplace disability.

GO TRANSIT

Ms. Lindsey Park: In Durham, the area of the province I represent, thousands of people take public transit from Oshawa, Bowmanville, Courtice and Scugog to their jobs and activities in the GTA every day. Over the last six months, our government has been making it easier for Durham commuters to hop on the GO. In September, we announced the largest GO train service increase in five years. We added 400,000 more train seats every week for people travelling on the Lakeshore East and West lines, an increase of nearly 18%. Specifically, that is 27 new train trips on the Lakeshore East GO, doubling midday weekday service between Oshawa and Union.

To all those who drive around for 20 minutes trying to find parking at Oshawa GO on a weekday, I have good news. We announced mid-February that the Courtice park-and-ride and the Ritson park-and-ride lots are officially open. Bus service to these new lots will operate during rush hours on weekdays, with a peak frequency of two buses per hour at Courtice and one bus per hour at Ritson.

These were two great announcements in the last six months, and I look forward to seeing continued expansion on the Lakeshore East line to meet the needs of the growing number of commuters in our east Durham community and beyond.

VOLUNTEERS IN WHITBY

Mr. Lorne Coe: It's time for me to brag about the town of Whitby again and their volunteer strategy. The strategy was based on feedback from many current volunteers and those interested in volunteering. The focus is on how the town attracts, trains, retains and recognizes its event volunteers.

Ultimately, the volunteer engagement strategy and accompanying action plan are expected to lead to a more engaged group of volunteers. As more towns and cities are acknowledging, without these volunteers, many town-wide programs and events would not be possible.

I'd like to applaud Whitby's mayor, Don Mitchell, and the council for their ingenuity once again in making sure that volunteers are able to do the great work that they do in the town of Whitby.

INTRODUCTION OF BILLS

PLANNING AMENDMENT ACT, 2019

LOI DE 2019 MODIFIANT LA LOI SUR L'AMÉNAGEMENT DU TERRITOIRE

Mr. Downey moved first reading of the following bill:

Bill 88, An Act to amend the Planning Act / Projet de loi 88, Loi modifiant la Loi sur l'aménagement du territoire.

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

First reading agreed to.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Would the member like to explain his bill briefly?

Mr. Doug Downey: The bill makes multiple changes to the Planning Act, particularly sections 50, 53, 57 and a few others. It makes life more affordable and cuts red tape for farmers, property owners and others dealing with land. It will simplify processes, it will provide clarification of ambiguities in the act, and it will treat all people dealing with property equally.

The bill is very technical, and I'd like to thank Sidney Troister and Ray Leclair for their years of work, which was instrumental in making this private member's bill the excellent product that it is.

PETITIONS

PHARMACARE

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

"Whereas prescription medications are a part of health care, and people shouldn't have to empty their wallets or rack up credit card bills to get the medicines they need; and

"Whereas over 2.2 million Ontarians don't have any prescription drug coverage and one in four Ontarians don't take their medications as prescribed because they cannot afford the cost; and

"Whereas taking medications as prescribed can save lives and help people live better; and

"Whereas Canada urgently needs universal and comprehensive national pharmacare;

“We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to support a universal provincial pharmaceutical plan for all Ontarians.”

Speaker, I agree. I'm going to sign this and give it to my friend Aaryan to bring up to the front.

VETERANS MEMORIAL

Mr. Toby Barrett: “Petition in Support of Constructing a Memorial to Honour Our Heroes.

“To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“Whereas over 40,000 Canadian Armed Forces members served in the war in Afghanistan including the 159 Canadians who made the ultimate sacrifice; and

“Whereas the Premier made a commitment to the people of Ontario to build a memorial to honour the bravery and sacrifice of our armed forces; and

“Whereas, by remembering their service and sacrifice, we recognize the values and freedoms these men and women fought to preserve; and

“Whereas the memorial will show our gratitude to our veterans, their families and to their descendants; and

“Whereas the memorial will be a place of remembrance, a form of tribute, and an important reminder to future generations of the contributions and sacrifices that have helped shape our country;

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

“That the government of Ontario immediately construct the memorial to honour the heroes of the war in Afghanistan.”

I affix my signature to these petitions.

INJURED WORKERS

Ms. Judith Monteith-Farrell: I have a petition.

“Workers’ Comp is a Right.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

I fully agree with this petition, will sign it and give it to Julia to give to the Clerk.

FISH AND WILDLIFE MANAGEMENT

Mr. Will Bouma: I'd like to read in this petition.

“To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“Whereas the government created a special-purpose account (SPA) in 1997;

“Whereas the SPA pools together all revenues from hunting and fishing licensing fees, fines and royalties;

“Whereas the funds in the SPA are legislated to be reinvested back into wildlife management to improve hunting and angling across the province;

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

“That we support the Minister of Natural Resources and Forestry in completing a review of the spending of the SPA expenditures and revamping the account, ensuring revenue is directed towards conservation management.”

I entirely endorse this petition, will put my signature on it and give it to page Saad.

AFFORDABLE HOUSING

Mr. Faisal Hassan: I would like to thank the residents of York South–Weston for giving me these petitions about affordable housing.

“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. I'll be affixing my signature to it and providing it to page Sanjayan to deliver to the table.

MUNICIPAL GOVERNMENT

Mr. Stephen Crawford: “To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“Whereas the government of Ontario has announced a review of Ontario’s eight regional municipalities, the county of Simcoe, and their lower-tier municipalities, including Halton region and the town of Oakville; and

“Whereas municipal governments are responsible for funding and delivering the important local services residents rely on every day; and

“Whereas Halton region has maintained a AAA credit rating for 30 consecutive years due to effective governance and prudent fiscal policies; and

“Whereas the town of Oakville is recognized as Canada’s best place to live;

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

“That the town of Oakville remain a distinct municipality within a two-tier region of Halton municipal governance structure.”

I’ll give this to page Julien to present.

HEALTH CARE

Ms. Bhutla Karpoche: I’d like to thank my constituents of Parkdale–High Park who attended a town hall on health care and Bill 74 that I hosted, and who signed this petition titled “Save Our Health Care: Stop Bill 74.”

“To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“Whereas the Ford government is currently proposing massive restructuring to the entire health system without any public consultation;

“Whereas the proposal eliminates local planning and control of health care;

“Whereas the proposal will open the door for unprecedented levels of for-profit providers in our health care system;

“Whereas the last Conservative government privatized home care services, creating a system that fails too many families;

“Whereas the current hallway medicine crisis is a direct result of inadequate home care, long-term care and community care services;

“We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to request the government to abandon Bill 74, The People’s Health Care Act, and focus on improving our province’s not-for-profit delivery of universal health care system.”

I fully endorse this petition and will be affixing my signature to it, as well.

ANIMAL PROTECTION

Mr. Randy Pettapiece: I’m presenting this petition on behalf of the member for Wellington–Halton Hills, as the rules of this House prevent the Speaker and cabinet ministers from presenting petitions. The petition reads as follows:

“To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:...

“Whereas the Ontario Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals (OSPCA) is the only agency in Ontario authorized to enforce animal protection laws;

“Whereas the OSPCA has continually cut back services, including the recent decision to stop investigating incidents involving farm animals, including horses, as well as failing to fully investigate poorly run zoos, dogfighting operations, puppy and kitten mills and even documented cases of dogs being tortured in the city of Toronto;

“Whereas the OSPCA has made itself completely unaccountable to the public by eliminating annual general members meetings and board elections as well as eliminating a government representative from their board meetings;

“Whereas the Ministry of Community Safety and Correctional Services provides an annual grant to the OSPCA of \$5.75 million of the public’s dollars, for which the OSPCA is to provide province-wide coverage and other services which the OSPCA has failed to deliver;

“We, the undersigned, hereby petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to exercise its authority, through the Ministry of Community Safety and Correctional Services under the current funding transfer payment agreement and the OSPCA Act, requiring that:

“—through the OSPCA Act the government annul the bylaws of the OSPCA;

“—a new bylaw be required that re-establishes annual general members meetings, open board elections and a government representative attending board meetings;

“—the government immediately suspend funding to the OSPCA and conduct a forensic audit of the organization’s use of public funds;

“—the government conduct a service delivery audit of the OSPCA relating to the enforcement of the OSPCA Act;

“—recognize the important job of animal protection by creating a more accountable system that ensures the immediate and long-term protection of the millions of animals who live among us.”

I agree with this petition and I will send it down with the page.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): I want to thank the member for Perth–Wellington for presenting that petition.

AUTISM TREATMENT

M^{me} France Gélinas: I would like to thank Laurie Zaldiner from Azilda in my riding for collecting the names on this petition. It reads as follows:

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

“Whereas in 2003 and again in 2016, previous age caps on comprehensive therapy were removed by” the former Liberal government “because the age cap was recognized to be unfair and discriminatory; and

“Whereas ABA is not a therapy, but a science, upon which interventions including comprehensive treatment is

founded and duration and intensity of treatment are the key components in predicting outcomes—not” the age of a child; and

“Whereas accredited peer-reviewed ... evidence in the treatment of children with ASD has repeatedly shown that for some children with ASD, comprehensive ABA therapy is best practice ...

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

They petition the Legislative Assembly as follows:

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

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

AUTISM TREATMENT

Ms. Laura Mae Lindo: I have a petition entitled “Support Ontario Families with Autism.”

“To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“Whereas every child with autism deserves access to sufficient treatment and support so that they can live to their fullest potential;

“Whereas the Ontario Autism Program was badly broken under the Liberals, and the changes introduced by the Conservatives have made it worse;

“Whereas the new funding caps are based on age and income, and not the clinical needs of the child;

“Whereas Ontario needs a true investment in evidence-based autism services that meets the needs of autistic children and their families;

“We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to direct the Ministry of Children, Community and Social Services to invest in equitable, needs-based autism services for all children who need them.”

I fully support this petition and will give it to page Katherine to bring to the Clerk.

SERVICES EN FRANÇAIS

Mr. Michael Mantha: I want to thank student Christen Ramsay from Espanola, École secondaire catholique Franco-Ouest, for the following petition.

« 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’avoir 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 mon nom, et puis je la donne à page Elizabeth pour l’apporter à la table des greffiers.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): I think the time for petitions has expired.

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 third 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: It would be an honour, Speaker.

With the third reading of the Comprehensive Ontario Police Services Act, we are one step closer to a safer province. By treating police with fairness and respect, we create the conditions for a stronger relationship between police and the people they serve. And as any police officer or community leader would tell you, a strong relationship between the police and those who are policed means more security for our families, justice for victims, and accountability for criminals.

By treating officers with suspicion and scorn, the previous government’s legislation drove an unnecessary wedge between law enforcement and the communities they serve.

This past Saturday, my colleagues the honourable members from Peterborough–Kawartha and Northumberland–Peterborough South invited me to their area to meet with the local policing community. I started the day at the Peterborough Police Service’s first-ever Women in Policing Symposium. Nearly 50 young women gathered at Fleming College to hear from veteran officers, some with more than 200 collective years of combined policing experience, about what to expect if they chose a career as a police officer. I hope many of these young women walked away excited at the prospect of a career in law enforcement.

It was a symposium that inspired me. These young people represent the future of policing. Having had the opportunity to speak to a number of them on Saturday, I know the policing community will continue to be in good hands. The women I met told me they were interested in joining a police service to make a difference to their community, whether it's combatting gang violence, human trafficking, Internet child exploitation or sexual assault. They told me they were motivated to join a police service because they see themselves as part of the solution. If you like working with people, you can be a front-line police officer. If you're passionate about technology, you can fight cyber crimes. If you love science, you may find success in forensics.

They told me they were motivated to join a police service because Ontario has some of the finest police officers in the world. These women would know. After all, some are already studying policing foundations, or they've worked as first responders, or they've served as auxiliary constables. And some have family or friends who serve. I reminded these future officers that the reason our province has the finest officers is because we have some of the highest standards of policing anywhere in the world.

The excitement for a career in policing that I witnessed on Saturday reminded me of why our government for the people introduced the Comprehensive Ontario Police Services Act. If these young people choose to pursue a policing career, they deserve a government that has their back, and under the leadership of Premier Ford, they will.

I also had the opportunity to attend a round table with chiefs, officers, special constables, auxiliary constables and civilian staff from the local OPP detachments, Port Hope police and Cobourg police. I heard about the challenges our police face and was reminded how rapidly policing is evolving. From mental health to opioids to cyber crime, the day in the life of a police officer in 2019 is very different than what it was in 2009—never mind the years before that.

Speaking to these professionals reminded me that before our government introduced this legislation, police who acted heroically, such as the officers who responded to the Danforth shooting in Toronto last summer, were subjected to months-long investigations. We're fixing that with changes to when the SIU will now be involved.

I'm proud to say that the people and police of Ontario have noted our efforts. Bruce Chapman, who joins us today in the chamber—thank you—president of the Police Association of Ontario, said that the act would “restore fairness and respect for professional policing” and “make oversight more effective.”

The Ontario Association of Police Services Boards said that the government's new legislation would “significantly enhance every police board's ability to make the best possible decisions about local policing policies, strategic plans and budgets” and that “everyone will benefit.”

Jin Chien, who testified at the committee, said, “I'd like to note ... Bill 68 does adopt several of Justice Tulloch's recommendations, which is commendable, and which, in our view, constitute positive changes to the police oversight system.”

Chief Kimberley Greenwood, president of the Ontario Association of Chiefs of Police, said, “The Comprehensive Ontario Police Services Act” was “welcomed by us as a positive opportunity to ensure that we, as police leaders, have legislation that helps us (1) deliver on policing services; (2) meet public safety expectations; and (3) maximize public investments in law enforcement.”

I think what I'm trying to reinforce with a number of quotes that I just raised from various stakeholders and organizations is the balance that we were able to strike with this legislation, which I am very pleased with.

Before introducing this legislation, we carefully reviewed the previous government's legislation to identify the specific gaps and deficiencies that needed to be addressed. We spoke to police officers, police chiefs, police services boards, municipal governments, policing experts and our constituents. We considered previous stakeholder submissions, including submissions received at standing committee for the previous legislation. The bill this House is being asked to pass is the result of all of this critical and vital work. It addresses the gaps that people working every day to keep our community safe identified and the concerns that they raised.

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Whereas the previous legislation was too broad in what policing functions could be outsourced, the proposed legislation clarifies that when you phone 911 for an emergency, a police officer will respond.

Whereas the previous legislation created an Inspector General of Policing to monitor, inspect and ensure compliance regarding the delivery of adequate and effective policing, it didn't allow candidates with policing experience to apply. Bill 68 will allow candidates with policing experience to serve as our inspector general.

And whereas disciplinary provisions in the previous legislation were overly punitive and weakened procedural fairness, we are holding police personnel accountable under a system based on fairness and due process.

I'm proud of the work that we have been able to present today, and I really want to thank and call out my parliamentary assistant for all of the work on committee. As you know, parliamentary assistants carry the load when we have committee and clause-by-clause. Prab Sarkaria did an excellent job, so thank you for that.

My parliamentary assistant will speak more about the specific changes in this legislation, but let me conclude by saying that each of these changes is carefully designed to make our families safer, ensure justice for victims, and hold criminals accountable for their actions.

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

Hon. Caroline Mulroney: I rise today on third reading of the proposed Comprehensive Ontario Police Services Act, 2019. Before I begin, I would like to extend my thanks to my colleague the Minister of Community Safety and Correctional Services for her hard work to help deliver on our shared mandate to keep communities safe and to restore respect for the women and men of our police services who so honourably devote themselves to upholding the rule of law in Ontario's cities, towns and villages.

J'ai eu le privilège et l'honneur de travailler avec la ministre sur cette législation très importante.

I would also like to take the opportunity to thank my parliamentary assistant, the MPP for Durham, for her work on the committee on this legislation.

Madam Speaker, this bill will provide critical improvements to police oversight in our province. Our government was elected with a mandate to restore the respect that front-line police officers deserve and earn each and every day in their work to enable the people of Ontario to thrive in safety and security.

This government heard directly from front-line police officers who put their lives on the line each and every day. They had serious concerns about the prior government's policing oversight legislation, Bill 175. We heard the previous government's plan was out of touch. In some ways, we were told, it disrespected police and ignored the everyday realities of law enforcement. So when this government was elected, one of our first orders of business was to pause the implementation of Bill 175 so that we could fix it and restore respect to police. That's what we have done with the Comprehensive Ontario Police Services Act. We are proposing to fix unbalanced legislation in a way that continues to ensure the quality of police oversight that Ontarians expect, and to do so in a fair and balanced way.

Any bill that regards public safety policing must respect the challenging realities that our front-line officers face. Sadly, the prior government's policing legislation did not do that. Our legislation has been carefully drafted with those realities in mind so that our government can provide police the tools they need to keep our communities safe.

In developing this legislation, we took the time to consider the concerns of all sides. In fact, our reforms were guided by Justice Tulloch's recommendations in the Independent Police Oversight Review. Ultimately, it proposes to restore transparency and fairness to a system that had previously left the police and the people in the dark for too long.

Madam Speaker, an issue we heard about over and over from both families and police is that the current process used by the special investigations unit is unreasonably opaque, and it simply takes too long. Our proposed changes address this. Under the proposed Bill 68, the SIU would be required to endeavour to wrap up an investigation within 120 days. If for any reason that deadline cannot be met, the SIU would have to provide an explanation for that delay.

Not only do these investigations take too long; they drain resources that could be better focused on stopping criminal activity. Bill 68 proposes to streamline the investigative process and maximize the impact of investigative resources on public safety in our communities.

That certainly is not the case under the current SIU process. Today, if a police officer tries to stop a suicide attempt but is unsuccessful, he or she can be treated like a suspect in a criminal investigation. Likewise, if an officer is present at the scene of a crime when a person suffers a heart attack, even where there is no contact between the

officer and the person, the officer is subject to an investigation and made to feel like a suspect. These are not the cases the SIU should be investigating.

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. La législation proposée clarifiera la capacité de l'UES de demander des renseignements préliminaires afin de déterminer la pertinence de mener une enquête complète.

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. The proposed legislation would clarify the SIU's ability to conduct preliminary inquiries in order to determine whether an investigation is necessary at all. These would not be hearings as preliminary inquiries are thought of in the Criminal Code. The preliminary inquiries in this case are simply an opportunity for the director of the SIU or his or her designate to pick up the file to review basic facts or to have some initial conversations before deciding whether it is necessary to proceed to a full investigation.

Another very important feature of Bill 68 is that it legally constitutes the special investigations unit as an arm's-length agency. This would reinforce the SIU's independence. This would help ensure the SIU's resources are focused where they should be: on possible criminal activity.

It's important to note that law enforcement's automatic notification of the SIU would continue to be required in set circumstances, as we would all reasonably expect. In circumstances such as when use of force, custody or detention, or motor vehicle pursuits result in serious injury or death, the SIU should be notified immediately. In addition, notification would be required in all cases when an officer has discharged a firearm at a person or is reported to have committed a 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. This proposed change takes a simple, common-sense approach, and 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.

These measured and practical changes we are proposing for the SIU are in line with the direction we took last year to fix a 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 health care advocates and police, and we took action. I am pleased to say that we passed a new regulation to recognize this new everyday reality of police work in our communities. We said that officers who are attempting to provide first aid or the life-saving medication naloxone should not automatically be subject to a criminal investigation. With the changes we made last year, now they are not.

Madam Speaker, this government will always respect and support the commitment to community safety that is demonstrated by our front-line police officers. We will continue to support them with the same unwavering commitment they have to the safety of our communities. Support for police must include strong, effective oversight that is focused in the right places. Our bill recognizes that more needs to be done to ensure the people and the police have a clear line of sight into a system that has allowed trust and accountability to erode for far too long.

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By proposing to lift this veil of darkness, we are seeking to restore accountability and trust for everyone in Ontario. Our bill also recognizes that a police oversight system that is difficult to understand and navigate does not contribute to what the people of Ontario want: safer communities to call home. That's why the Comprehensive Ontario Police Services Act would create the Law Enforcement Complaints Agency. The agency would be continued from the Office of the Independent Police Review Director and would provide a clear route for filing public complaints against law enforcement and commencing an independent investigation when necessary. As recommended by Justice Tulloch, the proposed name change would serve to clarify the purpose of the independent agency and reflect its focus.

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 the proposed Bill 68, Madam Speaker, we would have a single independent body, the Law Enforcement Complaints Agency, receiving all public complaints about police. The regulation of policing would be handled by the inspector general, while the special investigations unit would be refocused and maintained. As recommended by Justice Tulloch, police disciplinary hearings would be heard by independent adjudicators. This streamlined approach would eliminate the need for the Ontario Civilian Police Commission, which would be wound down after an appropriate transition period.

Madam Speaker, our government promised to fix the policing legislation in Ontario. With the introduction of the Comprehensive Ontario Police Services Act, we are recognizing that the existing police oversight system does not work for our police services—our most important partners in public safety. It does not work for our front-line officers, who Ontarians depend on for our safety and security, and will not contribute to what the people of Ontario want: safer communities to call home. If passed, Bill 68 would solve these problems.

Merci. Thank you, Madam Speaker, for the opportunity to speak on this common-sense proposal to restore respect to police, to restore accountability and trust in police oversight, and ultimately, to do everything we can as a government and policing partners to keep communities safe.

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

Mr. Prabmeet Singh Sarkaria: It's once again an honour to stand here today to debate this piece of legislation, a very important piece of legislation that this government committed to fixing in the previous election because we heard loud and clear from the front-line officers that the piece of legislation that the previous government had introduced was one of the most anti-police pieces of legislation to hit this Legislature. So we knew we had to fix that piece of legislation. We knew we had to listen to our front-line officers, who sacrifice themselves—whose families are put in danger—to serve and protect the residents of Ontario and this province. We owe it to those individuals to ensure that we do whatever we can to ensure that the police have the tools and resources necessary to keep our communities safe. That's exactly what this piece of legislation aims to do.

I also want to start by recognizing the Minister of Community Safety and Correctional Services for her outstanding work and the Attorney General and the parliamentary assistant to the Attorney General for all the work they have done in putting this piece of legislation together to ensure that our officers and front-line officers have the tools and resources they need to do their jobs.

Since becoming the parliamentary assistant to the Minister of Community Safety and Correctional Services, I have come to appreciate first-hand the incredible contribution police officers make to keep our families safe and to stand up for victims and hold criminals accountable for their actions. I've had the privilege to use my experience to help craft new policing legislation that stands up for our police officers and helps them ensure the security of the people.

I had an opportunity, first-hand, to do a ride-along with members of the Peel police and really see what our officers see on a day-to-day basis. I was only there for one day, and not even for the entirety of their shift, but I was shocked to see the amount of calls that were coming in, to see the different types of calls that were coming in from the different priorities, and how they are able to then assess the situation when they arrive on the scene, and how grave the danger was in a couple of instances when I was there. I was absolutely shocked at how dangerous some of these situations can very easily become and how situations can escalate out of control. After going on that ride-along and after talking to so many front-line officers, I knew that we needed to make sure that we give them the tools and resources they need. They sacrifice themselves, they put themselves in danger for our security, and sometimes we take that for granted. We live in one of the greatest countries in the world, where we know that if we're ever in need of help, if we're ever in danger, help is only a phone call away. So we need to make sure that we appreciate the service of those individuals to this province and to this country.

Being a parliamentary assistant, there have been few responsibilities I've enjoyed more than meeting young people pursuing a career in keeping our province safe. From cadets at the police college, to future firefighters, to professionals graduating our correctional, parole and

probation officer schools—I've come to have great confidence that our province will remain secure.

For those impacted by crime—parents who worry about gang violence, women affected by domestic violence, children who become the victims of Internet child exploitation—empowered security professionals is the difference between living in fear and living in security. It's the victims of those crimes who motivate our government to address the critical errors in the previous government's policing legislation. By strengthening the relationship between police and the communities they serve, we are empowering our police officers to pursue justice for these fellow citizens who have been victimized by crime.

I wanted to share a very supportive quote that came about during our committee hearings from Rob Jamieson of the OPPA, who spoke to our government's commitment to reform this piece of legislation. He said, "The previous government attempted to enact legislation in the form of the Safer Ontario Act, 2018, that vilified police officers in Ontario and attacked their rights as workers. I'm very appreciative of the work that this government has done to put a halt to such a divisive piece of legislation with the introduction of Bill 68."

Madam Speaker, these types of quotes are about what our government has aimed to do to ensure that our police officers have the tools and resources; that our front-line officers have the confidence that their government is really looking out for them.

And now, to speak to this piece of legislation and what we're doing in this piece of legislation, I'm going to first start by showing how we're providing confidence that we as a government will ensure that police services are provided by the police. Imagine a situation where you're calling 911, and rather than having a police officer respond, a private company shows up at your door. Many Ontarians have legitimate concerns over this uncertainty based on the previous government's legislation.

1400

This proposed legislation makes it clear that the following core police functions must be delivered by members of a police service or persons acting under their direction. If the policing function is either law enforcement, emergency response, maintaining the public peace, or crime prevention—in any of these functions, you will expect a police officer. That was a key piece in this legislation that we wanted to ensure we really focused on. The proposed legislation makes it clear that these functions must be delivered by a member of a police service or persons acting under their direction.

Our proposed legislation also creates the role of Inspector General of Policing. Among the inspector general's responsibilities would be monitoring and inspecting policing entities such as police services, chiefs of police, police service boards, and Ontario Provincial Police detachment boards for compliance with the proposed Community Safety and Policing Act, 2019, and regulations.

The inspector general would also be responsible for investigating service and policy complaints, and complaints about board member misconduct.

Our legislation also ensures that police officers are subject to fairness and due process in the disciplinary process. The disciplinary framework for professional police misconduct must be balanced.

How, then, is public safety served? Public safety is a top concern of mine, and I believe it to be a concern shared by all people in Ontario, yet the previous government overrode those concerns with disciplinary provisions that were overly punitive and weakened procedural fairness. The government proposes to restore the balance.

Now I'd like to share another supportive quote from the Toronto Police Association with a direct relation to the disciplinary process: "Under the Police Services Act, for decades the standard of proof was clear and convincing evidence. The Safer Ontario Act sought to reduce that standard to a balance of probabilities, and Bill 68 returns it to the old Police Services Act standard of clear and convincing evidence. We think that's appropriate."

This is just one of the other examples of our government ensuring that we have the backs of our front-line officers, who are doing all they can to protect this province and keep it secure.

Under the Police Services Act, 2018, the standard of proof at a disciplinary hearing would have been a "balance of probabilities." Front-line officers expressed concern that this change from the previously accepted standard of proof could negatively impact how police officers perform their duties.

Under the government's proposed legislation, we would be keeping "clear and convincing evidence" as a standard of proof, as it is currently under the Police Services Act, 1990. This would require chiefs of police to prove misconduct, based on clear and convincing evidence.

Another very important part of this legislation is ensuring the wellness of our officers, and I want to share a quote from Bruce Chapman, who is actually here today, and who shared at committee with us with regard to his experience between the previous act and this act. He said, "The Safer Ontario Act had some grave concerns about the ability of employers to dismiss those who suffer from PTSD and physical injuries. We welcome Bill 68, which has put to rest some of those concerns that we had surrounding the mental health and the physical health of our members. That was a welcome change in Bill 68, to ensure the wellness of our members."

We are also 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 peoples. As the minister previously noted, such a framework is an early response to the training recommendations presented by Justice Michael Tulloch in his Independent Street Checks Review. If our proposed legislation is passed, police service board members, the inspector general, inspectors and all 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 people.

As indicated by the minister, it was determined by our government in committee that the trust of groups directly impacted by this new training framework will not be served by two-tier training, and that every police officer and special constable should be required to complete the enhanced diversity training within three years.

Finally, 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 and make these boards more responsive to the diverse communities they serve.

I would like to now move on to two other pieces of our proposed legislation: amendments to the Coroners Act and the updates to the Mandatory Blood Testing Act, 2006.

The government's proposed changes to the Coroners Act relate to the safekeeping of seized items, historical death reviews, residency requirements for regional coroners and the introduction of an investigative screening provision.

We are also proposing amendments to the Mandatory Blood Testing Act to better support and provide peace of mind to victims of crime, first responders, good Samaritans and others. We have heard from first responders' organizations that the process timelines for an order for the respondent to provide a blood sample are too long, and that there isn't meaningful enforcement when someone does not comply with an order. Also, penalties for non-compliance are not in line with the seriousness of the offence. We have also heard that an incident resulting in exposure to another's bodily substance can be traumatic, meaning some victims of crime may require more time to submit an application.

Madam Speaker, these concerns leave our first responders, front-line staff, victims of crime and good Samaritans at risk. We are proposing to:

- shorten the timelines from application to order from 10 days to five business days;
- shorten the timeline to comply with a Consent and Capacity Board order from seven days to two business days;
- lengthen the timeline from exposure to application from seven to 30 calendar days;
- increase fines for non-compliance from up to \$5,000 a day to \$10,000 per day;
- give the Superior Court the authority to issue an order that authorizes police to provide assistance to the person who is taking the blood;
- give applicants greater flexibility in the process by allowing them to withdraw applications; and
- provide explicit legislative clarification that medical professionals specified by the Consent and Capacity Board may be party to the board hearing.

1410

These changes would reinforce the respect that all Ontarians have for first responders, front-line staff and for ordinary people who put their lives on the line to do what is right. They also reinforce our support for victims of crime.

That is this government's proposed legislative package. It will fix the previous government's flawed Safer Ontario Act, 2018, restore respect for police officers, streamline police oversight processes, improve service delivery, respect human rights, and enhance public safety. I encourage all honourable members to pass this proposed piece of legislation when it comes up for a vote in this House.

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

Ms. Lindsey Park: Thank you for the opportunity to stand in this House today for third reading of the Comprehensive Ontario Police Services Act, 2019. I want to start by thanking the Standing Committee on Justice Policy for their hard work in reviewing this bill over the last few weeks. In fact, I think this is the longest bill that has been tabled this session in the Legislature. I counted the pages; this one is 170 pages in English. I think the closest competitor is 118 pages in English. Once again, thank you to the committee for your hard work in reviewing it, particularly the member from Kitchener Centre—thank you for your work; for Brampton Centre; for Brampton North; the member for Simcoe North; the member for Sault Ste. Marie; the member for Scarborough—Agincourt; the member for York Centre; the member for Ottawa—Vanier; and, of course, the parliamentary assistant to the Minister of Community Safety and Correctional Services, the member for Brampton South.

I'd also like to thank my colleague the Attorney General; the member for York Centre; and the Minister of Community Safety and Correctional Services, the member for Dufferin—Caledon, for their dedication to community safety and to the women and men who have honourably devoted themselves to upholding the rule of law and keeping Ontario's cities, towns and villages safe.

I'm proud to be part of a government that is championing a strong, fair and transparent partnership between police, the people and the government to ensure public safety in our communities, and I'm honoured to have the opportunity to contribute to this partnership as the parliamentary assistant to the Attorney General.

In Durham, the area I represent, 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 those who rely on their bravery and professionalism. The front-line officers of the Durham Regional Police Service are professionals who work hard to serve our community every day. According to the DRPS 2017 annual report, in that year more than 4,000 Criminal Code charges in Durham region were laid that led to convictions. Officers also submitted approximately 7,500 crown briefs to be used by prosecutors in court cases. This is in addition to the more than 500 presentations made to youth in the community and more than 200 events and 100 community meetings where DRPS members attended. This is important work that is not only necessary to keeping our communities safe but to upholding the rule of law in Durham, the area I represent, and across Ontario.

The government can make laws, but without the work of police, which includes our local police services, the

Ontario Provincial Police, the RCMP and others who carry out the daily enforcement of our laws—without their work every single day across our province, our time spent law-making in this chamber and in the federal House of Commons would be useless. This is what we mean when we say that police are our partners in upholding the rule of law.

Speaker, we listened to our front-line officers when they raised serious concerns about Bill 175. Restoring trust in police oversight and rebuilding respect for police is a priority for this government. Our government also 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.

That is why pausing the previous government's policing legislation, Bill 175, was one of the first things our government did once we were sworn in. This was because we heard a clear message when knocking on doors in Clarington, when knocking on doors in Scugog in the last election. We heard a clear message over and over again from front-line officers. That message is that Ontario's police recognize the importance of an independent and effective oversight system, but they want a system that treats them with respect and fairness and that recognizes the realities of the dangerous work they do.

I'm pleased to say that our government has responded with the Comprehensive Ontario Police Services Act, 2019, that we're here today debating.

We promised to fix Bill 175, and let me assure you, Speaker and all Ontarians, that this government is working hard to keep that promise. This legislation would, if passed, fix Bill 175. The proposed legislation would do so in a way that ensures strong, effective police oversight while creating balance, respect and fairness for the dedicated front-line officers of our province.

Speaker, as I've said, our government views the police as our partners in public safety. That's why we have worked hard to address the many concerns we heard from police about the previous government's legislation. To address the concerns of police, we are proposing changes such as the refocusing of the core mandate of the special investigations unit. These changes would speed up SIU investigations while strengthening its independence by allowing them to conduct preliminary hearings in some cases to determine whether full investigations need to be conducted in the first place.

This proposed legislation is designed to allow the SIU to use its resources on appropriate, pressing cases that need to be investigated. An example of that is—and there has been some confusion about this in the media at times, but let's be clear: What these changes mean for the SIU is that the SIU will be required to investigate any discharge of a firearm at a person by a police officer, regardless of whether or not serious injury or death occurred. I think it was worth clarifying that.

These kinds of common-sense changes are focused on public safety and are being proposed to strengthen this important partnership between the government, the police and Ontarians. As my colleague the Attorney General has

said, if passed, Bill 68 would address nearly every recommendation from Justice Tulloch's Independent Police Oversight Review. That includes that we're establishing the SIU as a fully independent provincial agency.

The proposed legislation has been very carefully crafted to balance effective oversight of police with respect for police. Our government believes these two goals do not have to be at odds with one another. We're confident that, if passed, these changes would help to ensure police oversight is reasonable, fair and effective for our communities, our front-line officers and our policing partners.

The proposed legislation would strengthen police oversight by ensuring that law enforcement organizations meet reasonable standards of transparency and accountability while offering respect and fairness to policing officials and making more efficient and effective use of investigative resources.

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I'll tell you what we mean when we say it will make a more effective use of resources. One thing that we're doing through this bill is really focusing the mandate of the SIU on the most important and most serious criminal cases. That's what the public expects from the SIU and expects of police oversight, and that's exactly why we've made these changes.

Speaker, we ask our police to potentially put themselves in very dangerous situations each and every day. We ask them to keep our communities and loved ones safe. Over the last month, I had the opportunity to spend the afternoon with the men and women of the human trafficking unit of the Durham Regional Police Service to see first-hand the work they do and to hear about the dangers they face while trying to protect some of the most vulnerable people in our province. Last week, the Durham region government members also hosted a round table on human trafficking in Pickering to hear first-hand from victims of human trafficking and the organizations that support those who are rescued from human trafficking because of the hard work of our police.

I encourage all members of the Legislature, if you haven't had the chance to do this yet, please, I beg you, 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. Our government is working to ensure they're treated with the fairness and respect they deserve. That principle can be found throughout this piece of legislation. The principle of fairness and respect for our front-line officers is a principle that I'm proud to stand here and discuss in this House. I would like to urge my colleagues and the members of this House to stand up for this very principle, to stand up for community safety and support the Comprehensive Ontario Police Services Act. The proposed legislation focuses SIU investigative resources where they are needed: on criminal activity within a police oversight system that is transparent, fair and effective.

On that point, I just want to read a quote from Kimberley Greenwood of the Ontario Association of

Chiefs of Police. She is speaking exactly about the focusing of the SIU's mandate. She says, "We do support the changes in the SIU portion of the legislation. We have members who have been impacted greatly by the delay the investigation takes. We have officers in services that fully co-operate with the SIU but we see significant delays in the outcome of the investigation and the letter to indicate that the matter is concluded. We appreciate the change of 120 days. I think that will assist in the well-being of our members."

Speaker, thank you for the opportunity to speak about our government's commitment to restoring respect for the police and standing up for public safety in our communities. On that, I'd like to thank, again, everyone who is contributing to this debate. I look forward to hearing from my colleagues.

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

Mr. Kevin Yarde: Madam Speaker, just to let you know, I'll be dividing my time amongst Brampton Centre, Kitchener Centre and Oshawa.

It's an honour to have the privilege to rise today in the House to speak to this legislation. Policing and being a member of the police force is not an easy job. I have a world of respect for our police services and our officers, as does our entire caucus. Their determination, their courage and their unwavering commitment to their communities make our province a safer place to live.

Since I was elected last year, I have heard and I've also seen front-line police officers raise the issue of privatization of policing and contracting out tasks and services that are under the policing umbrella in Ontario.

Our fine officers are proud of the services they provide in our communities. Our communities depend on efficient, uncompromised and accessible services in their times of need. We need to ensure that policing and police services are not privatized and stay under the realm of services provided by the government. Privatization and privatizing some police duties as a way to reduce costs and replace uniformed police officers has the potential to put the public at risk.

The president of the Police Association of Ontario, Bruce Chapman, who is here today—hello, sir—once stated, "I want to be unequivocal: Allowing for the privatization of some police duties won't save taxpayer money, improve public safety or protect human rights."

See, the thing is that police officers and those who understand public safety agree on the fact that privatization of policing services can be detrimental to ensuring public safety, so any government that is remotely serious about public safety would remove privatization provisions from the policing bills. This government had that chance. They had the opportunity to remove all vague language and make it clear that they are committed to public safety by removing all provisions in regard to privatization of policing services in this province. New Democrats were concerned about this when the Liberals introduced privatization as part of the last police legislation, and, alongside front-line police officers, we remain concerned,

as should all Ontarians, that privatization remains a possibility in this Conservative bill as well. That's why we introduced amendments that would have removed this possibility, as we did during consideration of the previous Liberal bill. As with the earlier bill, this Conservative government voted against those amendments. Again, yes, Madam Speaker, the Liberals got the ball rolling, but the Conservatives had a choice and decided not to do it.

New Democrats have long championed the welfare of our front-line first responders, including police, who in doing this work can experience post-traumatic stress disorder, or PTSD, at higher rates than other sections of the population. While that was not a part of this legislation, it is clear that this remains a concern, as we've seen recently with the tragic suicides among OPP officers. There is no doubt that this work can be isolating and traumatic. Sadly, just last week, an OPP constable based at a west-end Ottawa detachment took his life, marking the 13th reported suicide of an active or retired member of the force since 2012.

Back in 2012, the Ontario Ombudsman launched a report about the OPP and how the force fails to help officers who struggle with PTSD. Thirty-four recommendations were made. One of the recommendations was calling for the OPP to provide a suicide prevention program. That was seven years ago, Madam Speaker, and the OPP still does not have one. In the past 30 years, more OPP officers have died by suicide than in the line of duty. Of this most recent officer who committed suicide, one of his colleagues remarked that "he was such a solid guy. He'd come out of the military really smart, really humble—always had a smile on his face ... He didn't seem like the kind of person that would go through something like that." But of course there is no one kind of person that struggles with mental health.

Unfortunately, when someone thinks they're going to get shamed for saying, "I'm not well and I need some time off," that's what results in people taking their lives. Our officers see everything from deaths, car accidents, family tragedies—they respond to all of these situations on a regular basis. Yes, being an officer is hard work. They see the worst in society. To work on the front lines as a police officer is to live on a razor-thin margin between life and death. There are few jobs more stressful, where what you face every day follows you home every single night.

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However, there is a perception of those whose job it is to help: They're not supposed to need help themselves. Many times officers are afraid to speak up and say they're not well, because they don't want to risk not being able to get a transfer, not being able to get a promotion, because they've got that mark against them for being "off." This burden should not be shouldered by our front-line officers. It should not be a career killer if you acknowledge that you suffer from PTSD. A comprehensive mental health plan is needed for our police forces.

One of the largest police forces, if we look to the United States, is the LAPD. They've made suicide prevention a priority. They have over 10,000 officers, and last year,

guess how many suicides they had: zero. They have 16 psychologists on staff. The OPP has none.

We recognize that mental health is an issue for too many of our communities, as well, that are left without acute mental health supports, programming and beds, starting with cuts made by the last Conservative government in the province. There is also a crisis in mental health in our communities, and that is why it's important that we recognize that an increasing amount of the contact between our front-line officers and the public in times of crisis today involves mental health.

One comprehensive study found that since 2000, as many as 70% of the tragic incidents where someone has died in an altercation or an interaction with police has involved individuals suffering from an acute mental health episode or addiction. Happily, the majority of interactions don't result in death, but it's clear that these interactions are increasing—the police say so themselves—and it's clear that police and those who respond to these incidents from the oversight bodies need more support. That can start through the right training in how to deal with individuals experiencing mental health issues.

One example that the NDP members mentioned during the recent amendments stage of this bill was O'Brien Reid, a young chemical engineering student who suffered from mental illness. During an interaction with police in 2004, he was, sadly, killed. The coroner's inquest in 2007, 12 years ago, recommended that the Toronto police improve their training for officers dealing with people in mental health crisis and focus more on de-escalation tactics and less on confrontation.

That's why another thing we all should recognize is significant to police officers and for community confidence in policing is training. It's precisely because of how important their job is and how much power police can hold over members of the community that we expect to hold our officers, the police services and their conduct to a high level of accountability. However, for the officers to be able to fulfill their duties, they need to have ample, ideally ongoing, training, so they are put in a position to make the best decisions and succeed at their jobs to keep us all safe.

We support and advocate for a requirement of establishing human rights and inclusion training by a timeline that includes the requirement of a framework including outcome measurement and public reporting of those outcomes. This is actually a recommendation from the Tulloch report, and that's why New Democrats fought to have included the requirement that all police receive training in dealing with individuals who have mental health issues or disorders, as well as individuals who have developmental disabilities. Despite what the government says, that is not ensured through the training provisions in this act.

We, the members of the official opposition, attempted many times to introduce this added requirement for training of our police officers. In fact, on nine separate occasions we attempted. Each time this government voted against this, and each time the government members said they "agreed in principle." So why not in practice?

The result is that now, police won't be required to receive this specific training, and the oversight bodies, the SIU, police service boards and the complaints director won't be required to receive this specific training right at the moment in time that it's needed the most.

Such steps are necessary to foster a positive relationship and trust between the community and the policing forces. My colleague the member from Oshawa pushed for an amendment that would make it a requirement that police services notify residents of a sex offender's admittance to a long-term-care home. My colleague from Oshawa will be speaking in more depth about this awful case and why this amendment was the right thing to do.

Lastly, I want to talk a little bit about the relationship between the public and the police.

For police to do their jobs effectively, they often require assistance and partnership and the trust of the public. This is vital for policing and ensuring public safety in this province. Any erosion of trust means that there would be breakdowns in the partnership between the police forces and the public.

We have some systems in place to ensure that the police are held accountable and the public's confidence and trust in their police services is maintained. One of the ways we have done that in this province is with the special investigations unit, otherwise known as the SIU. The SIU is a civilian law enforcement agency, independent of the police, that conducts criminal investigations into circumstances involving police and civilians that have resulted in severe injury.

To maintain trust, it is imperative that the SIU is given the resources it needs to complete its investigations, so it can uphold its mandate, which is to maintain confidence in Ontario's police services by assuring the public that police actions resulting in serious injury, death or allegations of sexual assault are subjected to rigorous, independent investigations.

However, Bill 68 does the opposite. The previous bill, under the set duties of an officer, clearly stated that the duties of a police officer include complying with any investigations being conducted. However, that requirement is no longer part of this government's bill. If the police officers are not required to co-operate with the various oversight bodies, it weakens the mechanisms of oversight and accountability that we have in place.

Major changes to police oversight in this province, how you complain about police behaviour, and how this is investigated will be dramatically different. The language of the Conservatives when they first brought forth this bill: "The Liberals' bill ... was, quite frankly, the most anti-police legislation in Canadian history. It was a disaster," according to the minister.

Under the new legislation, the Ford government is setting a 120-day limit to investigations by the SIU. Expectations for when the SIU will be called in will be lowered. Now the SIU will only be investigating when an officer is involved in serious injury or death or sexual assault, if they fire their weapon or are involved in a police chase. It will be up to the discretion of police chiefs to

notify the SIU for anything else; for example, if someone commits suicide in the presence of an officer.

Also, if an officer refuses to cooperate with an SIU investigation, fines will be lowered from \$50,000 to \$5,000. After numerous protests and calls for greater transparency in the wake of the fatal police shootings of Sammy Yatim and Andrew Loku, who was a black man with a history of mental illness, oversight agencies were increased. But now, with the Ford government, these oversight agencies have been decreased.

It is scrapping the Ontario Civilian Police Commission and turning the Office of the Independent Police Review Director into the Law Enforcement Complaints Agency, which will determine if a civilian complaint should be investigated and by whom, potentially sending the complaint back to the force where the officer works. Under the Liberal Bill 175, the police complaints watchdog was supposed to be completely independent. In other words, it's a bad day for police oversight. The government has gutted police oversight. It has scrapped the police complaints system. The pendulum was swinging towards greater transparency and accountability, but now the Ford government has pushed the pendulum the other way, away from de-escalation and accountability into a new era which, sadly, is not going to work well with marginalized and racialized communities.

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If this government is interested in maintaining that trust and believes in civilian oversight and accountability of policing bodies, then it would restore that requirement. Again, policing is such a core part of our communities and ensuring public safety. It is imperative that all should be done to maintain and grow the trust and relationship between all communities and the police.

These oversight bodies are public agencies, Madam Speaker. Doesn't the government think the police, with their tremendously important responsibilities and powers over others, should be overseen by and accountable to the public?

I also want to take a second to talk about the independence of the oversight bodies. Justice Tulloch, in his report, recommended the need for independent civilian oversight, and one way we can do that is by making the office of the inspector general an independent office of the Legislative Assembly. This would allow the inspector general to have oversight over policing and ensure that the concerns of erosion of trust which have been raised by some community leaders are addressed and that the public trust in our police is maintained.

That is the type of legislation that we, as Ontarians, deserve—legislation that helps police officers do their jobs effectively, maintain public trust, and put public safety first by outlawing privatization. I am disappointed that this Conservative bill fails to do all of that effectively.

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

Ms. Laura Mae Lindo: I'm going to focus my attention on the enhanced diversity or human rights training that is said to be within this bill. Part of why I'd like to do

that is because I think it's really important for us to understand human rights training as a tool that our police services can use to help to rebuild the trust between them and communities that have historically been over-policed.

I know that it's a very difficult conversation for us to have, but I do think it's important for us to have on record why this training is so important. There are parts of the bill where you can see that this tool is trying to be leveraged. For instance, some of the steps that have been taken are with regard to First Nations or Indigenous communities.

Just recently, there was a Globe and Mail article by Gloria Galloway on March 23, 2019: "Police and political leaders are being asked to do better. How they respond could shape the future of reconciliation in Canada."

She was speaking specifically about two different reports that had come out in Thunder Bay. In December last year, a critical review by Ontario's Office of the Independent Police Review Director found racism at an "institutional level" within the Thunder Bay Police Service, and a report by Senator Murray Sinclair which followed just two days later said that the police board was failing to protect Indigenous people from hate crimes.

The policing community in Thunder Bay, along with Indigenous communities, came together to try and figure out how it was that they would address racism when it's systemic.

I think sometimes when we're in the House speaking about issues like legislation that's coming to pass, we get tied into a space where we believe that it's about individual officers, but what we're talking about is not that; the reason we need training is to rid the system itself of discriminatory practices that can inadvertently hurt some communities more than others.

What happened in Thunder Bay was that data was collected, and that data allowed the police chief to argue for increased funding for concrete changes. She wanted cameras that she could have on officers, and name tags on officers so that civilians would know who the police were that they were speaking with. She wanted to create a peer review process to ensure cases are investigated properly, and she wanted to add five officers to her criminal investigations branch, which currently is understaffed and undertrained.

Within this particular bill, when you look at these sections that do talk about training—hello, Mr. Speaker—when we look at the sections of the bill that speak about training, they do actually speak specifically about needing to address the histories of Indigenous communities across the province. Part of the reason that we had forwarded some amendments to the training portion was because there are other groups of people across Ontario that have also historically been over-policed: One is the Black community in Ontario; another would be the LGBTQ2S community.

When I was sitting down I was trying to think, "What can I add to this debate? I don't want to be part of a problem; I want to be part of a solution." I believe strongly that this legislation is being tabled in good faith, that we all want to help rebuild the trust between marginalized

communities and our police services. And I believe that our police services are asking for the tools to be able to do that trust-building with marginalized communities better.

But then I sat back and thought, “Well, if the way that we address systemic racism when it comes to Indigenous communities is to embed specific training into the legislation in order to build that trust, then why would we not be doing that using the same kind of method for the other communities that are also proven to be overrepresented when it comes to police services encounters”—not always helping to build that trust.

On top of that, I wondered why we would weaken the oversight when it's those oversight bodies that are actually providing us with the data that we can use to be able to prove that these marginalized communities that feel over-policed are in fact being over-policed. I'm going to just take a little bit of time to talk about the Black community and the queer community in Ontario in order to help expand on this idea.

The Ontario Human Rights Commission recently put out an interim report about the relationship between the Black community and the Toronto Police Service. I'm not going to go into great detail but I am going to provide some of the data that was collected when they looked deeper into SIU investigations. It's written in their executive summary that between 2013 and 2017, a Black person in Toronto was nearly 20 times more likely than a white person to be involved in a fatal shooting by the Toronto Police Service; this was true despite making up only 8.8% of Toronto's population. The special investigations unit shows that Black people were overrepresented in use-of-force cases, so 28.8%; shootings, 36%; deadly encounters, 61.5%; and fatal shootings, 70%.

When we have data like that at our disposal, I want to go back to the fact that the goal is to become part of the solution. This indicates to me, as a researcher and also as a legislator who is in a position to actually bring some change, that we have a systemic problem. There's something that's happening that we need to address, and we need to address it differently.

Currently, I know that a lot of police services go through a human rights training program of some kind, but generally it's generic. What communities that are over-policed are asking for is something more specific to be able to help them to better that relationship.

I can tell you that within Toronto's Action Plan to Confront Anti-Black Racism, there are a number of recommendations. Recommendation number 9 is to implement measures to stop racial profiling and over-policing of Black Torontonians. Both the Toronto Police Service and the Black community would like us to find a way to address that recommendation. Two of the various actions they have include improving training to equip law enforcement officers with knowledge and skills to better protect and serve diverse people of African descent, and also strengthen protocols for police responses to emotionally disturbed persons and report regularly on police interactions using an anti-Black-racism analysis. So they're asking for an intersectional approach.

I keep quoting this report *HairStory: Rooted*, which just came out recently. This is with youth who are in our care system. They too asked for mandatory training for correctional staff, police, judges, court personnel and lawyers to deliver more culturally relevant supports and services to Black youth involved in the justice system.

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Within the queer community, we see a similar situation. There was the recent discovery of a serial killer who was targeting folks in the queer village here in Toronto. Although, on the one hand, we can be happy we found this person and brought them to justice, many of the families have reported that they had been saying there was a serial killer that was there, but their cries and pleas for help were not being heard. As a consequence, right now, while they go through that investigation—I would argue that we already know that we need to have specific training about how police services and the queer community can interact to heal that relationship.

Every single person in Ontario wants to feel safe. It doesn't matter who you are or where you're from or what you're doing; you want to feel safe. But if for 10 years there has been a serial killer and nobody has bothered to believe that what you're saying is true—or if, for many, many years, as a Black person, I have not been able to have that healing relationship with the police services—then more has to be done.

That's the reason that we tabled some amendments that would require more specific training, with an understanding that that training would allow for the police services to think through what anti-racism work would look like or what anti-homophobic work could look like in particular communities, depending on how you interact with those communities. What the SIU director would do would be different than what a front-line officer would do. But right now, as it's written into the bill, it seems like it's enhanced human rights training but just sort of generic. That's also part of why we wanted the training to be developed, similar to what Justice Tulloch had said, in collaboration with the communities that are actually impacted by the injustice; for instance, Black communities for looking at anti-Black racism in police services, or the queer community when we're talking about how to decrease homophobia within police services.

As a final note, all of that training would be done in collaboration with the Anti-Racism Directorate, which is mandated to oversee the systemic discrimination that could happen in places like this if we don't make sure that we have our eye on that prize. For me, the prize is rebuilding that trust, and I would hope that is the same goal that all of my colleagues in this House share.

Now I would like to hand it over.

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

Ms. Jennifer K. French: I am very pleased to stand today and speak on behalf of my colleagues. I wish that I had had a little more opportunity to spend time in the justice policy committee as presentations were being made and the discussions were being had on Bill 68, the Comprehensive Ontario Police Services Act.

I'm going to be very focused and specific in my comments today, and that is a little bit challenging for me—not just to be focused, but on such a massive piece of legislation. There has been so much that has brought us to this point. I was very proud to serve as the critic for community safety and correctional services in the previous session. I look over and I see Bruce Chapman is intently following the debate today. Welcome, Bruce—from the PAO.

I have so many thoughts that I would love to share and to get into. I would like to, very clearly, as a resident of the Durham region and certainly of Oshawa, thank the police for the work that they do across my community and the broader Durham region. I heard the member from Durham talk about initiatives happening locally. I have certainly been pleased to support that work and work alongside some of our officers when it comes to human trafficking and doing a ride-along and recognizing that they are at the front lines when it comes to supporting our communities in so many different ways.

I don't know that it was really covered in this piece of legislation, but police do really need more tools and support to do the work that, increasingly, as we see more cuts to services, whether it is restrictions when it comes to housing or cuts to mental health—all of these things end up in the laps of our police and first responders, for them to not just pick up the pieces, but find a way to respond.

Of course, we need to bring it back to, "What do we want our society to look like?" We need to invest in what we care about—and that should indeed be our vulnerable communities—and to work in partnership with our police and our community agencies to make sure that that work happens the best way with the best outcomes for our communities.

Speaker, I promised to be focused in my remarks, so I will be very specific. I had the opportunity to come before the justice policy committee on Bill 68, the Comprehensive Ontario Police Services Act, and I was pleased to have our folks put forward an amendment. I'm going to read the amendment and then I'm going to explain it, because it won't be clear in its entirety. So I'd like to give the back story because there is quite an emotional one.

It was moved in committee that subsection 80(2) of schedule 1 to the bill be amended by adding the following paragraph:

"9. Notifying the public of the admittance to a long-term-care home of an individual who,

"i. has been convicted of a sex offence, or

"ii. has been found not criminally responsible of a sex offence on account of mental disorder."

This was among the over 30 amendments that the NDP tabled, all of which were rejected. But I'd like to give the back story of why I put forward this amendment. Because it has been soundly rejected by this government, my next step as an advocate for community members is to now put forward a private member's bill. I will be undertaking that, and hopefully we can have it resolved.

It's disappointing, because here we have Bill 68 opened—well, in existence, but we're opening the opportunity to make amendments when it comes to giving police

tools and resources. We're not taking the opportunity with this bill open and before us, so I'll have to come at it after the fact with an amendment through a private member's bill.

Speaker, you might remember a few years ago, in 2016, that W5 investigated cases of sexual assault in Ontario nursing homes. They had done a show; I believe it was called *In the Dark*. It was a few years back. It was shocking. It had started because there was a man named Geert Flonk. He was a sex offender. He had been convicted back in 2003 of sexually assaulting a developmentally challenged young woman in Bowmanville. That man was sentenced to a year in jail, three years on probation, and he was still on probation when he ended up in Hillsdale in Oshawa. That is one of our long-term-care homes. No one at the home knew that, so this individual, who was still on probation and whose location had shifted—no one at the home was aware. It wasn't until four families got the call that their loved ones had been sexually assaulted by this known sex offender on probation—and those families were left reeling.

The home had not been aware. Police were, of course, called and brought in after the fact, because the Long-Term Care Homes Act in Ontario requires homes to report any violent incidents. The police were called to investigate. We had former police officers involved in Durham's elder abuse team who made recommendations after the fact.

This really affected our community, and it continues to. It was back in 2008 that the incidents had occurred. Four loved ones in care in Ontario, in provincial facilities, where we would trust that they would be safe—they are vulnerable community members—were sexually assaulted by a known sex offender, who was unknown to the home.

So I put this forward as an amendment to give the police the tools to be able to give this information to the home, that this is an individual who moved into long-term care. Then we can have conversations around what was appropriate for the home to do with that information—but the administration should know. PSWs bathe individuals. You have a vulnerable community.

This is not to preclude anyone from care in Ontario. This is not to preclude anyone from care in a long-term-care home. We have many individuals with needs. They all deserve a place to live. But everyone deserves to be safe.

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I'm going to read something into the record. This was from the meeting on June 29, 2016:

"The council of the regional municipality of Durham endorsed the following resolution of the city of Oshawa." Speaker, I'm going to read the resolution into the record.

"Whereas we have an aging population; and,

"Whereas many families are responsible for the care of both or one parent; and,

"Whereas these parents have provided protection and endless love to their children throughout all stages of their lives; and,

"Whereas many of these parents are placed in private or publicly run long-term care facilities; and,

“Whereas many are dealing with physical and mental health issues, Alzheimer’s and dementia; and,

“Whereas many are unable to speak or protect themselves from violent acts, sexual assaults or theft of personal property; and,

“Whereas many of our parents have become vulnerable and deserve protection as they have provided to us throughout our lives; and,

“Whereas many private and publicly run long-term facilities screen their owners and employees to protect all the residents; and,

“Whereas many residents placed in these long-term care facilities have changed due to medical and health reasons, and have become violent, physical, and aggressive; and,

“Whereas there is no screening done on these residents or history of crimes committed currently or in the past; and,

“Whereas some still have active probation or protection orders against them; and,

“Whereas many seniors have become the most vulnerable due to lack of ability to speak up;

“Therefore be it resolved, that the council of the city of Oshawa supports the protection and care of all long-term-care workers and residents, and requests the federal and provincial governments require that appropriate disclosure of any history or active cases of violence, sexual assault, etc. be made for any person being placed in any of these facilities.”

This is a need. We presented it to the government. We were surprised that this government, which talks about public safety and which today talked about protecting vulnerable community members and working together and all sorts of wonderful things, soundly rejected this. In fact, it didn’t have much to say except when asked about a bit of clarification.

Calling in the police after the fact: We appreciate the work that they have to do when they are called, but what about prevention? In this case, we have a tangible opportunity to prevent, and it was soundly rejected without justification.

I don’t know whether the government didn’t understand it, didn’t pay attention or wasn’t going to give the NDP a win—I’m not sure. But playing politics is not the right way to go. I challenge this government. Families trust that their elderly parents, when they’re in the care of the province—they should be able to trust that they will be safe and not sexually assaulted. We need to protect vulnerable people.

Caregivers have a duty of care. Long-term-care operators can’t get that criminal information, as it stands now. We tried to make that change. We hear over and over about homicides in long-term care. We hear about sexual assaults in long-term care among our vulnerable community members. If anyone is curious, watch *In the Dark*. Look it up on W5. You can look it up—sexual assault in Oshawa. Watch the video and then justify to me why we can’t close this gap and make this change.

So I say, shame on this government. I will be bringing this forward as a private member’s bill and again challenge

you. It’s coming. Please be ready, change your mind and do right by seniors in our long-term-care facilities.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): Further debate? I recognize the member from Brampton Centre.

Ms. Sara Singh: Thank you and good afternoon, Mr. Speaker. It’s always a pleasure to see you in the chair.

It’s a real honour to rise here today and contribute to the debate. I appreciate listening to members on both sides of the House. This has been a very interesting experience, as we move forward with Bill 68. It’s very interesting to me.

I’d first like to start off by thanking our front-line officers for the valuable work that they do in our communities across the province. For me, as someone who once thought about a career in policing, as I had shared at the Police Association of Ontario convention, I take great pride in the work that police officers do. I think that it’s important that we acknowledge how they do, essentially, put their lives on the line to respond to the calls that they go out to and to serve and to protect our community.

I think that we can all agree that we do need to work on building those relationships between our communities and our police services a little bit more effectively, especially for those communities that have been over-policed and have dealt with the impacts of over-policing in their communities.

While this bill is a step in the right direction, as we discussed in committee, there is still so much work that needs to be done to ensure that we are effectively restoring that trust and accountability within our police services and within the communities who are, frankly, receiving the service from those police—so much work to do.

It was really interesting to me that we time-allocated a very important bill that really, I think, needed very fulsome conversation and consultation and hearings during the committee process. Unfortunately, because we time-allocated this bill, we only heard from a very limited number of people. But it was a really interesting experience because it was great to hear from officers, presidents of police associations, community members and lawyers who raised several concerns still with the bill.

The NDP caucus here presented several pretty reasonable amendments to help strengthen this piece of legislation and ultimately achieve the goals that this government had outlined, which were to increase transparency and accountability.

I think we all agree that there’s no harm in developing well-being and diversity plans for our communities. But there were a lot of concerns raised by municipalities themselves, who are worried about how they’re going to meet the targets that this government has set out.

I know my time is limited, so I’m going to try to address some of the concerns that were raised for us in committee.

We heard from the Association of Municipalities of Ontario. They were very concerned that this government was imposing a one-size-fits-all mandate for all 444 municipalities here across our province, and that policing, let’s say, in the region of Peel was going to look very different than if we were going to your riding, Mr. Speaker. Because the communities were very different, targets would be very different.

They were very concerned with how they were going to meet the mandate of reflecting board diversity in communities where, perhaps, that diversity is just not present. It was concerning to them how they were going to meet the objectives this government was putting in place. They were very optimistic, because, again, I think we can all agree that we want to ensure that the police have the tools they need to do their jobs effectively.

That was one of the reasons that we put forward amendments to perhaps strengthen, again, what those training plans would look like, perhaps align them with not only the ministry but also with the Anti-Racism Directorate as well, and consult with the Anti-Racism Directorate to ensure that the diversity plans and consultations that these communities were going to engage in were going to be effective and actually support the communities that we needed to.

We also asked that if we were going to develop all of this training, and encourage police services to develop these well-being plans, why are there no outcome measures being put in place to ensure that the plans that are being developed—perhaps two years, three years, five years down the road—were meeting the goals that we wanted them to. Again, we put forward amendments for schedule 1, in section 3, to ensure that we strengthened how that training would be implemented here in the province, and to ensure that the police services had the tools to make sure that they were meeting the goals that this piece of legislation was going to address.

But unfortunately, during that committee process, our amendments were shot down—again, very reasonable amendments to strengthen legislation, not to be opposition just for opposition's sake, but to bring something tangible, to make something better. It was shocking to me that we couldn't find common ground in terms of understanding that we needed to make sure the police had all the tools at their disposal to do their jobs more effectively when they went into the community.

I'm going to read to you, Mr. Speaker, another amendment that we put forward: "I move that paragraph 3 of subsection 35(2) of schedule 1 to the bill be amended by striking out 'and' at the end of subparagraph 3 i and by adding the following subparagraphs"—that in section 3, we included this very specific language: "lesbian, gay, bisexual, queer, questioning and two-spirit people," and that in bullet number 4, we included very specific language, to ensure that "people with mental health issues and developmental or other disabilities" were also included in the type of training that police officers would receive.

Now, I sat in on many of the hearings with Justice Tulloch in our communities, and when I sat in at those meetings, time and time again people wanted to ensure that the police had the training to interact with our communities. So we suggested that, in addition to outlining certain racialized groups that needed to be taken into consideration, we take that a step further and look at other vulnerable groups—that perhaps the police would benefit from additional training in how they would interact with those groups.

As I shared a couple of days ago, I actually have a younger sister with a developmental disability. As a tireless advocate for all folks with disabilities across this province, I sat as a board director on Community Living Ontario's board of directors for a number of years, and time and time again, we really struggled with the number of people with developmental disabilities who were having interactions with police. It wasn't that the police didn't want to do their jobs; they just really, truly did not understand the type of disability that they were dealing with when somebody came in with a speech impediment, or if they came in with a lower cognitive rationalizing perspective. They couldn't understand the situation that they were in, and neither did the police.

1510

By putting forward these types of amendments, we were encouraging the government as well as the police services to receive additional training. This wasn't just for the police. Actually, we suggested these amendments on several occasions throughout this legislation, to ensure that everyone from front-line officers to the SIU director would receive this additional training when they would interact with these vulnerable communities. But for whatever reason, members of the government did not feel that these were good enough amendments, and that we couldn't work together to ensure that we strengthen this piece of legislation, to ensure that the police and all levels of law enforcement were receiving the type of training that they needed.

The final section that I'll perhaps discuss is schedule 5, which deals with the Special Investigations Unit. There were several concerns raised about the direction that this piece of legislation was going to take us in with respect to restoring accountability and trust between communities and our police services. When I sat in on many of those hearings in our communities, people were very concerned with making sure that the SIU and police functions as a whole were separate and very independent. They were concerned that retired police officers were being appointed to the board and sitting on these boards, and that there really wasn't enough representation from the community on these boards.

To some degree or another, I can understand that, and I can agree that we need to have a ratio that is fair, that represents the community but also ensures that police members are represented on that board. During our conversations, a suggestion actually came up that perhaps what we could do is train those SIU investigators. We put forward amendments to ensure that they receive the additional training, so that even if community members were appointed to that board, they would have the same level of training to be an investigator as anyone else who would have stepped onto that board—again, allowing the community an opportunity to be a part of the solution and be a part of the conversation.

As I wrap up here, I'm just going to read one little piece from the written submission that was received from the SIU, who were very concerned with the direction in section 15 with respect to the powers that are given to

investigate. They were very concerned, and I'm just going to read this: "In the draft legislation, the SIU's statutory mandate is predicated on an incident that 'may have resulted from criminal conduct by an official.' Respectfully, this puts the cart before the horse and requires a determination at the outset of an investigation, before any evidence has been gathered or information collected."

So we put forward several amendments to help just clarify when the SIU's mandate would be invoked, again, to ensure that there was clarity not just for the community but for police officers themselves, for chiefs of police, as well as the SIU. Those amendments, Mr. Speaker, were also not accepted.

It's very unfortunate that here, today, as we debate this very historic piece of legislation and we work towards, on both sides of the House, restoring trust and accountability, this piece of legislation, when we had an opportunity to do the right thing and go far enough—we failed to do that. We failed to put in place the right balance between the community and the work that needs to be done.

I thank you, Mr. Speaker, for the opportunity to rise here today.

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

Mr. Mike Schreiner: I'm pleased to contribute to the debate on Bill 68, the Comprehensive Ontario Police Services Act. For years, citizens, civil society organizations and police associations themselves have called for modernizing the Police Services Act, and while far from perfect, Bill 68 begins to move Ontario in that direction by acting on many of the key recommendations from Justice Michael Tulloch's police oversight review.

I'm especially encouraged that Bill 68, like Bill 175, requires more transparency from the special investigations unit. Requiring by law that the SIU provide greater details about its decisions not to lay charges against the police is an important step forward in meeting Justice Tulloch's recommendation that the agency become more open, candid and communicative by including the releasing of detailed public reports in every case in which it does not lay charges.

I was worried that such transparency provisions would not be in Bill 68 when I first heard the minister's news conference announcing Bill 68. The harsh rhetoric from the government on Bill 68 accusing the previous government's Bill 175 of being "the most anti-police" bill "in Canadian history" had me worried that Bill 68 eliminated these transparency provisions recommended by Justice Tulloch and demanded by citizens groups.

For all the chest pumping about the previous legislation and the opposition being anti-police, Bill 68 retains many of Bill 175's key provisions. I bring this up because I would ask the government to keep in mind that ramping up divisive rhetoric, especially when it comes to police and community relations, is not helpful. Using the police as a wedge issue is dangerous. It's disingenuous and it's divisive. We don't need more heated rhetoric about being for or against the police; we need more rhetoric about

bringing police and community together. Accusing other parties and other members of this Legislature of hating the police is not helpful. Such divisive rhetoric only serves to inflame tensions between police and community. It can undermine public confidence in the police and in government oversight of the police.

Yes, police work is hard. It is hard work to keep us safe. Yes, police work is dangerous. It is dangerous to keep us safe. But we also ask the police and put the police in a sacred public trust to be in a serious position of responsibility and authority, more authority than most any citizens in our society. They have powers that are not granted to other everyday citizens, so there must be transparency and there must be accountability mechanisms in place. We need balance between police and community relations.

I agree with the government that we should not be needlessly putting police under a cloud of suspicion, and I support changes to Bill 68 that require shorter investigation times, for example. It's hard on individual officers, and the police force in general, to have a cloud of suspicion hanging over an officer's head.

But I take issue with the government accusing people or parties asking for more transparency and accountability of being anti-police. Systems of transparency and accountability exist for a reason. It's possible to both respect the police, to admire the police and to equip them with authority while also holding them accountable. So let's not make transparency and accountability red tape.

1520

I want to personally thank all police members in this province. I especially want to reach out and thank Matt Jotham, the president of the Guelph Police Association in my riding, who has given me so much wonderful information about this bill and other issues facing policing in my community. I want to thank Bruce Chapman, president of the Police Association of Ontario, for being here today. And I want to thank all police officers for putting their lives on the line.

One of the things that I think is important in this bill is the duty to accommodate officers with a disability, such as those dealing with mental health challenges from PTSD. I want to challenge the government to invest in the public supports that those officers need to honour them for their services.

I think Bill 68 makes the SIU process more transparent, which frees up resources for police to focus on public safety. That's a good thing.

Greens have long called for the police service board members, the inspector general, inspectors and all police officers and special constables to be required to take training around human rights, systemic racism and diversity training; and training in the rights and cultures of First Nations, Inuit and Métis peoples. We also believe in providing crisis training for officers that includes the fear and apprehension experienced by officers as a result of stereotyping or lack of knowledge about mental illness.

I just want to compliment the official opposition for bringing forward amendments at committee that would

strengthen those training provisions. I sincerely wish the government would have taken the opposition up on their offer. That's what committee is for—for us to work together to improve legislation. I think those amendments would have improved Bill 68.

I want to conclude, Mr. Speaker, by saying that one of the things that is not talked about in Bill 68 but that I think is an important issue when it comes to building trust between police and community is the issue around carding. We should be explicit at all times in this province that carding has no place in Ontario. As we move forward with the modernization of policing, I want to ensure that we have strong bonds of trust between police and all members of our community.

I also want to raise a concern that I know the police association has raised as we think about moving forward, and that's ensuring that there are no provisions in Ontario whatsoever that would ever lead to the privatization of policing. I know that's a concern that the association has raised. I just want to be clear in my commitment that I will always oppose anything that would move us in that direction.

I also want to raise a concern about the elimination of almost 100 police service boards in rural and remote communities. We need local decision-making and local representation to ensure that we have strong local connections to build those bonds of trust between community and police.

So, Mr. Speaker, Bill 68 is not perfect. I'm planning on supporting it because it is a step in the right direction, but I want to encourage the government to move forward and strengthen and improve this bill, and to actually listen to some of the amendments that opposition members put forward that I think would have strengthened this bill, as we think about the best way to modernize policing in this province.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): Pursuant to the order of the House dated March 5, 2019, I'm now required to put the question.

Ms. Jones has moved third reading of Bill 68, An Act with respect to community safety and policing.

Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry?

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

All those opposed to the motion will please say "nay."

In my opinion, the ayes have it.

Call in the members. This will be a 20-minute bell.

Interjections.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): Well, this is a first. We have deferral slips from both the government and the official opposition:

"Pursuant to standing order 28(h), I request that the vote on third reading of Bill 68, An Act with respect to community safety and policing, be deferred until deferred votes on Tuesday, March 26, 2019."

Third reading vote deferred.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): Orders of the day.

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

Ms. Scott, on behalf of Mr. Todd Smith, moved third reading of the following bill:

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

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): I recognize the Minister of Labour.

Hon. Laurie Scott: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I want to say from the onset that I'm pleased to rise today to speak on Bill 66, the Restoring Ontario's Competitiveness Act. I'll be sharing my time with the Minister of Economic Development and the MPP for Aurora–Oak Ridges–Richmond Hill.

Mr. Speaker, I'm happy to rise in the Legislature today to urge the passage of Bill 66, the Restoring Ontario's Competitiveness Act. I'm going to address schedule 9 of the bill. Schedule 9 proposes important reforms to employment and labour legislation in Ontario. This afternoon, I want to use my time in the House to address three subjects:

(1) the objectives of our government in pursuing the reforms set out in schedule 9;

(2) the amendments to schedule 9 proposed by our government and adopted by the Standing Committee on General Government; and

(3) the relationship between these reforms and my vision for Ontario's labour market.

Bill 66 is the latest piece of our government's plan to turn Ontario around. The Ontario we inherited from the previous government—overtaxed, over-regulated—was uncompetitive and sinking into debt. As Minister of Labour, my vision is an Ontario that is the best place in North America to recruit, to retain and to reward workers for the jobs not only of today but for the jobs of tomorrow.

Schedule 9 of Bill 66 is part of that vision, Mr. Speaker. Please allow me to tell this House about the three modern labour reforms in Bill 66: (1) bringing the employment standards poster into the 21st century; (2) respecting employees' choices about overtime hours; and (3) clarifying that broader public sector employers are not construction companies for the purposes of the Labour Relations Act.

Through Bill 66, our government proposes to remove the requirement in law for employers to physically post the Employment Standards Act poster in the workplace. In Ontario, the Ministry of Labour creates a poster setting out information about certain basic standards that each worker is entitled to under the Employment Standards Act. Today in Ontario, employers need to give each employee a copy of the poster and post the physical poster in the workplace. Why is the government telling employers where to put a poster?

Mr. Speaker, perhaps this approach made sense in the 1950s, when employees gathered in the lunchroom or

everyone worked on the same floor. Today the workplace could be anywhere: a GO train, a coffee shop, a construction site or a home office.

1530

Our reform in schedule 9 recognizes the reality of today's workplace. If passed, our reform will mean that employers will be responsible for sending a copy of the poster directly to their employees. Ontario employees will know their rights, and Ontario businesses won't be trapped under a legislative requirement designed for the 1950s. Our government is bringing Ontario back, and we are proposing to bring the poster requirement into the 21st century.

Second, we are proposing to eliminate the need for the government to second-guess a worker's choice regarding overtime hours. Schedule 9 would eliminate the requirement for employees and employers to apply to the Ministry of Labour after they had both agreed to additional weekly hours of work or overtime averaging. So we would retain the requirement for written agreements with employees, but applying for permission from the Ministry of Labour would no longer be necessary. Today in our province, the Ministry of Labour can second-guess an employee's choices about how many hours they work. If an Ontarian wants to work extra overtime hours or if an Ontarian just wants a flexible shift schedule with multiple shifts one week and fewer shifts in another week for the purposes of determining overtime, the government could actually say no.

The government should not be overruling Ontario's employees when they freely volunteer to work different hours or earn extra income. Through Bill 66, we are proposing to return that freedom to Ontario employees. The members on this side of the House respect the people, are for the people, and we will let the people decide when they work overtime hours. As my NDP colleagues will appreciate, schedule 9 is a win for worker choice and worker freedom. By streamlining overtime rules, Bill 66 would reduce unnecessary regulatory burdens on employers and put more money into the pockets of Ontario employees.

Third, the last labour reform in Bill 66 will finally clarify that broader public sector employers are not construction employers for the purposes of the Labour Relations Act. Schedule 9 of Bill 66—please go ahead if you wish.

Interjections.

Hon. Laurie Scott: Schedule 9 of Bill 66 would explicitly deem that municipalities, school boards, hospitals, colleges, universities and other public bodies are “non-construction employers” under the Labour Relations Act. By clarifying that public sector employers are not construction employers, this Legislature would be deliberately preserving Ontario's construction labour relations regime for construction companies and their employees.

The Labour Relations Act contains a specialized labour relations model for the construction industry. In Ontario, a number of broader public sector employers have become subject to this specialized labour relations model and

bound to province-wide construction industry collective agreements, even though they are not actually in the construction business. Municipalities, school boards, universities and hospitals are obviously not construction businesses. In many cases, when a municipality or other broader public sector employer becomes bound to construction collective agreements, that employer typically can only tender construction work to companies that are also bound to that same province-wide collective agreement.

Among other things, the misapplication of the specialized construction labour relations model of the Labour Relations Act to broader public sector entities effectively leads to fewer construction companies bidding on public infrastructure projects and fewer construction workers getting a shot at each job.

There are some workers now employed by broader public sector entities across Ontario who would be affected by this legislation. We are proposing that the appropriate model of collective bargaining for those employees is the general model of collective bargaining that applies to most employees and industries across Ontario.

Through this reform, broader public sector employees in Ontario would continue to have access to a collective bargaining regime that allows for employee choice, meaningful collective bargaining, and a pursuit of employee interests. If passed, our reform means that broader public sector employers who are not actually in the construction business, including hospitals, municipalities and school boards, can negotiate collective agreements specific to the circumstances of their sector.

This finally corrects the situation of broader public sector employers being bound to province-wide construction industry agreements that they have little opportunity to influence and that do not relate to the circumstances of their sector.

I'm in politics to solve problems, Mr. Speaker. Many of my colleagues and former colleagues in this House advocated for non-construction employer reform for years. I am pleased to be part of a government that is proposing to finally solve this issue for Ontario employees and employers.

This Legislature first attempted to resolve this issue 20 years ago. At that time, the Ontario Labour Relations Board was broadly interpreting the construction industry provisions in the Labour Relations Act. This broad interpretation meant that employers who did not provide any construction services to third parties were nonetheless caught by the specialized labour relations regime designed for the construction sector.

The Legislature originally considered the non-construction employer principle through Bill 31, introduced in 1998. The bill provided a mechanism for employers to demonstrate that they are not construction employers. This did not solve the issue, and further legislative changes were made by the Legislature in 2000. Unfortunately, the amendments made in 2000 still did not solve the problem for broader public sector employers. In

practice, the regime adopted in 1998 and amended in 2000 has become complex, time-consuming and unworkable for broader public sector employers. In our view, it has not achieved the Legislature's objective.

In 2013, this Legislature considered reforming these provisions through another bill, the proposed Fair and Open Tendering Act. Unfortunately, that bill was defeated. At the time, the current Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing pointed out that nearly half a million Ontarians were looking for work and that open tendering would have done a lot to create more work and more jobs, but the previous government wasn't interested. But now things are different.

I am pleased that the misapplication of the specialized construction labour relations model in the Labour Relations Act to broader public sector entities can finally and decisively be solved if Bill 66 is passed.

The Labour Relations Act should not presumptively force broader public sector employers into construction collective agreements. Those agreements are designed to govern construction companies, not municipalities, schools, universities and other public entities. Mr. Speaker, the specialized construction industry labour relations model is simply an inappropriate labour relations model for broader public sector entities.

In addition, one of my concerns is that construction workers should not be unfairly excluded from working on public projects in their local communities. All construction workers deserve a shot at helping to build the community where they live and pay taxes. This is one of the reasons our reform is targeted at broader public sector employers who are not construction companies: It is unfair to shut out many workers and contractors from working on public construction projects. Our proposed change will level the playing field for everyone. If you can do the work, you deserve a shot at the job. It is a question of fairness.

1540

These objectives are achieved while preserving the right of employees of broader public sector entities to organize and to access a meaningful collective bargaining regime that is appropriate to their sector.

I know that there are some people who oppose our non-construction employer reform. Our government introduced Bill 66 in December. We have spent three months listening and consulting with stakeholders on all sides of this issue. Our consultations were serious and meaningful. Representatives of the government at various levels met with stakeholders and worked to address their concerns.

Our government is happy to listen to all sides of an issue. The stakeholders engaged directly by our government since December 2018 include: building and construction trades and their affiliated unions; LIUNA; the Carpenters' District Council of Ontario; the Christian Labour Association of Canada, or CLAC; the Progressive Contractors Association; Merit OpenShop Contractors; the Ontario Electrical League; the Association of Municipalities of Ontario and many more organizations and individuals.

The government believes in schedule 9 to Bill 66, but we also believe in listening to the people and working to find common solutions. In that spirit, our government proposed three amendments to schedule 9, each of which was adopted by the committee on general government.

The substance of our amendments accomplishes two objectives: expanding the range of broader public sector entities covered by the new provisions, and allowing a limited election for broader public sector employers who wish to remain within the system of construction labour relations.

Over the course of a lengthy consultation, we heard some objections and we listened. Those of us on this side of the House know the frustration of a government that refuses to listen. We lived that reality for 15 years.

Various stakeholders suggested expanding the range of broader public sector entities covered by the new provisions. The government is particularly pleased to extend the scope of our reform to cover municipal housing corporations.

The other substantive amendment—allowing a time-limited election for broader public employers to remain within the construction labour relations scheme—was the product of extensive consultation and deliberation.

While our government continues to believe that the specialized construction labour relations model is an inappropriate model for broader public sector entities, we recognize that some broader public sector employers may have specific reasons to prefer to remain with the construction labour relations provision of the Labour Relations Act. We are allowing employers to make that election.

For reasons of fairness, we believe employers must make that election promptly. It must not be used as an attempt to exert improper influence over employees. And we believe the election must be a one-time option, so it cannot be revisited to gain improper leverage over employees.

These amendments were the product of consultations with many parties. But I want to particularly acknowledge the trade union stakeholders who gave input towards these amendments.

One of our government's main tasks is to make it easier to work and create new jobs in Ontario. We need to let common sense inform public policy. These are the primary motivations behind Bill 66.

Ontario has nearly 400,000 regulatory requirements. Far too many of these are inefficient, inflexible or out of date. The centrepiece of Bill 66 is an aggressive plan to reduce by 25% the number of regulatory compliance requirements in Ontario. Our government is committed to maintaining the rules and regulations that keep Ontario workers and families safe, but we want to make it easier and faster for employers to comply with the rules of doing business in Ontario.

As Minister of Labour, my vision is an Ontario that is the best place in North America to recruit, to retain and to reward workers for the jobs of today and tomorrow. I believe Ontario workers understand that cutting red tape

and fiscal prudence is the path to a more efficient and productive economy.

Workers across all trades and professions treat their hard-earned money with respect, and they want their governments to do the same. Working people should have confidence in reasonable and predictable regulations, and everyone who works should have the confidence of a good job and a safe workplace. Bill 66 is an example of reasonable rules and a common-sense approach to government. I strongly urge the passage of Bill 66, as amended.

As I said at the beginning of my remarks, Mr. Speaker, I will be sharing my time with the members I mentioned. Thank you very much for the opportunity to speak to Bill 66 here.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): Thank you very much. Since you did mention that you were sharing your time, I will now turn it over to the second member, the member from Aurora–Oak Ridges–Richmond Hill.

Mr. Michael Parsa: Thank you very much, Speaker. It's my pleasure to rise today to speak to the third reading of Bill 66, Restoring Ontario's Competitiveness Act, 2019. This bill marks the government's continued commitment to reduce outdated, inefficient and burdensome red tape.

During the election, and now as government, we have continued to state that our mandate is to open Ontario for business. With this bill, we're doing that. From very early on in our mandate, we made a clear commitment to the fine people of this province that we would be reducing red tape by 25%—a goal that I'm so proud to say we will be achieving by 2020, a whole two years ahead of schedule. We're targeting 25% of the 400,000 rules and regulations that do nothing but act as barriers to our province's businesses and job creators. These pieces of red tape are burdensome, duplicative and, in a lot of cases, outdated and irrelevant to the times and circumstances we live in today.

These pieces of red tape were so burdensome and costly that 320,000 good-paying manufacturing jobs left our province over the past 15 years. On average, businesses that want to come and set up shop here in Ontario face a compliance cost that is about \$6,000 to \$8,000 higher than other provinces. This is largely due to the cost of complying with all the ridiculous red tape we have here in Ontario.

But it's not just the cost of business that's being affected by all this red tape. Our ranking for productivity in terms of GDP per capita is appalling. Ontario currently ranks 46th out of 64 North American jurisdictions. Almost half of Canada's population are residents of Ontario. We have a robust economy that just added 95,000 jobs. We have the talent, we have the resources and we have the know-how, yet our productivity ranked 46th out of 64 North American jurisdictions.

Ontario was once the engine of Canada's economy. Now it's not. The actions that were taken by the previous government over a 15-year period played a leading role in this decline. During their 15 years in power, the previous government piled on so much unnecessary red tape that it

choked the productivity out of our economy. In simple terms, Ontario was once the engine of Canada's economy. Then the previous government came along, and now Ontario ranks 46th out of 64 North American jurisdictions.

Even with this conclusive evidence, there are members across the aisle who have stated, "Some of the most successful economies in the world—Germany, for example—have more regulations in place than Ontario." Well, I'm here to tell you, Speaker, those members are very wrong, and they need to do more research. I've done it, so please allow me to share it with you. According to the World Economic Forum's 2018 Global Competitiveness Report, Germany ranked seventh in terms of burdens of government regulation. In that same report, Canada ranked 53rd in the world. If Canada is 53rd and Ontario is the most overregulated province in Canada, doesn't it make sense to have less red tape, not more? In case the members opposite don't know, we are cutting over-regulation and red tape so that Ontario can once again claim its rightful place as the engine of Canada's economy.

1550

After being elected and appointed parliamentary assistant to the Minister of Economic Development, Job Creation and Trade—a great guy—I set out on tour and visited various ridings in this province. I sat down with small business owners, entrepreneurs and job creators to discuss what the government could do to get the economy going again. Do you know what the vast majority of these business owners and job creators recommended, Speaker? I can tell you that they didn't mince words. They clearly stated that they just wanted the government to get out of their way and let them do what they do best. They wanted us to listen to them and remove the burdensome and irrelevant red tape that was hurting their bottom line. This is the same bottom line that these businesses would use to reinvest into our economy to create more jobs, more innovation and ultimately more revenue for the province.

We have listened and continue to listen to business owners and job creators, and we're clearing the way for them by cutting the chokehold that red tape has on this province. It is precisely because of the actions this government is taking that for the first time in history, the Canadian Federation of Independent Business awarded Ontario a red tape report card with an A- grade. In less than eight months, this government raised Ontario's report card from a C+ to an A-. Speaker, I want to emphasize and reiterate that: We went from a C+ to an A- in just a few months. That's why all of the job creators are so happy with the leadership of our government.

That's why it should come as no surprise—which leads to my next point, Speaker—that Premier Ford is the first Premier in Ontario's history to receive the Canadian Federation of Independent Business' Golden Scissors Award.

Mr. Wayne Gates: You're cutting jobs. That's what you're cutting.

Mr. Michael Parsa: The numbers don't show that, Speaker. I'm sure, if you've seen the numbers in the last

few months, you know that the job losses were coming in in previous months. But since we've formed government, jobs are being added every single time there's an announcement made.

The CFIB represents 42,000 small and medium-sized business members. If 42,000 small and medium-sized businesses thinking we're steering the ship in the right direction, I don't understand why the members opposite don't agree.

Speaker, I want to read an excerpt from a September 2018 Fraser Institute report that said, Ontario "experienced a 'lost economic decade' from 2008–2017, as the province ranked near the bottom of the Canadian pack on a variety of economic measures...."

"Ontario's policy environment has undermined, rather than helped, Ontario's attractiveness as an investment destination. A large and growing public debt, uncompetitive taxes, high electricity prices, and restrictive labour regulations are some of the most important policy factors that have likely interfered with investment and growth."

Speaker, when one hears a phrase like "Ontario experienced a lost economic decade," they would be negligent if they did not act to reverse the trends of decision-making that led to such dire decline. I should note that the economic numbers and indicators all support this assessment.

The Canadian Manufacturers and Exporters, CME, stated that the manufacturing sector—a sector that "directly accounts for over 12% of the province's GDP, with nearly \$300 billion in annual shipments, \$200 billion in exports and 770,000 jobs"—experienced the erasing of all the gains made since the economic recovery after the 2008 recession.

Speaker, our entire manufacturing sector virtually made no gains in a decade. Do you know what they identified to be a significant impediment to investment and gains in the province? Regulatory burdens and—you guessed it—red tape.

If you're still not convinced, there's more. Our friends at the Ontario Chamber of Commerce, in their 2018 Ontario Economic Report stated that, "In 2017, 41% of businesses lacked confidence in the economy." In early 2018, that number significantly rose, to 48%. They indicated the number one explanation for this lack of confidence cited by three quarters of the respondents was economic policy by the government.

The government heard all these concerns. My colleagues and myself travelled the province and heard these concerns. At every business round table I attended, businesses and job creators voiced the same concerns. There is no question about it: Ontario is overregulated with red tape, and it is hurting our economy.

Speaker, we hit the ground running and we have been diligently working to create an economic environment in which our businesses and job creators can thrive. The Minister of Economic Development, Job Creation and Trade said it best: "It's important to think of the government's red tape reduction measures as stations on a rail line. Bill 47 was the first one; Bill 57 was the next station and Bill 66 is the next station on the line, and it's nowhere near the final destination."

Under this bill, every ministry has worked together to make sure we are getting rid of burdensome regulations that are unnecessary and duplicative. For instance, with guidelines from the Ministry of Government and Consumer Services, our government is proposing to repeal the Wireless Services Agreements Act and harmonize it with the federal government's national Wireless Code. By repealing this unnecessary provincial duplication, which has been superseded by the federal regulations that provide nearly identical protections for all Canadians, our government is making it easier for consumers and businesses to understand their wireless services rights.

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

Under Bill 66, we're proposing to restore fairness to our economic environment by removing unnecessary and burdensome barriers. As I toured the province and participated in over 40 small business round tables, the message I continuously heard from business owners was, "Give us a fair playing field and let us do the business of doing business."

This message was echoed over and over again from all parts of the province, and my caucus colleagues and I have heard it loud and clear. We're working to get out of the way of businesses and working hard to provide them with an economic climate that allows them to be more competitive.

It's due to reasons such as this that we are proposing to provide businesses with property tax certainty. As part of our red tape package, the Minister of Finance directed the Municipal Property Assessment Corp., MPAC, to assess and value employment lands based on permitted uses rather than speculative ones. This will protect businesses from steep tax increases resulting from new nearby residential developments and it will ensure businesses on industrial lands receive equitable treatment and certainty when it comes to property tax assessments. You see, Speaker, anyone who operates a business will tell you that the foundations of a strong economy are based in certainty. As a government, we're working to remove the barriers that cause uncertainty in business and in our economy.

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Another red-tape-reducing initiative under this bill that will remove the shackles to innovation is schedule 12. Ontario is positioned as a global leader in science and innovation, yet many of our industry leaders are handcuffed by regulatory burdens. These regulatory barriers have worked to limit their abilities to advance the testing of technologies that will benefit Canadians and people around the world. Our government has made it a priority to make sure Ontario continues to grow and positions itself as a centre for innovation and science.

Through schedule 12 of this bill, our government is taking active steps to open the doors for expanded testing related to connected and autonomous vehicles in Ontario.

By expanding the automated vehicle project and through our Driving Prosperity auto plan, we are also helping the auto sector to grow and thrive. Through changes to Ontario's Automated Vehicle Pilot Program, we will be opening the doors to new CV/AV testing, research and development opportunities. We're taking action to support the work of the 200 companies working on AV technologies. This will help remove the barriers to innovation and research, which in turn will lead to immediate and long-term economic gains for Ontario.

The auto sector agrees with our plan. In fact, the president of the Automotive Parts Manufacturers' Association said that our plan "is a strong indication that this government understands the planning, training and investment cycle of the automotive manufacturing sector." We look forward to continuing to work with the sector and industry leaders to strengthen our auto sector.

Another great initiative under this bill is the red tape relief that it will give to farmers of this great province. Under this bill, the farm registration program will operate under electronic service delivery. This will simplify the process, change how the program is delivered and improve the timeliness of its decisions. By streamlining the farm business registration process, this government, with the guidance of the Minister of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs, is reducing the onerous paperwork for this province's farmers. We're taking red tape out of the equation and letting farmers do what they do best, and that is to continue to grow produce and delicious foods that keep this province and Canada fed.

Speaker, it doesn't stop there. This bill is also amending the ministry's act to make it easier for the provincial loan guarantee to be offered directly to farmers. This amendment will allow farmers to receive the relief they need by having faster and easier access to government programs such as loan guarantees. This small change will help 19,000 beef farmers in ways we cannot imagine.

Yet another important initiative under this bill is straight from the auditor's report on the Technical Standards and Safety Authority and the effectiveness of the job it was doing to protect Ontarians on everything from elevators to pressure valves. Under section 7 of this bill, reforming the TSSA to ensure effective and efficient regulation is a key focus of this government. It is for this reason that we're enabling the TSSA to develop better rules to achieve its objectives under this act. We're allowing for the creation of a regulatory environment that allows for the standardization of best practices in a practical and regulatory environment. By removing up-holstered and stuffed articles from TSSA's mandate, the government is also ensuring that TSSA inspectors are spending more time on pipelines and no time on stuffed teddy bears.

These are just a few aspects of the bill that, once enacted as law, will help remove the regulatory barriers to a thriving economy.

We didn't just pull these ideas out of thin air. We consulted with businesses, entrepreneurs and innovators from across this province.

Speaker, I just want to tell you a story about one of these consultations. At a small business round table in Mississauga, a very young, intelligent and energetic business owner said very clearly: "I own a flower business. I have over 20 employees, and they are all like family to me. I want to continue to grow my business and provide my customers with excellent customer service. However, I cannot do these things when I am continuously flooded by paperwork.

"The amount of duplicative and irrelevant paperwork I have to fill out, and then wait for approval on, is incredible.

"Sometimes I don't even know if the paperwork even arrived in the hands of the people assessing it.

"PA Parsa, is there any way for the government to streamline all these processes and put them online?"

"I am just a small business owner, with a lot of time constraints, and the time-consuming nature of all this paperwork is killing my ability to operate and grow my business."

Speaker, this was just one of many stories, as I toured the province, that I heard from the people. This story reminds me that we're on the right track and heading in the right direction to serve the people well.

In conclusion, I'm proud of the work we're doing for the job creators and residents of this province. We're making life easier, we're making life more affordable and we're helping our economy thrive.

Speaker, Ontario is open for business, and we want to let the world know it. We're also open for jobs. Thank you for the opportunity.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): Further debate? I recognize the Minister of Economic Development, Trade and Jobs as well as the government House leader for further debate.

Hon. Todd Smith: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'm happy to rise to speak at third reading of the Restoring Ontario's Competitiveness Act, Bill 66, to talk about how we're keeping one of our most important promises to the people of Ontario: We're making Ontario open for business, and we're making Ontario open for jobs.

We promised to provide relief for families, we promised to get government out of the way of our job creators, and we promised to create an environment where businesses can thrive and grow and create good jobs for the people of Ontario. Speaker, that's exactly what we're doing. We're cutting the red tape that adds so much to the high cost of doing business in Ontario, so we can bring jobs and investment back to our province.

After 15 years of wasteful government spending and scandal and mismanagement, we're turning this ship around. We've got a real problem with red tape in Ontario. We have too many unnecessary regulations that make it harder for businesses to create jobs and harder for people to find them. We also make it expensive and time-consuming for companies to comply with regulations that we actually do need, to keep our workers and our population safe.

A research paper shows just how bad things are. The paper, by scholars at the Munk School of Global Affairs

and Public Policy in Toronto, shows that in Ontario, it costs \$33,000 per business per year to comply with regulations, much more than our neighbouring jurisdictions and the highest of any province in Canada.

Since we were elected, we've been hearing from businesses about how bad the situation really is. As a matter of fact, I've been hearing how bad the situation is for years and years and years in opposition as well.

In a submission to the Standing Committee on General Government, Julie Kwiecinski, from the Canadian Federation of Independent Business, wrote, "In general, red tape costs businesses time and money that could be better spent on creating jobs and improving competitiveness. Small businesses in the province spend as much as 177 hours and \$6,776 per employee every year to comply with regulations from all levels of government."

Speaker, 177 hours and almost \$7,000 per employee every year to comply with regulations is unacceptable. It cannot be acceptable in a province that wants to grow and thrive.

The problem goes beyond competing with other provinces here in Canada. When it comes to red tape, there is a widening gap between Ontario and US states that are our chief competitors when it comes to attracting and sustaining jobs. These states are making a big push to reduce unnecessary regulatory burden. As a matter of fact, the Premier just met with the governor of Kentucky a couple of weeks back at a governors' meeting in Washington, D.C. The governor of Kentucky presented Premier Ford with a red pin with a pair of gold scissors on it, because Kentucky, one of our major competitors, is taking cutting regulation extremely seriously as well.

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Businesses are telling us that, every year, the burden gets heavier in Ontario and lighter in the United States. Every day, businesses decide where to invest and create jobs, and those businesses in Ontario are under siege. They're getting phone calls from neighbouring US jurisdictions every day, asking questions: "Why are you doing business in Ontario? Why don't you come down here? We'll roll out the red carpet for you. We'll give you a site, we'll give you a building, we'll give you half-price electricity costs, we'll get rid of the regulations." They want our jobs.

Our job creators here in Ontario are making a choice between Ontario and between our competitors: Michigan, New York state, Ohio, West Virginia and even Quebec. We want as many of those jobs to stay here, and new jobs to land here in Ontario as we possibly can.

At the end of the day, businesses will not invest here if they don't think that they're welcome here. That's why we've gone to work so early in our mandate, to ensure that businesses know that there has been a change of government in Ontario: a government that is pro-business, a government that is open for business and open for jobs. With all the red tape that we have here in Ontario, it's no wonder that we have been, under the Liberals, losing jobs and losing investment here in Ontario.

I heard the member earlier talking about more than 300,000 manufacturing jobs lost under the Liberals'

watch. The fact is, Ontario has far too many regulations that are inefficient, inflexible or simply out of date, or they're duplicates of federal or municipal regulations. Overregulation is driving up the cost of doing business and making it harder for Ontario to compete.

The problem isn't just the number of rules; it's how incredibly complicated many of these rules are, and how much it costs companies to comply with them, compared to other places.

It also takes far too long to get shovels in the ground on job-creating projects in Ontario. In Ontario, it takes 48 weeks, on average—almost a year—to get environmental permits for a new plant; in New York state, it's 10 weeks. That's it. While it may be tough for the members of the opposition to understand why we need to cut red tape, examples like these are why we need to take a long, hard look at the regulations that we have in place.

Imagine if you're looking to expand your business, to create new jobs and provide for your family, and your employees are relying on you to make a living. You're working hard and your business is succeeding, and now you want to open a new facility. When it comes to such a huge investment, businesses need to move quickly. Otherwise, they can be forced to cut back production, and they can be forced to cut back shifts and cut back employees. Speaker, time is money. Would you be willing to wait an extra 38 weeks, almost an extra year, to get that facility up and running if you didn't have to, when it takes only 10 weeks elsewhere? I think we all know the answer to that one, and the answer is no. Businesses are going to invest elsewhere unless we do something.

In other sectors, the timelines for approvals are even worse. The member from Timiskaming—Cochrane, while speaking to the bill, talked about a mining company that wants to invest in his riding. He said it would take them seven years to get up and running here in Ontario; in Nunavut, it would take them only two. I'm glad that he understands that reality. It's stories like these that explain why Ontario is a less attractive place to mine.

In fact, the Fraser Institute published a survey earlier this year that showed Ontario fell from seventh to 20th as the most attractive destination worldwide to mine. That's why the Minister of Northern Development and Mines is acting as quickly as he possibly can—he's also the minister responsible for energy—to ensure that those big mining investments are happening in northern Ontario, because we need them. We need them, Mr. Speaker. We have the ability to create these mines. We have the ability to create wealth in northern Ontario, and we have to act on it, but a big reason that we haven't been able to act on it—and the number has slipped steadily down the list from seventh to 20th under the Liberals. I think at one time, actually, when the Liberals first came into power, we were number 4. So we have fallen, and it's because the Liberals kept on bringing in more and more burdensome red tape because it made them feel warm and fuzzy because they were bringing in a new regulation, but half the time, it was a duplicate of something that was already happening at the federal level.

We're paying the price for the high cost of doing business in our province. Many companies have stopped investing and modernizing or expanding their operations here. Others are taking investments and jobs to more welcoming places. One business says that the government authorities in the US work alongside you every step of the way to attract your investment; the government is actually there to help you. But here, the feeling has always been that when you show up to talk to the Ontario government, it's like when you go to the doctor's office and they tell you, "Take a number." You can't give them a number here. We need to help them bring those jobs to Ontario.

We have a real problem with our competitiveness. Just look at what's happening to our manufacturing sector. I mentioned it already: Under the previous Liberal government, supported every step of the way by the NDP, we lost 320,000 manufacturing jobs. That's a staggering number under the watch of the Liberals. Since then, we haven't seen any net increase in manufacturing jobs.

In committee the other day, we heard from Canadian Manufacturers and Exporters. They reminded us that contrary to what the member from Kingston and the Islands thinks—and I like the member from Kingston and the Islands a lot—manufacturing jobs are not jobs of the past. Manufacturing jobs are still the jobs of the present and they can be the jobs of the future. They are good, stable jobs that allow people the opportunity to provide for their family, to put their kids through school, to save for retirement. They're the kind of jobs our government is fighting for.

CME also came with a warning, Speaker—a warning about our competitiveness as a province and as a country. Business investment in Canada fell by 2.2% in the third quarter, and again by 2.5% in the fourth quarter of last year. Investment in Ontario is just barely above where we were before the last recession.

Look at our auto sector, Speaker: Over the past decade, we've had a number of high-profile plant closures. I want to expand on that, because I know it's a sector that's important to every member of the House. Over 100,000 men and women across the province go to work every day in our auto sector, building the cars and parts that we need in our daily life. Auto sector jobs help families put food on the table. They put their kids through college or university and invest in their futures. They're the economic lifeblood of so many communities across the province.

I was in Windsor last week, visiting the heart of Ontario's auto sector. I had the chance to visit Fiat Chrysler's automotive research and development facility and Laval's manufacturing facility, where they make tools and moulds that are used by automakers. It was great to hear from the front-line workers in the sector about what they need to succeed. Our auto sector is great, Speaker, but we are falling behind. Instead of building 2.2 million cars in Ontario, like we were this time last year, we're now at about two million cars.

Since 2009, Ontario has attracted only 6% of new auto sector investment in North America. That's the legacy of the previous Liberal government: high hydro rates, high

taxes, and crippling red tape and overregulation. That's why we announced Driving Prosperity, our first phase in our plan for the auto sector, because we have the best auto workers in the world and we're going to support them every way that we can. Our auto plan has three pillars: competitiveness, innovation and talent. A big part of the competitiveness pillar of our plan is cutting red tape. The actions that form this piece of legislation, the Restoring Ontario's Competitiveness Act, are a big step forward.

One specific action we are taking is to make it easier to test autonomous vehicles on Ontario roads. Through changes to the Highway Traffic Act, we're opening the door to new research opportunities for connected and autonomous vehicles. Right now, Ontario has over 200 companies developing connected and autonomous vehicle technology—General Motors, Ford, Google, Apple, BlackBerry QNX, you name it. That's a big step. As a matter of fact, just this morning I was meeting with General Motors officials talking about the opportunities that lie in the autonomous vehicle sector.

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Our automotive sector is not the only one that struggled under the previous Liberal government. We need to face the painful reality about the state of our economy. As the member from Waterloo said during debate on this bill, "You can't solve a problem until you acknowledge that the problem is there." Well, we are acknowledging the problem, all right, and the truth is, with apologies to Scotiabank, we're not as rich as we think, Speaker. I hope the member is taking note, because it's shocking to compare Ontario's economy to the rest of North America. We like to think that we're in the economic big leagues, right up there with New York and California. But the numbers, unfortunately, just tell a different story. The latest figures on GDP per capita compared every Canadian province and territory, the 50 US states and the District of Columbia. Out of those 64 jurisdictions, out of those 64 places across North America, New York ranked third. California ranked seventh. Do you know where Ontario ranked? Forty-sixth out of 64. We're way down in the bottom third of the ranking with a GDP per person similar to Oklahoma's and Montana's.

That's got to change. We can't keep squeezing our job creators. We can't accept that Ontario will remain an also-ran in North America and that our kids will have fewer opportunities than we did. We need to make Ontario once again a great place to do business and create jobs. That's why we've rolled up our sleeves and got right down to business.

Bill 47 scrapped the Liberals' disastrous Bill 148. We called it the Making Ontario Open for Business Act, and it's done that. It really has had an impact on the ground. I think it's certainly had an impact on business confidence in the province of Ontario, and, as a matter of fact, according to Stats Canada, it has had a pretty good impact on the job creation numbers in Ontario compared with other jurisdictions. Bill 47 also reduced red tape in the skilled trades. So many companies can hire as many skilled workers as they need now. Our job creators need

more people working in the skilled trades, so we're making it easier for them to take on apprentices. We believe that if you're prepared to do the work, then you're deserving of a shot at that job. Job creators were actually singing from the rooftops when they got the news that we were repealing the job-killing parts of Bill 148. It sent a very positive bit of news to job creators in the province.

As a matter of fact, there was a number of us that were just over at Hart House at the University of Toronto meeting with the Ontario Chamber of Commerce. Those who are representatives of the chamber of commerce, be it the executive directors or the CEOs or the presidents of their local chambers, are thrilled with the action that we took very early on by repealing the sections of Bill 148 that were killing jobs and making it difficult for the economy.

Mr. Wayne Gates: You know that's not true.

Hon. Todd Smith: I know it's exactly true because I was just over there meeting with them, with a bunch of my colleagues who were sitting there having a chat with them. Maybe the member opposite will want to hear this: It let them know that they have a Premier and they have a government that actually understand business. This government understands business. They understand that when businesses succeed, our workers and our communities succeed.

It also helps our public sector succeed. We need a strong, thriving private sector in order to have a strong public sector that's there to help us when we need them. We're seeing those results. I mentioned it earlier. The StatsCan numbers for the last three months were pretty darn good. We have created 95,000 jobs in Ontario in the last three months. Here we are, late March. In February, we created 37,000 jobs. That's almost double the entire United States. It's pretty remarkable, really, that we almost doubled the entire United States. It really is a testament—we're happy to play our part, but it's a testament to our job creators. When we create the right environment for them, then they're going to invest here, and that's what we've seen over the last three months. When we free them from the burden of excessive red tape and high taxes, they step up to the plate and they knock it out of the park just like Joe Carter in game 7 of the World Series.

Bill 66 is another big step to create an environment in our province that supports job creation. We've identified over 30 actions to reduce the cost of doing business. Our proposals would get rid of regulations that do nothing to protect workers or the environment, and streamline and modernize others. If this legislation is passed, our changes will make it easier for people to find good jobs, and they would remove obstacles to growth, investment and job creation in over a dozen industries. Manufacturing, construction, the auto sector, agriculture and food processing—they'll all benefit. We're taking these actions to make businesses more competitive so they can create more good jobs.

We're not out here to eliminate regulations for the sake of doing so, as much as the opposition would like to believe that's the case. What we are doing is getting rid of

overregulation—overregulation that is costing our businesses money. We want to reduce red tape. That's going to make it easier to do business in Ontario and reduce the cost of doing business by \$400 million, while at the same time make sure that our workers have safe working conditions, that our residents have safe communities to live in.

We're cutting regulations that just don't make sense, regulations that are hurting our competitiveness. Here's one example: Ontario has regulatory requirements for upholstered and stuffed articles like toys, pillows and mattresses. They're about the little tags that say the product was made with new materials. These rules came into effect back in the 1930s. They made sure these items were stuffed with new materials to prevent the spread of dangerous diseases. But things have changed a lot since the 1930s. The federal government has rules in place to regulate what goes into stuffed items. We're going to quit stuffing regulation on the businesses of Ontario and make sure that they can do business and create jobs in Ontario.

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

Mr. Wayne Gates: It's always a pleasure to rise in the House, particularly on this bill. I will talk about the auto sector to start out because, for whatever reason, this party seems to think they're now the party of the auto sector. It was just a few four months ago in Oshawa, it was announced they were going to close and our Premier said that that ship has sailed, it's gone, it's left the dock.

Well, what we found out is you fought back. The mayor fought back, the NDP fought back, the workers fought back and, most importantly, the union didn't give up on those workers because they knew they were highly skilled and they knew they had the tradespeople that put out the best auto parts in the world. Do you know what's happened? General Motors has come back to the table. There's not a settlement there yet, but I believe some of those jobs are going to be saved. Why that happened is, we didn't give up on the auto sector, we didn't give up on manufacturing and we didn't give up on those parts suppliers. They were going to lose their jobs. Their families were going to be affected by it. So don't stand up and tell us how much you cared about the auto sector, when you said let them die.

And just a few short months—actually, it was a few short years ago, under Tim Hudak—do you guys remember that guy? I know the member from the Bay of Quinte and I know one of the other guys over there remembers too. But at the end of the day—I'm going to tell you what happened—Tim Hudak, during the crisis, was one of the guys that said let the auto sector die, because it falls right within the PC Party and how you guys think: Business should run business. We shouldn't pick losers and winners—that's how you guys think. Admit it. But you know what? You decided that you wouldn't support the auto sector. You were very clear—

Interjections.

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

Mr. Wayne Gates: It would be nice if the PCs would listen to this because, unlike myself, you guys are

strangers to the truth. This is fact; this happened. You were here when they said it, and so were other people here.

Thank you very much. I hope I get another two minutes to finish the rest of Bill 66—

Interjections.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Jennifer K. French): A reminder to all members—

Mr. Wayne Gates: I know the truth.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Jennifer K. French): Come to order. A reminder to all members not to toe that line. We know what we can and can't say and what is and isn't parliamentary.

Further questions and comments?

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Mr. Roman Baber: If my friend from Niagara Falls had his way, his party would make all businesses in this province losers by compounding on taxation, by increasing the carbon tax, and by not providing the labour reform much needed in this province.

It's very simple: For many years, there used to be an argument as to how to reduce smoking. People would say, "You know what? If you increase the tax on smoking, then people would smoke less." It's very simple, Madam Speaker, taxation discourages behaviour. Regulations discourage behaviour.

My friends from the opposition, love jobs. They love good-paying jobs, but every opportunity they find to demonize business, to talk about business and to think about business is to demonize business. That's not right. That's why I am so proud that over the course of the last eight months our government has been precisely on the opposite path that now shows itself through these amazing job-creation numbers we're seeing. You can't argue with that.

I don't think that we should be in the business of demonizing employers, nor do I think that government is in the business of creating jobs. Businesses are in the business of creating jobs—because if you have a job, there is nothing stopping you. If you have a job, you're capable of attaining whatever it is that you desire. If you have a job and you're given an opportunity to work, you can have decency and self-respect. I always say that as an immigrant to this country. A job is what brings about decency and fairness.

So I am proud to support this bill. I am proud that we're going to make it easier for businesses to hire and grow. I am proud that we're open for business and open for jobs. And I can't wait to see Bill 66 pass.

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

M^{me} France Gélinas: I thought that if we're going to be talking about red tape that I would give a few examples from the health care system where red tape is really holding us back.

I'll focus on nurse practitioners just for the few seconds that were allocated to me. Did you know that when you go see your nurse practitioner—I'll say "she," because they're mainly women—she can do a hearing assessment? If she sees that there is something not too good she can

send you to see an audiologist or she can refer to you a hospital that will do further testing. If it is decided that you need some kind of hearing aid she can prescribe those. All of this is within the scope of practice. But did you know that we have a program in Ontario called the ADP, the Assistive Devices Program, where the government pays for part of your hearing aid? So she diagnosed that you had a hearing impairment. She sent you to get all of the tests and you now have your hearing aid, but she cannot sign the piece of paper that will allow you reimbursements from the government. At that point, you have to find a family physician—or a physician of some kind who doesn't know you from a hole in the ground—and say, "Would you sign this piece of paper? Because the government won't allow my nurse practitioner, who followed me all the way along, to be reimbursed unless a physician comes and signs that piece of paper."

We have clinics in northern Ontario where nurse practitioners are the primary caregiver. They often don't have a family physician attached to those clinics. It becomes problematic.

But it gets worse. Did you know that if you have a heart attack in a nurse practitioner clinic, they cannot use the defibrillator? The secretary can. The people in the waiting room can. Everybody else can, but not the nurse practitioner.

Did you know that if you go and need a urine dip for diabetes, the secretary can do this but the nurse practitioner cannot?

There's a little bit of red tape we could get rid of.

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

Mr. Will Bouma: It's a great pleasure to rise in response to the discussion about Bill 66 this afternoon. I really appreciate our Minister of Economic Development, Job Creation and Trade and the enthusiasm and the great joy that he has in taking a giant pair of scissors to the red tape in the province of Ontario.

I really appreciated the comments from the member from Nickel Belt because the things that she's talking about in health care are exactly the same that business owners in my riding are facing on a daily basis.

My good friend Jim recently built a brand new facility and had to start building his facility before he had all of the necessary permits just to get around the red tape. He was faced with a stop-work order and received a fine. When I asked him about that he said, "Quite frankly, I would much rather pay the fine than deal with the issues in trying to get my facility built." When I toured the facility to have a look at what he had been able to do and the great things that he's doing and the 30 employees that he has there, he informed me that he's getting notes every single day from other jurisdictions that are more than happy to take his facility on, that will clear the pathway to have him do that.

While our friends across the way in the opposition talk about how we have to be worried about workers' rights and things like that, at the same time, when we make an

environment for business that's so antagonistic to the growth and development of good business, then we won't have any of those jobs either that are so important to preserve.

In conclusion, all I want to say is that what we're doing is taking our first good swing at the things that are really slowing down development of opportunity to grow business and jobs in the province of Ontario, with Bill 66. I look forward to it passing, and quite honestly, Madam Speaker, I am really excited about what this is going to be able to do for the province of Ontario and for the people we're working for here.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Jennifer K. French): I return to the Minister of Economic Development, Job Creation and Trade for his final comments.

Hon. Todd Smith: I thank the member from York Centre and also the member from Brantford for their comments, and also the member from Nickel Belt. She's absolutely right: Should we be expanding the scope of practice for our nurse practitioners? We do have a doctor shortage in many communities across Ontario. Can nurse practitioners play a role in ensuring that we get proper primary health care when we need it? Absolutely. We're just getting started on reducing red tape. We're focusing on business in the early stages of our red tape reduction, but there's no reason why we can't look at reducing red tape in the health care sector as well.

The member from Niagara Falls had lots of accusations in his commentary. I can tell you that since becoming the Minister of Economic Development, Job Creation and Trade and the minister responsible for red tape reduction, I've met with more auto sector employees and auto sector head office people than I ever imagined that I would. What we want to do is create an environment where we're growing our auto sector here in Ontario and creating more of those good jobs that are in Ontario. The status quo wasn't working, and so what we want to do is ensure that we have an environment here in Ontario where we're creating more auto sector jobs.

I've met with the folks at Honda and Toyota and Ford. This morning, I met with General Motors executives. Just last Friday, I was at FCA in Windsor, talking to executives there, and do you know what they told me? They told me, "Don't do what the NDP want to do. We can't have a higher carbon tax. That's not going to encourage businesses to come into Ontario. We can't have Bill 148 and those job-killing regulations in place. You did the right thing." We did the right thing by removing those job-killing pieces of legislation. We can't have a Green Energy Act, which the members opposite were supportive of, and we can't go out there and tell people not to buy General Motors vehicles. It doesn't work. It's not the proper way to go. We need to be buying vehicles made right here in Ontario.

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

Mr. Peter Tabuns: Speaker, before I go to my comments, I believe there's unanimous consent to stand down the lead on this bill by our critic the member for Waterloo.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Jennifer K. French): The member from Toronto–Danforth is asking for unanimous consent to stand down the lead. Is it agreed? Agreed.

I recognize the member for Toronto–Danforth.

Mr. Peter Tabuns: Thank you, Speaker. I appreciate this opportunity.

It's quite extraordinary—in fact, it's Alice in Wonderland—listening to the Ford government talk about this bill. I'm not going to speak about the whole bill. As you're well aware, this bill is unspeakable. But I am going to focus on three schedules, and if I have a little more time I'll touch on some other elements.

I listened to the speakers for the government—the parliamentary assistant talking about outdated, inefficient and burdensome red tape—

Mr. Will Bouma: Hear, hear.

Mr. Peter Tabuns: Well done, sir. Well done.

So that's why you're cutting out protection from tenants from sub-metering companies. I don't think that cutting out protection for tenants from sub-metering companies is going to increase industrial investment in Ontario by a nickel—not even by a dime—nothing. But it will mean that sub-metering companies get to take advantage of 325,000 households in this province.

Tell me, in your questions and comments, how this is going to help industrial investment in Ontario, how this is going to help the creation of jobs. It's going to make tenants a lot poorer; no doubt about it. It's going to make the investors in these companies richer; no doubt about it. It may increase the number of people who move yachts from the sale room to the ownership of the investors at a later point because of the money they're squeezing out of tenants, but it's not going to help Ontario's competitiveness—not one whit.

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For those who may not be familiar with it, if you're a hydro customer and you have a meter in your home, you're a fairly standard customer. For those who live in high-rise buildings or condominiums with multiple units, there are, increasingly, companies that put in sub-meters that break up all the electricity coming into a building and apportion it unit by unit so that people can be charged individually for their use of that power. I think there are substantial problems with that; that's another debate for another day.

The previous government, the Liberals, with great reluctance—great reluctance—were willing to put in place a requirement that the Ontario Energy Board oversee the rates charged to tenants by these sub-metering companies. They shouldn't have been reluctant because tenants didn't have any choice; they weren't able to switch providers. But eventually, after a lot of pressure, they went along with it, and that is what this government is reversing in this bill.

Tell me how this makes Ontario more competitive in the world. Tell me. Does it mean that we're competing with sub-metering companies in Buffalo who will somehow magically get the electricity consumption in a unit in downtown Toronto, downtown Kitchener or Ottawa? No, there is no cross-border competition here, but there is an

incentive, an interest, in making the investors in those sub-metering companies as well off as possible, at the expense of the tenants.

This is a government that railed on about high hydro prices. You don't care, though, when it comes to tenants. You don't care if they have any protection at all, because that's what you're taking out of this bill: protection for tenants against gouging.

Global News has been tracking this story since January of this year, reporting on the risk to tenants from the end of the regulation of sub-metering. They've looked at the impact that it will have on tenants. They interviewed sub-meter company owners, they interviewed tenants and they interviewed organizations that stood up for tenants. In March, they reported that students at Brock University in a student residence were apparently being billed for four times the amount of water use in an apartment with a water sub-meter, in this case run by Wyse metering. Instead of splitting the cost of the water going to the unit four ways, they charged each student—all four of them—the amount that every other one was getting. They didn't split it four ways; they quadrupled the cost. Pretty amazing, eh? I guess if you're not regulated, you can do whatever you want.

In another unit, where there were two students, they charged them double. Each student got an amount charged to them equivalent to the amount for the whole unit. There was an uproar. The students noted—and I have to give those students credit—that they were being gouged. They met with the landlords. They met with the sub-metering company, and one of the things that happened, which was intriguing to me, is that the sub-metering company and the landlord said, “Oh, you should apply for a low-income allowance to offset your bill.” This is crazy. The students said, “This is a scam. If you divided the bill four ways, we wouldn't qualify.” Eventually, after a lot of pressure, the metering company backed off.

The question that occurs to me, though, Madam Speaker, is: How many tenants in how many buildings are being gouged without knowing how they're being taken advantage of? These students were in a position to compare notes and fight back. They had Global News backing them. That helped them. They were able to get publicity for their case. Eventually, the companies had to back off. But the reality is that these companies should not be trusted with the ability to simply charge what they want without any oversight.

Again, we go back to: How does this make things competitive? If I'm a tenant in a building with a sub-meter provider who's got a 10-year contract with the landlord, I can't say, a few months into being outrageously and unfairly billed, “No, I want a separate provider.” No, you don't get to do that.

Those companies don't have to compete for those tenants as customers. There is no competition. You're saying, in the name of anti-competitive practices, that you're going to be cutting out the protection for those tenants. I don't want to hear ever again how you're standing up for hydro customers, because if you can get

away with not standing up for them, you will. You will just throw them to the sharks. That's simply it.

I listened to the companies at committee talk about the burden, the regulatory cost, and how, because the government was getting rid of this regulation, there wouldn't be a burden—\$1.3 million over 325,000 customers. So I did the math. It's 33 cents a month—33 cents a month per customer. That is the cost of protecting those tenants from gouging.

Frankly, if you don't have regulation, those guys can charge whatever they want. If you don't like it, stop using power in your unit—that's your choice. That's not competitive. This is simply looking out for the big guys, looking out for the big investors, and forgetting about the tenants. Speaker, there's no question that this schedule has nothing to do with competition and everything to do with making investors in sub-metering companies very, very well off.

The second schedule I want to talk to is schedule 3.

I find it extraordinary that people in this chamber would vote to reduce protection for children in child care. I suggest that you read the schedule. I suggest that you read the act to understand what you're doing.

Some of you were here back in 2013 and 2014, when the Ombudsman's report, *Careless About Child Care*, came out, talking about the deaths that had happened in unlicensed care. It was a time of great anger and great sorrow at the thought that children were dying needlessly, and had been dying needlessly, without action on the part of government. As much as I thought there was a lot more to be done, the government was forced to actually toughen up regulation on unlicensed child care. You are undoing that.

Do you understand that we have had decades of coroners' reports, that we have had decades of newspaper reports about children dying needlessly? And you actually are going to roll the clock back and reduce protection for children in child care? Seriously.

I said to the Conservative members of the committee that I wanted a recorded vote, because in the terrifying possibility that there will be further deaths and further inquests, I want the people of Ontario to know the names of those who voted to roll back protection for infants and toddlers in child care.

All of us have in our hands the power to protect, or put at risk, children. When you roll back child care protection—I look forward to having the minister questioned in question period after an inquest, as the previous Minister of Education was questioned in this chamber, about the lack of protection for children. A future Ombudsman will point out that there was protection for children and it was taken away.

I want to just read the names and the circumstances of some of the deaths, so that you know what you're voting on.

As the Ombudsman noted, on July 8, 2013, Eva Ravikovich died at an unlicensed daycare in Vaughan.

I want to note that Jérémie Audette, on July 28, 2010, drowned in a pool in the backyard of an unlicensed

daycare provider. A number of the unlicensed daycare providers got together. I think there were about four adults and about 20 kids. Jérémie wandered through an unlatched gate to an outdoor pool, drowned and was found.

That is the kind of risk that children will be exposed to when you reduce child care protection. That is not something that you can sleep with. We will make mistakes in our time here in this chamber. We will see unexpected things. But I can tell you, from the history in Ontario, when you reduce protection, you increase the number of deaths in child care centres. It is as simple as that.

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At the time that we were going through these debates, there were a variety of media reports. The Toronto Star, in September 2013, reported, “Two-year-old Allison Tucker drowned in a bathtub on July 4 in a North York condo where she had been receiving unlicensed child care for the past year”—and then, Eva Ravikovich, who I noted.

“In 1995, 13-month-old Mercedes Fraser strangled on her undershirt when it caught on a bolt in a defective playpen in an unregulated Cambridge home.”

Speaker, coroner’s juries at inquests noted that the ratio of children to caregivers was critical in ensuring that the children were safe. And this government is rolling back that protection.

Tell me today which industrial investor, which Ford Motor Company, which Siemens is going to come and invest in Ontario because you’ve cut back the protection for children in child care. Tell me, because this is the whole argument that’s being made. You’re going to look after kids by doing this? You’re going to increase investment by doing this? Seriously? It bears no relationship to what you’re talking about. It may bear a relationship to some other political considerations; I’m not even going to speculate on those. But your argument on outdated and inefficient regulations that protect children from dying in child care centres is totally off the mark—you have no credible reason for doing this; none.

Speaker, the bill also eliminates the Toxics Reduction Act. I think this is an important point. It actually does touch on industry—one of the few things that I’ve talked about that does touch on industry. I’ll say that at least the government is consistent. If you’re going to cut protection for tenants and you’re going to cut protection for infants and toddlers, why don’t you cut protection for working-age adults on the job? Because it’s consistent with what you do. Not protecting the population is what you do. Not protecting the people is what you do.

It isn’t just a question about protecting people in industrial plants, although that’s pretty important. Friends and relatives of mine have worked in very large industrial plants. I think it’s important that they be protected from toxic chemicals, and I think the people who live near those plants need to be protected from toxic chemicals.

You’re repealing the Toxics Reduction Act from 2009. Why do we need protection from toxic chemicals? Well, the World Health Organization listed toxic pollution and chronic diseases as two of the top 10 global health threats in 2019. Up to 15,000 Canadians die prematurely every

year because of air pollution alone, and the annual economic burden of diseases associated with toxic chemical exposures is estimated to be in the tens of billions of dollars globally. Public Health Ontario estimates that 560 Ontarians develop cancer every year due to air pollution.

I want to say to all of you on the other side: The next time you’re in a cancer ward and you’re visiting someone in their final days and you’re looking at how they’re gasping and you’re looking at how they’re dealing with the painkillers that are being administered, why don’t you give a thought for a moment to the idea that people should be protected from toxic chemicals that will kill them? But that’s not on your minds, apparently. I hope that when you’re in that cancer ward, it does focus in your mind that you could have done something to reduce the number of deaths—because you should. It’s your moral imperative. That is what we do here. We should be extending people’s lives, making their lives fuller and richer. When you increase people’s risk of unpleasant and early death, you’re abandoning your responsibility.

Speaker, this jurisdiction, Ontario, may not, according to the Minister of Economic Development there, be punching above its weight in terms of total gross domestic product, but boy, in terms of toxic chemicals we spill out, we’re right up at the top. Only Texas dumps more toxic emissions into the environment than we do—Texas.

Mr. Wayne Gates: Wow.

Mr. Peter Tabuns: Wow. That’s something. If we here in Ontario are aiming to be number one, I think that your actions are going to help so that we could be the top toxic emitter in North America. That’s extraordinary to me.

This bill came forward on the basis of a push by people in the health field, like the Registered Nurses’ Association of Ontario. It came forward from labour unions. It came forward from environmental activists who looked at Massachusetts, a successful industrial jurisdiction—I know the government is always comparing us to the United States and our competitors. Well, Massachusetts is a competitor, and they weren’t timid the way the Liberals were. They actually put in place a Toxics Use Reduction Act that had substantial reduction of toxic chemicals used in industry, and that has made a big difference in terms of lives lived and total toxics dumped into the environment. We needed to do that. The Liberals went a quarter of the way there, and now the government wants to go all the way back so that we don’t have protection, so that it is simply not there.

We know that we would have substantial reduction in emissions if we were to proceed with this act and not repeal it. I won’t go through all of the materials that we dump into the air, but there was an interesting comparison of toxic dumping between Ontario and New Jersey. New Jersey is not noted as one of the cleanest, greenest spots in the world, but in 2013, I think it was, Ontario dumped 596 tonnes of mercury into the environment, and New Jersey dumped something like 0.03 tonnes. Ontario: 21,590 tonnes of lead into the environment; New Jersey: 1.4 tonnes.

For those who haven’t dealt with lead, my riding had Canada Metal, a battery recycler, that operated for

decades, dumping lead into the community so lead showed up in the blood of the children in my community. It affected their ability to get through school and have a decent life. The whole area had to be decontaminated by people wearing spacesuits. People had the soil outside their homes dug out to a depth of two feet. You had to have people going through and scrubbing the homes. And yet this Legislature, this government, doesn't want to clean up; it rolls back even the timid elements before us.

Speaker, this bill will not make us more competitive. It will make us a jurisdiction where tenants pay a lot more money, where people who work in the construction trades will be deprived of protection and rights, and where we will see an undermining of the protection of children. This bill is not what the government says it is. It is not something that will assist competitiveness. It will assist some people to get much richer. I urge everyone to vote against it.

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

Ms. Lindsey Park: I want to thank the member for Toronto–Danforth for his always well-thought-out comments on this piece of legislation. We will not apologize for our objective of reducing red tape that makes our province and the businesses in it uncompetitive. We're not an island in the Pacific Ocean; we're competing for business with other jurisdictions like Michigan, like New York, like other provinces such as Quebec.

Look, that objective of reducing red tape—we've set out a lofty goal of reducing it by 25% in our mandate here. That objective, let's be clear, does not mean compromising on health and safety. That does not mean compromising on the environment. I care deeply about the environment. In law school, I got a specialization in environmental law because I care so much about it.

1700

Let me be clear: When we're talking about looking at those regulations that have become a burden, we're looking at regulations that are outdated, regulations that were put in place for the business realities of 50 years ago, that no longer make sense today. But we will stand firmly on protecting the health and safety of the people of Ontario, and we are committed to environmental protection and conservation.

I am proud of our Made-in-Ontario Environment Plan put forward by the Minister of the Environment. We're all proud to stand behind him, on the government side, in committing to reducing greenhouse gases in accordance with the Paris targets set out.

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

Ms. Peggy Sattler: I am very proud to stand and comment on the remarks from my colleague the member for Toronto–Danforth who certainly spoke the truth about this bill.

Speaker, I want to comment also on some of the remarks that were made earlier by members across the way who talked about the World Bank and some of the data that's available internationally, looking at regulatory

environments across nations. The World Bank analyzed 190 economies to find out what kinds of regulations actually improve business competitiveness. What they found is that the two most important kinds of regulatory improvements that nations can make are to enable women to get into the economy, to enable women to start new businesses and find employment that matches their skills. There is there is nothing in this legislation that speaks to the gender gap in terms of women's participation in the labour market.

What there is in this bill, as the member for Toronto–Danforth points out so eloquently, are measures that are going to gut protections for children in child care centres. If we are serious about wanting to enable women to get into the labour market, we would be looking at a robust system of high-quality, non-profit child care that is delivered in communities, that is accessible and affordable, and that is not based on profit.

The other thing that the World Bank found is that economies that have lower levels of income inequality are also the most competitive. Again, as the member for Toronto–Danforth points out, the sub-metering provisions of this bill are just going to put tenants and condo owners more into poverty because of the impact of those changes.

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

Mr. Randy Pettapiece: It's a pleasure to rise and stand in this place representing the constituents of Perth–Wellington in speaking to the comments by the member from Toronto–Danforth. I listened with interest to some of the comments that he was making. If there are some things that are happening that he doesn't believe are fair, or that are brought up in the press, then maybe those should be investigated. I could agree with that.

But one thing: It's interesting to me—this is my eighth year here, and I remember sitting in opposition when we tried to get motions passed to stop the proliferation of turbines in rural Ontario. You talk about gouging people, which the member says is going on, that some of this legislation could help. It wouldn't prevent gouging people. He supported large, industrial turbines. He supported large companies that were doing that to the consumers of Ontario. So how can he stand there and accuse us of doing the same thing? This is totally ridiculous.

Every motion that we tried to get through this Legislature at that time—or a bill we tried to get to change the Green Energy Act—that member and his party stood up and supported the Liberal Party at that time and defeated those motions all the time. Where have our hydro rates gone? Crazy—they have gone crazy. We are producing hydro right now—and then—that is still going to the United States at subsidized prices that the consumers of Ontario have to pay for. So standing there and accusing us of gouging the public is totally ridiculous, and I think the member should remember back a few years to when they did the same thing to Ontario consumers.

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

Miss Monique Taylor: It's always a pleasure to listen to the member from Toronto–Danforth and his thoughtful

comments and the work he puts into the comments that he brings into this House.

I want to touch on the portion where he spoke of schedule 3, which is the Ministry of Education and the child care portion. I remember very clearly from my seat, as I sat over in that direction and this government sat over in the opposition, fighting the Liberal government at the time to put in better regulations to ensure children's safety. We had children dying in our province: Eva Ravikovich, J r mie Audette. I spoke very clearly in questions, asking the Liberal government to put better things in place so the children would be safe. The government did so, and now we have the Conservative government reversing those decisions. That puts children at risk. When you have too many children under a certain age being supervised by only one adult, things happen. The qualifications have to be there. You have to ensure the ratios are correct to ensure that children are safe.

For the member opposite to talk about that this is about health and safety—what about the health and safety of little children, who parents drop off at child care in the morning expecting to pick them up at the end of the day, and yet they get a phone call that there is an emergency and there has been a death of their child or an injury to their child because of the lack of supervision?

This bill that you have put forward today, this very big omnibus bill—unfortunately, maybe the members didn't read it through that clearly—when we're talking about children and the death of children and things that were put in place that this government is going to reverse, is a big mistake.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): Now I return to the member from Toronto–Danforth for his final comments.

Mr. Peter Tabuns: Thank you, Speaker. It's always a pleasure to be introduced by you—always.

I want to thank the members from Durham, London West, Perth–Wellington and Hamilton Mountain for their comments. I appreciate people having listened to my speech and having taken the time to think about how to respond to it.

Member from Durham, you talk about us dealing with regs that are outdated from 50 years ago; well, the child care regulations are from the last five or six years. We're not talking about 50 years ago; we're talking about regulations that were put in to prevent deaths in homes. This is not outdated, and it has nothing to do with industrial competitiveness. It has everything to do with making sure that when parents drop their children off in the morning to child care, they will be able to pick them up at night, not be phoned at work and told, "Your child has drowned." That's the critical thing here. It has nothing to do with competitiveness globally for industrial investment—zero. And yet it's in this bill. How does one explain that? How does one explain that? How do you make that consistent with all this argument about competitiveness?

We're talking about Quebec and how we can compete with Quebec. Quebec has child care for \$8 a day to \$22 a day. We don't have that, and yet they compete with us.

You cite them as a jurisdiction that we have to compete with. They're protecting their children. They are investing in their children, making sure women can go to work and pursue a career, and we're rolling it back so that parents worry about what happens when they go to work. You can't do this.

Gouging tenants—again, nothing to do with industrial investment or global competitiveness, everything to do with investors having big fat bank accounts. That's what it's about, because those tenants don't get to change their provider. They're stuck, and they need protection.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): I'm going to entertain further debate.

Mr. Parm Gill: It is always an honour and a pleasure to rise in this House and represent my constituents of the great riding of Milton. It's an honour to speak to Bill 66, the Restoring Ontario's Competitiveness Act.

1710

The Minister of Economic Development, Job Creation and Trade introduced a bill in December that will help put Ontario back on its feet. With over 30 actions, the bill aims to make it easier for businesses to create jobs and for the people of Ontario to find these jobs, Mr. Speaker. If passed, Bill 66, the Restoring Ontario's Competitiveness Act, will eliminate red tape and difficult regulations, to help businesses across our province grow as well as to help create and protect good jobs.

This bill addresses many different industries in Ontario that needed reform in terms of businesses that operate in them. The bill, if passed, will help create a job-friendly and flexible labour market. It will remove restrictions on home-based child care providers, to make it easier for parents to find affordable child care. By amending the Child Care and Early Years Act, 2014, the bill would remove some restrictions on home-based child care providers, which would increase flexibility in the number and ages of children they can care for, resulting in making life easier for parents and families by making affordable child care more available across our province. This would make it easier for parents to re-enter the job market and for employers to find the workers they need. The PC government believes in supporting families in Ontario and supporting parents in choosing their own career path.

It is our government's job to try to make life easier for the citizens of this great province, and every action taken through this bill is to achieve that promise. The bill, if passed, will not require new regulation whenever businesses and non-profits merge single-employer pension plans into jointly sponsored pension plans, known as JSPPs. The proposed change under the Pension Benefits Act would allow private sector employers to more easily merge their single-employer pension plans with jointly sponsored pension plans, Mr. Speaker. Eliminating the requirement to get government approval would make it easier for employers to reduce pension plan risk by pooling their plans with other employers'. Ontarians work hard for their future and their retirement. Pension plans are something that need the utmost attention and care. It gives me great pleasure to say that our government is helping to

ease these programs to help Ontarians plan a better retirement.

Bill 66 will also amend the Employment Standards Act to reduce regulatory burdens on businesses, including no longer requiring them to obtain approval from the director of employment standards for excess hours of work and/or overtime averaging. This will help employers increase the work hours for their employees without hurdles, resulting in providing employees with a chance to make extra money to help pay bills, save and invest in their future.

Mr. Speaker, let me tell you a story about a business in my riding of Milton that is providing jobs to those with disabilities. This is a company that has an assembly line and a great number of employees. They had been doing fairly well but wanted to better support the community somehow. They developed a program that hired and trained individuals with mental and physical disabilities. They were so proud to be able to offer these jobs to employees who could not find employment elsewhere. These employees had varying disabilities, but nevertheless, they felt as though they were contributing to the company. They were actually making things. This company made a decision to make as many accommodations for these employees as necessary, and they were proud to do so to keep them employed. I heard, though, Mr. Speaker, that because of the previous Liberal government's burdensome policies they had to stop the program. Their margins were already so thin, but with the job-killing regulations that the previous government brought in, this program unfortunately had to go. This company had to put these employees out of work. This bill intends to support businesses so they can offer programs like this again, so businesses can support the communities.

Our PC government made a promise during the election to open Ontario for business, and we will continue to work towards that mandate for years to come.

This bill, if passed, will introduce a new economic development tool and remove planning barriers, to expedite major business investments and speed up approvals so they would be completed within one year.

Ontario has the resources and the potential to grow and prosper just as much as any other province, and cutting the unnecessary red tape around these businesses is what will help Ontario and its businesses prosper.

Unnecessary regulations demotivate and scare away businesses from other provinces looking to expand to Ontario, as well as Ontarians looking to start a new business. Eliminating these types of regulations will help create more room for businesses and will result in a growing and prosperous economy.

Along with eliminating the much-needed red tape mentioned earlier, this bill, if passed, will make sure that industrial properties are assessed based on current permitted uses, not speculative uses.

The current practice mandates that the Municipal Property Assessment Corp. administer property assessment and appeals of assessments. Bill 66 aims to amend the Assessment Act to provide greater certainty for Ontario's

business community and would confirm that the methodology MPAC uses to assess business properties is based on permitted land uses only, not on speculative uses.

Mr. Speaker, my great riding of Milton is composed of both urban and rural areas. The Milton community prides themselves on this fact. Being right in the middle of the corridor between Toronto and Kitchener-Waterloo, many companies continue to set up in Milton. I continue to meet with business owners regularly to understand their daily challenges and the hurdles they need to jump over in order to grow and expand.

As a previous small business owner myself, I know the time it takes to figure out what applications need to be filled, and for what, and what ministry you need to apply for certain things from, not to mention the many levels of government a business owner needs to deal with, whether that be municipal, regional, provincial or federal. This bill is another building block in our promise to make it easier to do business in Ontario.

My riding has a large urban part as well as a large rural area. Oftentimes when bills are presented in the Legislature, they cater only to the urban, heavily populated areas, as this is seen to be where most votes can be acquired by political parties, unfortunately.

Bill 66 will make several changes to the agriculture and food processing sector that are much needed and will help the businesses in rural Milton and Ontario greatly. This bill will remove the outdated and time-consuming reporting requirements under the Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs Act, including ones required for loan guarantee programs.

It is important, as mentioned earlier, to help businesses succeed by letting them utilize their time wisely in marketing, expansion and efficiency rather than time-consuming red tape that takes away from their potential.

1720

On Friday, I attended a meat processing round table in Milton with my federal counterpart, MP Lisa Raitt. We heard from many small business owners, many of which are family-run, that regulations being imposed are time-consuming and, frankly, outdated. The industry has modernized to a large extent, and the regulations need to modernize, too.

I heard many examples of times that business owners were being pulled off the production floor to deal with government. This is lost time and lost revenue for these businesses. This bill will help amend the Farm Registration and Farm Organizations Funding Act to simplify delivery of programs and enhance responsiveness. Existing processes require a regulation to amend payment amounts, which creates delay and prohibits accredited farm organizations from responding to funding needs. Oftentimes businesses need external funding on an urgent basis, perhaps to cash a deal that will not be available for long. These amendments will help farming businesses to obtain the needed funding in a timely manner, resulting in making their business operations more profitable.

Farmers in my riding of Milton are anticipating a lower winter wheat crop this year due to many factors, none of

which are in their control. Some of them were not able to seed until early winter, and the weather has seen everything from frost to above-average temperatures and rain, all of which will result in lower winter wheat bounty. These changes will allow farmers in my riding to react quickly if a crop does not come to fruition as planned.

Also relating to the agriculture and food processing sector, the bill, under the Food Safety and Quality Act, aims to reduce paperwork and fees and encourage additional business opportunity for provincially licensed meat processors. It is important to maintain safety when it comes to food consumption, and the more locally sourced food that is available for Ontarians to purchase, the better it is for them and all of us.

Mr. Speaker, changing gears a little bit here, the auto sector is one that I studied extensively recently. My private member's bill relating to the automobile insurance industry just passed second reading in this House last week, on Thursday—

Interjections.

Mr. Parm Gill: Thank you—and has now been sent to committee. The auto sector is one of the main areas of concern for Ontarians, as it affects them on a daily basis. Bill 66 proposes several changes to the auto sector in order to increase its efficiency in policies for the people of Ontario.

For the regulations affecting assembly lines, this bill will add a new targeted exemption from guardrail requirements for a conveyor and raised platform. It mentions that other measures and procedures must be developed and implemented to protect workers from the hazard of falling where this new or other existing guardrail exemptions apply. This change reduces regulatory burden for vehicle and vehicle parts manufacturers by more closely aligning with regulations in US jurisdictions. It is evident that the Canadian auto sector is closely aligned with that of our neighbours south of the border, and it is essential to keep regulations regarding worker safety in alignment with theirs to stay competitive.

It is so important to make sure that factory workers are always protected and safe while performing the tasks they need to. This doesn't only apply to workers in the auto sector but to all workers. This bill helps make the work environment for auto sector workers a safer place.

Innovation has become an essential part of each and every industry in today's world. It is very important for our province of Ontario to keep up with the current technologies to remain a big player in the auto sector. This bill, if passed, will amend the Highway Traffic Act to expand testing of connected and autonomous vehicles in Ontario. Expanding the autonomous vehicles pilot will open the door to new connected vehicles and autonomous vehicle testing, as well as research and development opportunities in Ontario for local business interests and international sector investments—again, another example of our government listening to the job creators and reading the market.

Expanding the autonomous vehicle pilot will bring our province to the forefront of a quickly growing industry, an

industry that is making the vehicles of tomorrow. The PC government believes in consulting with industry stakeholders before introducing any piece of legislation. It is important to hear what the people who will be affected by the proposed law think about the piece of legislation, Mr. Speaker.

Responding to the request of auto industry stakeholders, this bill, if passed, will make amendments to the Highway Traffic Act to make requirements more flexible about when motors on e-bicycles must disengage. This action will reduce the regulatory burden.

Another industry Bill 66 addresses is the manufacturing industry, an industry that I personally know quite well. As mentioned before, I was involved in a family business which manufactured furniture. We employed over 200 employees and manufactured furniture that was shipped all across North America. I am proud to see that this bill will eliminate regulatory and licensing requirements for upholstered and stuffed articles. Removing all Ontario-specific licensing and regulatory requirements for upholstered and stuffed articles will reduce a long-standing burden on business, will save businesses \$4 million annually and eliminate trade barriers.

The manufacturing industry has so much room to grow in Ontario. Cutting red tape and making smart decisions to support businesses in this sector is very, very important for me.

Bill 66 does not only address the industries mentioned above, but also construction, electricity services, financial services, industrial and commercial facilities, private career colleges, the second-hand market, telecommunications and the trucking industry, just to name a few. This piece of legislation was introduced to build on the momentum from Bill 47 with a far-reaching plan to continue reducing red tape across our province.

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

Our PC government promised to build prosperity and put Ontario back on track as a leader in North America. This bill is working towards changing Ontario from the have-not province the Liberals left us with back to the economic engine of our great country.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker, for the opportunity.

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

Ms. Judith Monteith-Farrell: I'm happy to rise today to speak to this bill. My first comment is that I wish in government that we would be mindful that people want to follow what's going on in this House. In comments that I've had from people about omnibus bills, where there is a number of issues addressed, they feel that you're trying to pull the wool over their eyes in some effect. I have heard, too, from small business and business in my area that there has been regulatory duplication and a burden of what we want to call red tape, I guess, in this House.

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But what disturbs me is when I see something like section 88 under the Ontario Energy Board Act being repealed and it says, “The act is amended by striking out ‘prescribing rules in relation to the fixing of just and reasonable rates for unit sub-metering that the board must follow’ and substituting ‘prescribing rules in relation to the approving or fixing of just and reasonable rates for unit smart metering that the board must follow’.”

I don’t see why or where getting rid of prescribing rules in relation to the approving or affixing of just and reasonable rates is something we want to get rid of, and how that helps business in any way.

I have other comments on this bill—but that one is a burden for people who are already burdened in housing. It goes after those folks who really are finding it hard to stay in their apartments. So I wish that amendment would have been agreed to, but, unfortunately, it stands.

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

Mr. Paul Calandra: I always appreciate the opportunity to speak, Mr. Speaker.

It’s interesting to hear the member from Milton talk about cutting red tape. He’s done an extraordinary job on his private member’s bill which will reduce the costs for drivers not only in his riding but across Ontario.

But to hear the NDP talk about red tape—what we’ve heard today actually is quite shameful. What we’ve heard predominantly is that, for instance, our home daycare operators can’t be trusted with children. That’s what we’ve heard. We’ve heard that from the members opposite.

We’ve heard the member from Niagara Falls talk about the auto sector. I was a member, along with the member for Milton at the time, of a federal government that put billions of dollars into saving the auto sector. Do you know what happened in the Parliament of Canada? The NDP voted against it. They voted against the bailout. When Jim Flaherty worked tirelessly to put that money together, to put the investment together, to save the auto sector, to save jobs in the province of Ontario, working closely with our American friends to do that, the NDP in Ottawa voted against it. Do you know what, Mr. Speaker? The former NDP Premier—the one-time-only NDP Premier—also led the chorus voting against that. Of course, he was a Liberal at the time—but that’s what happened.

Now, the member for Toronto—Danforth talks about unit sub-metering. Yes, our regulations are going to bring the cost down, but this is a member who, as a member of Toronto council, had no problem charging residential tenants in multi-residential units four times the property tax of other people—four times the rate. When you look at the multi-residential tax rate in the city of Toronto, it was four times the rate. Who got that? The tenants got that. The member didn’t stand up for tenants then. We’ll stand up for tenants. We’ll stand up for the auto sector. We’ll stand up for parents who are looking for daycare. I know the member for Milton will do the exact same thing.

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

Mr. Sol Mamakwa: I’m very happy to speak about Restoring Ontario’s Competitiveness Act. I hear about cutting red tape—northern Ontario is open for business. I know one of the things from my area: In our area in northern Ontario, we’re very rich in resources, the lands, the rivers that are there, in the culture, the language and the traditions that we have.

When I read schedule 4, when I read schedule 5, talking about the environment, that is very critical where I come from. But I think it’s really important to understand as well, when the government says that northern Ontario is open for business, let me tell you, northern Ontario is not open for business until you talk to the First Nations. That’s very critical, and the government has to understand that. That’s where my culture comes from. That’s where the livelihood comes from. We are the first peoples in our lands. For our government to try to take over and extract resources—we’ve got to benefit as well.

I’m not saying that we are against development. You just have to work with us. We have to be part of the business. We have to be part of the solution. We have to be part of it. We have to be partners. It’s very important that you understand that. I am making it clear to you, within this cutting the red tape, that northern Ontario will not happen unless you talk to communities. Meegwetch.

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

Ms. Donna Skelly: I believe there are times in our life when we look back at moments that we treasure, moments that we’re so proud of, and this is one for me. As the parliamentary assistant for economic development, job creation and trade, I am proud to be part of this bill. I am very proud to be part of a bill that is truly restoring Ontario’s competitiveness in the global economy.

Mr. Speaker, we said at the beginning of our term that we wanted to be a government that recognized that people truly do want to work. They want to be able to have a good job so that they can provide for their families, so that they can provide for their children, and the elements, the components within Bill 66 will help them achieve just that.

Think about what’s happened in Ontario in the past few months. We are now leading the country in job creation. We are now recognizing that we have to do more to help businesses find employees to actually fill all of the jobs that we’re creating. A lot of what’s in Bill 66 is creating that environment. It’s making us more competitive, not just in this country but globally. That’s what we want to do.

Months ago—I guess it’s now over a year ago—when I decided to run under the PC banner, one of the things that I felt was very important was to bring good-paying jobs not just to Ontario, but specifically to my community of Hamilton. And these moments that I say I’m so proud to be a part of? I am proud to say that I was part of an announcement of over 300 high-paying jobs in my riding alone at the Hamilton airport.

That is just the beginning. Once Bill 66 passes, you’re going to see even more high-paying jobs right across this province.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): Now I return to the member from Milton for his final comments.

Mr. Parm Gill: I want to take a moment and thank my colleagues from both sides of the House for their comments.

Mr. Speaker, I can tell you, when I was running to be the candidate, and obviously leading up to the election and since, I spoke to countless members of my great riding of Milton. As I mentioned in my remarks, I am a fortunate member, I feel, because I have a riding that encompasses both urban and rural. I have a significant rural portion in my riding of Milton as well. I can tell you that since this government took over in June of last year, there is finally a sense of relief. There is a sense of excitement amongst the businesses, amongst the members of the community, in terms of opportunities, in terms of how every piece of legislation that this government has introduced has been to deliver relief for Ontario families. Everybody is saying that. We continue to hear that each and every single day. I can tell you that, certainly in my riding, I hear that regularly. It's important for us to do our part.

I just want to touch briefly also on how some of the members opposite talked about home care operators not being able to take care of young children that they might be caring for. I can tell you, I spoke to many families and some of those operators during the campaign, and the only thing that they talked about was how unhappy or disgusted they were with the previous Liberal government's policies in terms of limiting the opportunities for them, for their families and for small businesses. This bill is going to address every single one of those.

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The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): Further debate? The member from Kingston and the Islands.

Mr. Ian Arthur: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I do like your introductions in the House.

I think that my debate will continue all the way until 6, although I do hope that the member from Markham–Stouffville comes back for questions and comments tomorrow, because I'm always excited to hear what he has to say and what strenuous connection he can draw to the Bob Rae government in his answers, and how many times he can manage to bring it up.

But we're here today to discuss Bill 66, which I have read extensively. I was in committee for the debates on this bill, going through it on the clause-by-clause, and really trying to understand what the long-term repercussions of this bill are going to be for people in Ontario, and the difference between what I see as the reality of what the potential for some of these changes is going to be, and what I heard from the other side during debate, both in the House and in committee.

Let's start on schedule 2. I do understand where schedule 2 comes from, and the changes to the Pawnbrokers Act, and that there are municipal bylaws that replicate parts of this or achieve similar things to this, and the need to eliminate the duplication in the legislation here. But that's only some municipalities. For instance, in my riding, in Kingston and the Islands, there's no

corresponding bylaw that does the same thing as the Pawnbrokers Act, so now my city council has to scramble to figure out what bylaw they will pass so that they have those same powers.

In parts of Ontario, perhaps, it was partly redundant and could be called red tape, but without the consultation, without touring this bill, without giving municipalities the time to update their bylaws and to work with the province on this, you've created holes in legislation to do with pawnbrokers in Ontario, and you've been told this. Stakeholders came before committee. AMO came before committee, who have worked with this government extensively, who this government has listened to in the past, and said, "This is a bad idea." The Ontario Association of Chiefs of Police said that this was not a good idea, that you were removing tools that the police use to stop the sale of stolen items in Ontario.

Where it is redundant, I do understand that, and I'm trying to be reasonable here. I'm trying to recognize where the government was coming from. But it's the process of how they did it, and the fact that they did not do this in conjunction with the municipalities that are going to get stuck with the repercussions of this—those are those long-term repercussions that I'm trying to talk about here.

You can't take away a tool that is used on an ongoing basis by police in Ontario to prevent the sale of stolen goods and call it cutting red tape. This is the police government. These are the ones who say they're always behind officers. But you're removing tools that officers need, before municipalities have had a chance to update their bylaws. That doesn't make sense, Mr. Speaker.

Let's talk about schedule 3. During committee, it was levelled at us that we didn't bring forward any amendments, and therefore were unwilling to work with this government. But the problem, when you have a bill like this—it's not the largest omnibus bill we're going to see or have already seen. When you have a bill like this and you take all these disparate, unrelated items and you crunch them together, it suits the government, because there are a few things in here that we didn't really have a problem with, and if you look at the voting record in committee, you can see that. Where it was reasonable, we were willing to accept what this government was doing. But they put the reasonable behind the incredibly unreasonable and the outright dangerous, which brings me to schedule 3.

This section of this bill overrides everything else that's in it. As long as this was in here, this bill is a terrible piece of legislation. It doesn't matter that parts of the Pawnbrokers Act were reasonable. It doesn't matter that the federal wireless act covers a large part of what the previous Ontario legislation did.

None of that matters while schedule 3 is still in here—because schedule 3 is about the safety of children in this province. How short memories are. I think the member from Toronto–Danforth, when he was talking about how recently this legislation was passed—it's not from 25 years ago. It's from a few short years ago. How short those memories are. When we talk about how terrible we think

this section of the legislation is, we're not attacking daycare providers. We are not attacking daycare providers in this province and we're not saying that people shouldn't be able to access affordable daycare in Ontario.

What we are talking about is protecting against accidents, and against the worst examples and the worst offenders that may be out there in Ontario. It's the "what if?" because a child's life is so precious that you must regulate for the "what if?" You are not regulating for all those ones who do a good job—and there are remarkable caregivers in Ontario.

We value what they contribute and what they bring to this province. We value that. We understand the economic benefit of choosing child care as a career. For each dollar that is spent it generates \$4 in the economy. That's tremendous. We recognize all that.

But what we are arguing against is legislation that is potentially tragic. No one wants to follow down the path of where that might go. When we look at why this legislation is there, it was to protect against those accidents and those worst offenders, those ones that were absolutely not reflective of the industry as a whole—but the ones that had to be protected against so that no daycare provider or no police officer had to make that phone call to a parent.

This section of the bill is terrible and it should have been withdrawn in the committee. It absolutely is a deal-breaker above everything else in here, Mr. Speaker.

I want to spend a little bit of time on the toxic substances act, in my critic portfolio as the critic for the environment, and talk about, again, maybe misinformation, maybe lack of understanding, we will say—a lack of understanding of what was actually replicated in the federal framework, and what the toxic substances act does here in Ontario. Despite what is said on the opposite side here, they actually do different things. That's a very important thing to understand. They are not a duplicate piece of legislation.

If companies had to fill out similar forms, would it not make sense to then allow for one form that the company could fill out that would qualify for both processes? You send it off to two different places. I am just brainstorming here for ideas about how you could keep the substance and the importance of this act in protecting Ontarians from toxic substances, which is what this act sought to do.

The federal regulations covered the generation of toxics but not their use. And there was not the same reporting requirement attached to the federal piece as there was to the provincial one. So we need to know, yes, when a company is generating toxic substances, but I think it's actually more important to know when a company is using them in this province. It also required companies to come up with ideas or programs to reduce the amount of toxic substances that they were using in the manufacturing and the production of whatever they were doing, although compliance with that was voluntary.

So this wasn't a perfect act. There were all sorts of loopholes in this act. There were all sorts of ways for industry to avoid having to reduce the toxins that they're putting into the environment. But what it did do is it

pushed them towards having a plan, and that plan was working. Around 40% of companies had actually come up with a plan to reduce how many toxins they were using, and we had seen a 7% reduction in how many toxins were being used already.

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This legislation—if it had actually been effectively enforced and if it had had any teeth behind it—was actually modelled after legislation in Massachusetts. That legislation saw a 50% reduction in how many toxic substances, or how much toxic substance, were being leaked into the environment every single year—50%—and they remained competitive. It didn't drive away industry. It didn't drive business away from that area, because I believe that there is a competitive advantage to being responsible in this area. Sometimes you do need to use substances that are potentially harmful, but people care more and more and more about what a company's environmental footprint is.

You can look around the world. The entire world is searching for examples and opportunities to green their companies, and so not only is reducing toxins a responsible thing to do for your employees, for the people of Ontario, who may be exposed to those substances that you are using, and for the environment in general, but it can make good business sense if it's done right. Having that guiding hand that's pushing businesses towards that can be an incredibly beneficial thing. When those companies are going out into the world and to other jurisdictions—such as the EU, where they actually fundamentally care about these things—they have something else to sell. They have something else that they're doing that sets them apart from the competition. I think it's important to talk about that side of it and look at the other angles that are potentially out there.

Just so you realize the scale of what we are talking about, more than 425,000 tonnes of toxic substances were released into Ontario's water, land and air in 2016, which is the most recent year we have information for—425,000 tonnes. We are not talking about small leaks here and there; we're not talking about companies making a mistake and a little thing happens; but 425,000 tonnes of toxic substances. These substances cause respiratory diseases. They cause cancer. And this is what I mean: the long-term repercussions of the actions that we are taking here on the health of the people of Ontario. I am all for working with business to figure out how they can do this in a manner that makes sense economically. I don't want to drive any business away from Ontario, but I fundamentally believe that you have to understand that these substances are being leaked and that they have dangerous repercussions.

Without the Ontario piece of legislation that required the reporting on the use and on any potential spills that would happen, we're taking away a tool that we could use to protect Ontarians. It's not the right way to do things. It's not a perfect act, but just repealing it en masse is not the answer. It's not taking Ontario in the direction that it needs to go.

Let's talk about schedule 9 a little bit here and the sections of it that we really have a problem with. It is an attack on labour. It is an attack on a worker's right to organize. And this is the fundamental problem with this section: It will almost assuredly be challenged under the charter for violating a worker's right to organize—a charter-enshrined right. But the audaciousness of this government to pursue that anyway—they have lawyers; they know what the potential is. But it's going to get dragged out for years in the courts—it won't be quick—and in the meantime, they can accomplish what it is they are looking to do.

It's a fundamental right. It's protected by the Supreme Court, and, overnight, as soon as this bill receives royal assent, as soon as that section of this bill is passed, these workers could lose their collective agreements. That means that they could have their pensions stripped from them and their benefits stripped from them.

These are agreements that workers entered into in good faith and that companies negotiated with them, and they were working for both sides, but this government has given companies an out from that: the ability to not recognize the rights of workers in Ontario. Those “for the people” words ring a little more hollow than they have before this section was passed.

The government, in committee, claimed that they had listened, that they had introduced amendments to schedule 9 because they were listening to workers and people in Ontario. What they've created is the ability for one of their “entities,” which could be a municipality, a school board or a public institution, to opt out of schedule 9 so that they could still honour the collective agreements that were negotiated in good faith. But also written into those amendments is a little caveat saying that, even if they choose to opt out now, they can have another vote and reverse that decision later. So it kind of takes away the intent of those amendments. Maybe there is lots of public pressure right now, and the municipality decides to opt out of that because of public pressure or whatever other reason, but, a little while down the road, they decide they don't actually like that collective agreement and, with one vote, they can reverse it—or when they are going in to negotiate the next collective agreement. They're holding all the cards, Mr. Speaker, because if that labour union doesn't accept what the companies are putting forward or doesn't like what's coming from management on the other side, they can say, “Well, you know what? I don't think I'm actually going to abide by that. I think we're going to

have another vote, and we're just going to get rid of the collective agreement in its entirety.”

They are entering into the negotiations not on an even playing field. They are entering into it in a fashion where management has all the cards. It's just not the right way to go. And, because it potentially violates the charter, it's a very scary place to go. If it does turn out to violate the charter, the only folks who are going to come out ahead are the lawyers, because the government will fight the charter challenge. Using taxpayer dollars, using those hard-earned dollars of the people of Ontario, they will pay their legal teams to fight this challenge in court, and we're going to be out more money. That doesn't make sense.

They claim that they consulted with the council of trades and with the carpenters' union. Well, I listened to the presentation from both of those organizations in committee. They may have technically consulted with them, in the broadest sense of giving them an opportunity to voice their opinions, but in no way, shape or form did they actually listen to what those opinions were, because if they had—I was there; I heard them. If they had listened to what those opinions actually were, schedule 9 would not be in this piece of legislation right now because they were universally opposed to it. Again, that “work with us”; that, “Well, if we don't like what you're saying, we're not really serious about the working, although we will say we actually did consult with you.”

All in all, Mr. Speaker, as I said earlier, this bill has too many disparate things crunched together. There are sections of it that are absolutely abysmal and terrible, and there is absolutely no way that as a caucus we can support this bill.

I understand the game of trying to lay that political trap, or whatever you want to call it—of putting together some rather reasonable things with some things that are absolutely, fundamentally wrong. As long as the government keeps doing that, we will be here to argue against it, to be the voice of those who were not listened to in that consultation process here in the Legislature.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): I would like to thank all members for respectful debate this afternoon. It is now 6 o'clock. When Bill 66 is reintroduced, the opportunity for questions and comments will be made available to the member.

Third reading debate deemed adjourned.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): Since it is 6 o'clock, this House stands adjourned until 9 o'clock tomorrow morning.

The House adjourned at 1801.

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Harris, Mike (PC)	Kitchener—Conestoga	
Hassan, Faisal (NDP)	York South—Weston / York-Sud— Weston	
Hatfield, Percy (NDP)	Windsor—Tecumseh	Second Deputy Chair of the Committee of the Whole House / Deuxième vice-président du comité plénier de l'Assemblée législative
Hillier, Randy (IND)	Lanark—Frontenac—Kingston	
Hogarth, Christine (PC)	Etobicoke—Lakeshore	
Horwath, Andrea (NDP)	Hamilton Centre / Hamilton-Centre	Leader, Official Opposition / Chef de l'opposition officielle
Hunter, Mitzie (LIB)	Scarborough—Guildwood	
Jones, Hon. / L'hon. Sylvia (PC)	Dufferin—Caledon	Minister of Community Safety and Correctional Services / Ministre de la Sécurité communautaire et des Services correctionnels
Kanapathi, Logan (PC)	Markham—Thornhill	
Karahalios, Belinda (PC)	Cambridge	
Karpoche, Bhutla (NDP)	Parkdale—High Park	
Ke, Vincent (PC)	Don Valley North / Don Valley-Nord	
Kernaghan, Terence (NDP)	London North Centre / London- Centre-Nord	
Khanjin, Andrea (PC)	Barrie—Innisfil	
Kramp, Daryl (PC)	Hastings—Lennox and Addington	
Kusendova, Natalia (PC)	Mississauga Centre / Mississauga- Centre	
Lalonde, Marie-France (LIB)	Orléans	
Lecce, Stephen (PC)	King—Vaughan	Deputy Government House Leader / Leader parlementaire adjoint du gouvernement
Lindo, Laura Mae (NDP)	Kitchener Centre / Kitchener-Centre	
MacLeod, Hon. / L'hon. Lisa (PC)	Nepean	Minister of Children, Community and Social Services / Ministre des Services à l'enfance et des Services sociaux et communautaires Minister Responsible for Women's Issues / Ministre déléguée à la Condition féminine
Mamakwa, Sol (NDP)	Kiiwetinoong	
Mantha, Michael (NDP)	Algoma—Manitoulin	
Martin, Robin (PC)	Eglinton—Lawrence	
Martow, Gila (PC)	Thornhill	
McDonell, Jim (PC)	Stormont—Dundas—South Glengarry	
McKenna, Jane (PC)	Burlington	
McNaughton, Hon. / L'hon. Monte (PC)	Lambton—Kent—Middlesex	Minister of Infrastructure / Ministre de l'Infrastructure
Miller, Norman (PC)	Parry Sound—Muskoka	
Miller, Paul (NDP)	Hamilton East—Stoney Creek / Hamilton-Est—Stoney Creek	
Mitas, Christina Maria (PC)	Scarborough Centre / Scarborough- Centre	
Monteith-Farrell, Judith (NDP)	Thunder Bay—Atikokan	
Morrison, Suze (NDP)	Toronto Centre / Toronto-Centre	
Mulroney, Hon. / L'hon. Caroline (PC)	York—Simcoe	Attorney General / Procureure générale Minister of Francophone Affairs / Ministre des Affaires francophones
Natyshak, Taras (NDP)	Essex	
Nicholls, Rick (PC)	Chatham-Kent—Leamington	Chair of the Committee of the Whole House / Président du comité plénier de l'Assemblée Deputy Speaker / Vice-président

Member and Party / Député(e) et parti	Constituency / Circonscription	Other responsibilities / Autres responsabilités
Oosterhoff, Sam (PC)	Niagara West / Niagara-Ouest	
Pang, Billy (PC)	Markham—Unionville	
Park, Lindsey (PC)	Durham	
Parsa, Michael (PC)	Aurora—Oak Ridges—Richmond Hill	
Pettapiece, Randy (PC)	Perth—Wellington	
Phillips, Hon. / L'hon. Rod (PC)	Ajax	Minister of the Environment, Conservation and Parks / Ministre de l'Environnement, de la Protection de la nature et des Parcs
Piccini, David (PC)	Northumberland—Peterborough South / Northumberland—Peterborough-Sud	
Rakocevic, Tom (NDP)	Humber River—Black Creek	
Rasheed, Kaleed (PC)	Mississauga East—Cooksville / Mississauga-Est—Cooksville	
Rickford, Hon. / L'hon. Greg (PC)	Kenora—Rainy River	Minister of Energy, Northern Development and Mines / Ministre de l'Énergie, du Développement du Nord et des Mines Minister of Indigenous Affairs / Ministre des Affaires autochtones
Roberts, Jeremy (PC)	Ottawa West—Nepean / Ottawa-Ouest—Nepean	
Romano, Ross (PC)	Sault Ste. Marie	
Sabawy, Sheref (PC)	Mississauga—Erin Mills	
Sandhu, Amarjot (PC)	Brampton West / Brampton-Ouest	
Sarkaria, Prabmeet Singh (PC)	Brampton South / Brampton-Sud	
Sattler, Peggy (NDP)	London West / London-Ouest	
Schreiner, Mike (GRN)	Guelph	
Scott, Hon. / L'hon. Laurie (PC)	Haliburton—Kawartha Lakes—Brock	Minister of Labour / Ministre du Travail
Shaw, Sandy (NDP)	Hamilton West—Ancaster—Dundas / Hamilton-Ouest—Ancaster—Dundas	
Simard, Amanda (IND)	Glengarry—Prescott—Russell	
Singh, Gurraan (NDP)	Brampton East / Brampton-Est	
Singh, Sara (NDP)	Brampton Centre / Brampton-Centre	Deputy Leader, Official Opposition / Chef adjointe de l'opposition officielle
Skelly, Donna (PC)	Flamborough—Glanbrook	
Smith, Dave (PC)	Peterborough—Kawartha	
Smith, Hon. / L'hon. Todd (PC)	Bay of Quinte / Baie de Quinte	Minister of Economic Development, Job Creation and Trade / Ministre du Développement économique, de la Création d'emplois et du Commerce Government House Leader / Leader parlementaire du gouvernement
Stevens, Jennifer (Jennie) (NDP)	St. Catharines	
Stiles, Marit (NDP)	Davenport	
Surma, Kinga (PC)	Etobicoke Centre / Etobicoke-Centre	
Tabuns, Peter (NDP)	Toronto—Danforth	
Tangri, Nina (PC)	Mississauga—Streetsville	
Taylor, Monique (NDP)	Hamilton Mountain	
Thanigasalam, Vijay (PC)	Scarborough—Rouge Park	
Thompson, Hon. / L'hon. Lisa M. (PC)	Huron—Bruce	Minister of Education / Ministre de l'Éducation
Tibollo, Hon. / L'hon. Michael A. (PC)	Vaughan—Woodbridge	Minister of Tourism, Culture and Sport / Ministre du Tourisme, de la Culture et du Sport
Triantafilopoulos, Effie J. (PC)	Oakville North—Burlington / Oakville-Nord—Burlington	
Vanthof, John (NDP)	Timiskaming—Cochrane	Deputy Leader, Official Opposition / Chef adjoint de l'opposition officielle
Wai, Daisy (PC)	Richmond Hill	
Walker, Hon. / L'hon. Bill (PC)	Bruce—Grey—Owen Sound	Minister of Government and Consumer Services / Ministre des Services gouvernementaux et des Services aux consommateurs
West, Jamie (NDP)	Sudbury	
Wilson, Jim (IND)	Simcoe—Grey	
Wynne, Kathleen O. (LIB)	Don Valley West / Don Valley-Ouest	
Yakubski, Hon. / L'hon. John (PC)	Renfrew—Nipissing—Pembroke	Minister of Natural Resources and Forestry / Ministre des Richesses naturelles et des Forêts
Yarde, Kevin (NDP)	Brampton North / Brampton-Nord	
Yurek, Hon. / L'hon. Jeff (PC)	Elgin—Middlesex—London	Minister of Transportation / Ministre des Transports

**STANDING AND SELECT COMMITTEES OF THE LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY
COMITÉS PERMANENTS ET SPÉCIAUX DE L'ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE**

Standing Committee on Estimates / Comité permanent des budgets des dépenses

Chair / Président: Peter Tabuns
Vice-Chair / Vice-président: Wayne Gates
Stan Cho, Jill Dunlop
John Fraser, Wayne Gates
Stephen Lecce, Gila Martow
Jane McKenna, Judith Monteith-Farrell
Lindsey Park, Randy Pettapiece
Peter Tabuns
Committee Clerk / Greffier: Timothy Bryan

Standing Committee on Finance and Economic Affairs / Comité permanent des finances et des affaires économiques

Chair / Président: Stephen Crawford
Vice-Chair / Vice-président: Jeremy Roberts
Ian Arthur, 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

Chair / Président: Dave Smith
Vice-Chair / Vice-présidente: 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
Committee Clerk / Greffier / Greffière: Julia Douglas

Standing Committee on Government Agencies / Comité permanent des organismes gouvernementaux

Chair / Président: John Vanthof
Vice-Chair / Vice-président: Taras Natyshak
Roman Baber, Rudy Cuzzetto
Amy Fee, Vincent Ke
Andrea Khanjin, Marie-France Lalonde
Taras Natyshak, Rick Nicholls
Jeremy Roberts, Marit Stiles
John Vanthof
Committee Clerk / Greffière: Jocelyn McCauley

Standing Committee on Justice Policy / Comité permanent de la justice

Chair / Président: Parm Gill
Vice-Chair / Vice-président: Aris Babikian
Roman Baber, Aris Babikian
Nathalie Des Rosiers, Jill Dunlop
Parm Gill, Lindsey Park
Ross Romano, Prabmeet Singh Sarkaria
Sara Singh, Monique Taylor
Kevin Yarde
Committee Clerk / Greffière: Jocelyn McCauley

Standing Committee on the Legislative Assembly / Comité permanent de l'Assemblée législative

Chair / Présidente: Jane McKenna
Vice-Chair / Vice-président: Vijay Thanigasalam
Robert Bailey, Rima Berns-McGown
Lorne Coe, Michael Coteau
Mike Harris, Faisal Hassan
Jane McKenna, Christina Maria Mitas
Sam Oosterhoff, Gurratan Singh
Vijay Thanigasalam
Committee Clerk / Greffière: Valerie Quioc Lim

Standing Committee on Public Accounts / Comité permanent des comptes publics

Chair / Présidente: Catherine Fife
Vice-Chair / Vice-présidente: Peggy Sattler
Toby Barrett, Catherine Fife
Goldie Ghamari, Jim McDonell
Norman Miller, Suze Morrison
Michael Parsa, Peggy Sattler
Kinga Surma
Committee Clerk / Greffier: Christopher Tyrell

Standing Committee on Regulations and Private Bills / Comité permanent des règlements et des projets de loi d'intérêt privé

Chair / Président: Kaleed Rasheed
Vice-Chair / Vice-président: Will Bouma
Will Bouma, Paul Calandra
Lorne Coe, Stephen Crawford
Mitzie Hunter, Laura Mae Lindo
Paul Miller, Billy Pang
Kaleed Rasheed, Amarjot Sandhu
Jamie West
Committee Clerk / Greffier: Eric Rennie

Standing Committee on Social Policy / Comité permanent de la politique sociale

Chair / Présidente: Nina Tangri
Vice-Chair / Vice-président: Deepak Anand
Deepak Anand, Doly Begum
Jeff Burch, Amy Fee
Michael Gravelle, Joel Harden
Belinda Karahalios, Robin Martin
Sheref Sabawy, Nina Tangri
Effie J. Triantafilopoulos
Committee Clerk / Greffier: Eric Rennie

Select Committee on Financial Transparency / Comité spécial de la transparence financière

Chair / Président: Prabmeet Singh Sarkaria
Vice-Chair / Vice-président: Doug Downey
Roman Baber, Doug Downey
Catherine Fife, Robin Martin
Lindsey Park, Ross Romano
Prabmeet Singh Sarkaria, Sandy Shaw
John Vanthof
Committee Clerk / Greffière: Valerie Quioc Lim