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Président : L'honorable Ted Arnott
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LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY
OF ONTARIO

Tuesday 26 March 2019

ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE
DE L'ONTARIO

Mardi 26 mars 2019

The House met at 0900.

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

ORDERS OF THE DAY

TIME ALLOCATION

Hon. Christine Elliott: I move that, pursuant to standing order 47 and notwithstanding any other standing order or special order of the House relating to Bill 74, An Act concerning the provision of health care, continuing Ontario Health and making consequential and related amendments and repeals, that the Standing Committee on Social Policy be authorized to meet on Monday, April 1, 2019, and Tuesday, April 2, 2019, from 9 a.m. to 10 a.m. and 2 p.m. to 6 p.m. for public hearings on the bill; and

That the Clerk of the Committee, in consultation with the committee Chair, be authorized to arrange the following with regard to Bill 74:

—That the deadline for requests to appear be 12 noon on Thursday, March 28, 2019; and

—That the Clerk of the Committee provide a list of all interested presenters to each member of the subcommittee or their designate following the deadline for requests to appear by 2 p.m. on Thursday, March 28, 2019; and

—That each member of the subcommittee or their designate provide the Clerk of the Committee with a prioritized list of presenters to be scheduled, chosen from the list of all interested presenters received by the Clerk, by 9 a.m. on Friday, March 29, 2019; and

—That each witness will receive up to eight minutes for their presentation followed by 12 minutes for questions divided equally amongst the recognized parties; and

That the deadline for filing written submissions be 6 p.m. on Tuesday, April 2, 2019; and

That the deadline for filing amendments to the bill with the Clerk of the Committee shall be 12 noon on Thursday, April 4, 2019; and

That the Standing Committee on Social Policy shall be authorized to meet on Monday, April 8, 2019, and Tuesday, April 9, 2019, from 9 a.m. to 10:15 a.m. and from 2 p.m. to 8 p.m. for clause-by-clause consideration of the bill; and

That on Tuesday, April 9, 2019, at 5:30 p.m., those amendments which have not yet been moved shall be deemed to have been moved, and the Chair of the Committee shall interrupt the proceedings and shall, without further debate or amendment, put every question necessary to dispose of all remaining sections of the bill and any

amendments thereto. At this time, the Chair shall allow one 20-minute waiting period pursuant to standing order 129(a); and

That the committee shall report the bill to the House no later than Wednesday, April 10, 2019. In the event that the committee fails to report the bill on that day, the bill shall be deemed to be passed by the committee and shall be deemed to be reported to and received by the House; and

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

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

That, in the case of any division relating to any proceedings on the bill, the division bell shall be limited to 20 minutes.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Percy Hatfield): Ms. Elliott has moved government motion number 33. I'll return to the minister to start the debate.

Hon. Christine Elliott: Nothing further; thank you, Speaker.

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

Mr. Will Bouma: Right here, Mr. Speaker.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Percy Hatfield): Oh, there you are. The member for Brantford—Brant.

Mr. Will Bouma: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's good to see you in the Chair this morning. I'm glad you recognize that I blend and hide here very easily.

As always, it's an honour to rise in the House to speak to such an important topic as improving our health care system here in Ontario. This bill, The People's Health Care Act, comes at a time when our province's health care system is in crisis. Wait times for hospital beds and procedures are far too long. Hospitals are crowded, there are not enough family doctors, and patients are languishing in hospital when they would be better cared for in long-term care. I hear these and many other complaints from constituents time and time again. The current system is not working for them, it's not working for their families and it's not working for the taxpayers of Ontario. That's why it's so important that we move as quickly as possible and why I believe that time allocation on this bill is so important.

Our government has made a commitment to restore and reinvigorate our health care system that so often fails the very people whom it's meant to serve. The People's Health Care Act, if passed, is a significant step in making sure that health care in Ontario is of the highest quality. It

will integrate our system so that it works for patients first, not for administrators or for bureaucrats. It will increase the capacity of our health care system so that no one falls through the cracks, and it will modernize how health care is delivered in Ontario, bringing health care in Ontario into the 21st century. That's why we need to move quickly; that's why we need time allocation.

Speaker, our health care system is broken. Our government knows that, and the members opposite know that. It is currently under ever-increasing pressure, and over the past few years we have seen a number of important health care indicators trending downwards. As I said earlier, patients are waiting far too long. They're waiting too long to see specialists. They're waiting too long for hospital beds and long-term-care spaces. Currently, the wait time for a long-term-care space is approximately 146 days. That's nearly half a year, during which time the patient could severely decline at home or decondition in the hospital.

Patients and their families are finding it more and more difficult to navigate through this convoluted and complex system. Not only that, but patients also find themselves having to tell their medical history many times to each different service provider over the course of their journey through the health care system. There is no continuity of care.

To add to all this, there is also a shortage of family doctors across the province. When a patient has to wait too long to see a family doctor, or if a family doctor is unavailable, where is that patient supposed to go? They end up in the emergency room. They go there even if it's not medically necessary because, at the hospital, they're guaranteed to see a doctor.

So because of the lack of family doctors, because of these gaps in care, our hospitals are overflowing and under ever-increasing pressure. Sadly, the result of all this is hallway health care, and not only are poor patient outcomes a consequence of this, but the system is also a significant strain on the taxpayers of Ontario. Hospital visits are significantly more expensive than a visit to a family doctor or a clinic would otherwise be.

The current state of the health care system is not only broken for patients and their families, but it is also a burden for the taxpayers of Ontario. Ontarians have been waiting far too long for an improved health care system, and that's why we need time allocation on this bill.

Each of these examples—and there are many more—are significant barriers to realizing good patient outcomes, but the fact is that the province of Ontario spends 42 cents of every dollar on health care. Despite this significant and disproportionate spending, we have not seen any serious improvement in important health care indicators, in the way care is delivered or in patient health outcomes.

The perception of our health care system is at a low point. The people of Ontario do not have confidence that they or their loved ones will get the care that they need, should and when they need it. This is unacceptable. That is not to say that there is not excellent care delivered in this province; there certainly is, but we must strive to do better. Our government understands this, and that is exactly what

we're doing with The People's Health Care Act, and that's why we need time allocation on this legislation.

0910

Fixing our health care system is not an easy task, and there is no single solution. The problems facing us today transcend just one aspect of the system, whether it's hospitals, long-term care, primary care or any other part. The problems involve the system as a whole, and the solution requires a comprehensive, system-wide reform, from the bottom up. Rather than focusing on individual and isolated areas, The People's Health Care Act addresses the significant need for reform by focusing on the root causes of the challenges facing the system today. The bill does this by reorienting the system to make the patient the focus, rather than the administration or the bureaucracy.

It is this vision that is at the centre of the creation of the Ontario health teams. These Ontario health teams will be composed of a variety of different service providers, from primary care providers through to hospital and long-term-care providers, among others. These teams would make community level care integration a reality. One team, not many, would oversee a patient's care journey, from initial hospital admission to outpatient therapy and everything in between. The team would be able to guide patients through transitions and would take much of the guesswork out of the system. Not only would this allow for a seamless experience, but it would also significantly decrease stress and fatigue in both the patients and their families. By having one team of care providers responsible for care plans, outcomes, service provision and 24/7 navigation, this model would put the patient at the very centre of care. This bill doesn't just focus on individual areas or isolated blocks in the patient's health journey, but rather addresses the entire care framework so that each and every patient can have the confidence that they are receiving, and will receive, the best care possible. This is just another reason to move quickly and why we have to have time allocation on this bill.

Our government also understands that to reform our health care system as required, the agencies themselves must be reformed. Ontario has a huge network of health care agencies and organizations. While these agencies have proliferated across the province, we have not seen a significant rise in coordination among them. Each agency has its own mandate, its own goals, its own target populations and its own focus. Some of them, such as Cancer Care Ontario and Trillium Gift of Life, do an excellent job in fulfilling their mandate and serving their target populations. But without coordination among these agencies, that excellence in care isn't widely shared and can't be leveraged to better the health care system as a whole. As it stands, the health care system is fragmented and inefficient. By integrating each of these disparate agencies under one agency, Ontario Health, we are ensuring that patients receive consistent and excellent care no matter where they are or what condition they have. The integration of what are now fragmented agencies would allow for better coordination than is currently possible and, in doing so, would remove a critical barrier to good patient care. We will be able to leverage the expertise seen in so many

different clinical areas and distribute it across the entire health care system, especially to those such as mental health and addictions.

Ontario Health will not only be able to better serve patients and their families, but it will also be able to better serve the people of Ontario. A single agency, Ontario Health, will be more accountable than many fragmented agencies. We'll be able to better improve patient outcomes when aggregating data from one agency, rather than many, and taking well-informed action based on that data. And we will be more prepared to face the health care challenges of the future under one, well-organized, integrated body. We need to start this as soon as possible, and that's why we need time allocation on this bill.

Finally, Speaker, The People's Health Care Act would modernize our health care system, ushering it into the 21st century. The problems that Ontarians face now and in the future will require a dynamic, innovative and sustainable system. This bill, if passed, will ensure that we have the foundation of a health care system that is just that—dynamic, innovative and sustainable. The people of Ontario are ready and eager to embrace emerging e-health tools such as universal digital health records and virtual care options. These tools will enable patients, some of whom may live in remote areas, to consult with doctors virtually, freeing up our crowded hospitals and clinics for those who truly need them. They will enable patients and their care providers to have access to their health records electronically, eliminating the need for constant repetition of their medical history. Digital health is the future, and this bill will pave the way for a truly modern health care system.

Speaker, I hear from constituents and service providers over and over that our system is broken and in desperate need of real solutions—solutions that don't simply put a Band-Aid on the problems, but rather address the root causes themselves. Our government clearly understands that the system as a whole needs to be reworked; that change must be real, transformational and, above all, patient-centred. That's what we are doing with The People's Health Care Act. And that's why I'm looking forward to the loyal opposition's support as we time-allocate this bill to do what Ontario needs as quickly as possible.

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

Mr. Michael Mantha: It is wonderful to take my place on behalf of the good people of Algoma-Manitoulin.

I'm somewhat frustrated this morning. We have this bill, with motion 33, under time allocation, one of the most—according to this government—comprehensive bills, with many schedules and with a lot of dramatic changes that are happening within our health care sector. And we're not going to go out and talk to the public about this? We're not going to go throughout the entire province to hear and get some feedback from them? We are going to rely on the fact that we know best? That is wrong. I am sorry, that is wrong. This is something that is going to be affecting each and every Ontarian here in this province. The fact that we're not going to go out and listen to community members, organizations, health care providers,

front-line workers and community leaders is just wrong. That is absolutely wrong.

The fact that you're shutting down the debate on this, where there was previous accommodation that had been made at the committee stage—we had indicated to this government: “Listen, we are going to try to move this along as quickly as possible through the committee stage in order to get to public hearings, so that we can go out and accommodate the public and get out to the communities that we need”—and not only in some of those communities here in Toronto, where a lot of this government is very Toronto-centric. But guess what? There's northern Ontario and my riding of Algoma-Manitoulin, Kenora-Rainy River, Nipissing. There's many communities—Timmins. There's Mushkegowuk and the First Nations communities. My goodness, Speaker, it is just wrong of this government to not put this out to the public in order to have some discussions.

This bill is a huge transformation of what is there, and there are some big questions in regard to what people have and some huge concerns. It opens up the door to privatization. It opens up the door to a for-profit health care system. It does, and it will. It's the path. There is a trail that is going to be opened up in order to do this, and that's a huge concern. If it is no, let's put it out to the public. Let's get out there so you can hear what the concerns are from those individuals, so you can change, amend, modify, take it back and really consider what the concerns are for the people out there. I hear it in all my hospitals. I hear it in all my long-term-care homes. I hear it from the front-line workers that are working in the homes. There's a big concern about this, and it does open up the door. It does create a path where people are going to be subject—where we're going to have our public dollars going to profit.

And why? Why are individuals from the private sector interested in it? Because there's a profit to be made. They're looking at this big egg. Easter is coming up, right, Speaker? They're looking to cash in on this egg. And guess what? It's not going to be a Kinder Surprise that's going to be in there.

So when we say that we have to go out—this is a huge change. None of this was mentioned during the last campaign by this government—none, not a word. Well, there are a lot of things that weren't mentioned in the context of the last campaign. Mind you, we had a very nice, detailed, laid-out platform which resonated with a lot of Ontarians. The government—I'm still looking for their platform. But it's just a huge transformation that is happening, and the fact that we're not going to reach out and actually sit down and open it up so that the public can come in from all of our organizations—our schools, our seniors, our children. How are they going to be affected? So the fact that we're shutting down the debate on this is another thing that is concerning, and it's a path that this government has decided to take.

0920

I have to say, the member from—oh, jeez, give me a second here. Where is my friend? Oh, jeez, yes. The member from Renfrew-Nipissing-Pembroke. I remember in a

previous—he was just sitting over here, and when the previous Liberal government would come in and talk about time allocation, well, we all know he would bring that hand up and, “Oh, my goodness. Government is shutting down debate.” Well, why is it different now that the government is in this position shutting down debate on this, on such a piece of legislation that is so important for Ontarians?

I’m pleading with this government. Really, let’s get out and let’s hear from Ontarians so that we can make this better. Our role as an opposition is to do exactly that. I take my role in opposition very seriously. I always try to provide a different perspective. I try to provide a positive perspective in regard to what needs to be done and how things need to be changed, and for us to say that we are going to deny—and that’s what we’re doing; we’re denying the public the opportunity to be heard, the organizations. It’s wrong. I can’t say that enough about this particular action that this government has taken in regard to time allocating this specific bill. It is a huge, huge piece of legislation, and we need to get out to the public and hear what they have to say.

Quand tu regardes ce projet de loi, monsieur le Président, c’est vraiment une pièce de législation qui est extrêmement complexe et qui a beaucoup d’échelles, beaucoup d’étapes et beaucoup de gens, de communautés et d’organisations qui vont être touchés par les changements qui sont dans ce projet de loi. Quand on prend en considération qu’on ne prend pas le temps de vraiment regarder ce qu’on est en train de discuter dans ce projet de loi—parce que ça rouvre des portes. Ça rouvre des portes et des « concernes » pour plusieurs organisations et plusieurs personnes qui sont dans nos hôpitaux, qui sont dans nos services et qui sont dans nos maisons de soins à long terme. Puis, ça rouvre la porte à la privatisation. Ça rouvre la porte à des services pour un profit. Et, pourquoi est-ce que ça arrive? Pourquoi est-ce que ça fonctionne pour le secteur privé? C’est que tu regardes un montant d’argent que nous, le public, mettons envers les services et, à la place d’avoir ce montant d’argent-là du public pour les soins, ça va dans les poches des gens qui sont là pour le profit. Moi, j’ai un gros problème avec ça, et il y a plusieurs Ontariens qui ont des gros problèmes avec ça.

Puis, c’est frustrant de voir que ce gouvernement ne va pas prendre le temps avec cette pièce de législation ici. De faire une motion pour éliminer le débat, l’éliminer et faire certain que les gens—on a tous le droit, dans cette Chambre, d’avoir un point de vue, des idées et de faire une contribution à ce projet de loi. Moi, je suis très fier de prendre ma position ici, d’être le député d’Algoma–Manitoulin et d’apporter les points de vue que j’ai entendus des hôpitaux et des personnes de service dans mes communautés. Mais il y a plusieurs autres gens qui sont ici et puis, eux autres, vous êtes en train de leur ôter leur privilège; pas seulement le privilège des députés qui sont ici mais celui des gens qu’ils représentent quand ils prennent leur siège dans cette Chambre.

Ça, c’est un gros problème. On devrait avoir la chance d’apporter les nôtres—nos idées, nos contributions—et

puis de prendre au sérieux notre rôle de vous offrir des idées, et pas seulement de vous garrocher des pierres et puis de vous dire « oh, vous êtes méchants, méchants ». On a des contributions à faire. Même, au temps du comité, où les gens qui nous représentaient au comité avaient fait des offres de passer le montant de temps, le temps limité, au comité pour qu’on puisse le sortir du comité et puis le rendre au public, pour avoir plus d’occasions d’avoir les gens du public offrir leurs idées et donner leurs inquiétudes et offrir leurs changements au projet de loi que le gouvernement apporte en avant.

I’m going to pass it off to some of my other members, because time allocation, Speaker, as you know, is very short. The frustrating part is, it’s going to be silencing a lot of my caucus members. Not only my caucus members, but there are other members who are in here. Even government members are going to be silenced on this. I’m sure, when you go knocking on doors, not everybody says, “Yes, you’re doing a great job”—

Hon. Lisa MacLeod: You can never silence me, Michael.

Mr. Michael Mantha: Come on, now. I get some that are not happy with me. Come on now; look at yourselves in the mirror. Not everybody is happy with what you’re doing; my goodness. But to deny those individuals the opportunity to voice their opinion—well, okay, all right: Everybody loves me in Algoma–Manitoulin, if you want the truth to be told.

Hon. Lisa MacLeod: Yes, they do.

Mr. Michael Mantha: There you go. Anyway, I’m just saying, to deny Ontarians—not us, because this is not about us. This is not about this government. This is about a dramatic piece of legislation that’s going to be affecting each and every Ontarian. For us to say, “We know best. We don’t want to hear from you”—I have a big problem with that, Speaker.

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

Mrs. Daisy Wai: When I talk to people in Richmond Hill, I often hear of loved ones spending hours and even sometimes days in a hospital hallway, waiting for a bed to become available. Or I hear about parents struggling to navigate through a fractured mental health system for their children. Every day more than 1,000 people are being treated in unconventional spaces in hospitals. The average wait time to access a bed in a long-term home is 146 days. Patients, families and caregivers who are familiar with our system know far too well that Ontario can do better to improve the public health care experience.

The people of Ontario need a connected and sustainable public health care system that will ensure that they will have the high-quality care they need and deserve in the years ahead. In fact, the need that I saw in health care is why I decided to put myself forward to run as MPP, Mr. Speaker. I saw the growing needs of health care in the community and I saw the need of the aging population and the health care required for the rapidly growing population in Richmond Hill.

So when I was approached to join the board of Mackenzie Health, I accepted it with eagerness, hoping to participate in the board to make health care better and do the changes. I was disappointed to find a growing number of patients being treated in hallways because of the lack of funding. There are beds and doctors available to serve and ease off the wait, but as a board we have to be fiscally responsible to only serve within the budget that we were given. So the growing wait times in the ER became a constant problem, especially during the flu season.

To my frustration, I also found out that there are layers of management from the Ministry of Health which at that time had taken away the money that should have been serving in the front-lines. Other than this, the scandals and money wasted by the then Liberal government had left the hospitals in constant struggles. I finally gave up after six years on the board. I thought I'd join the board of the Central Community Care Access Centre. I hoped to really help the front line with direct care. In the first few months, I was impressed by the touching stories I heard from the testimonies of patients who had experienced care and support. But, unfortunately, not long after this it got merged with the LHIN. Front-line nurses were replaced by a thick layer of management, taking away the budget that should have been used to treat patients. I was so upset by this that I resigned from the board.

I was then invited to join the board of Markham Stouffville Hospital. I was hoping that the situation would have been changed, but unfortunately, it was the same old problem. I was so disappointed. I finally knew that perhaps the only way that I can make some difference is to put myself forward to run as MPP and try to make the changes from within.

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Patients and families are getting lost in the health care system, falling through the cracks and waiting too long for care. This has a negative impact on the health and well-being of patients and their loved ones, both physically and mentally.

The health care system is facing capacity pressures today, and it does not have the right mix of services, beds or digital tools to be ready for a growing and rapidly aging population with more complex care needs. It is because of this frustrating experience, Mr. Speaker, that I decided to run. I am now seeing the change from within.

I thank the Ford government for its belief that everyone in Ontario deserves to have access to the services they need at home, in the community and in hospital. They listened to the people who plan and work on the front-lines of the health care system and developed a long-term transformational health care strategy.

When we first took government, the health care system was totally broken. Thank you to Minister Elliott for your leadership in fixing our health care system and putting patients first. Thank you for introducing Bill 74. It is about time that we put our patients first. Thank you for your determination and focus in reducing hallway patient care

and working toward a public health care system where patients and families will have access to faster, better and more connected services.

Having a health care team working around patients will really improve the efficiency and reduce the duplication of service. Thank you for redirecting money to the front-line services—where it belongs—to improve the patient experience and provide better and connected care. This system will support family doctors, hospitals and home and community care providers to work in unison as a team. Within these teams, providers can communicate directly with each other, creating a seamless care experience for the patient and their family. This is a system where patients are supported when transitioning from one health care service to another—a system that truly puts the patient at the centre of care, where it is needed.

I really thank the minister and this government for introducing this bill so quickly. In fact, this is the need that we required immediately. That is why we needed time allocation for Bill 74. If passed, long-awaited health care will really be introduced properly.

To end this, I'd like to share one of my personal experiences. My mother-in-law has been in and out of hospital. In the past year, when she was in hospital, she was treated in the hallway. Just recently, in January, she was in and out of hospital again. The hospital has to keep her inside, staying in the hospital, because they are still deciding what health care is best for her after this. My husband has to put aside a lot of work, staying in the hospital and going back and forth. She was dismissed, and quickly, she was going back to the hospital again. It was a mess. It was just recently, when they started to see the need of this, that I could see they were trying already to get PSWs and people working together. This is only the beginning of a little bit of what Bill 74 is going to introduce.

I know that we need a lot of improvement. Right now, I need to have this Bill 74—the time allocation would really get it passed as quickly as possible. We cannot wait. Our loved ones cannot wait. Caregivers cannot wait. Doctors, nurses and all of the front-line people cannot wait. Our community cannot wait. I'm speaking on behalf of the people from Richmond Hill. I'd really like to get the people from the opposite side of the House to pass this bill when we introduce that.

Bill 74 is the answer to our health care.

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

Ms. Laura Mae Lindo: I'm going to start my debate with a parable that my daddy always says. Every time we rush things, my daddy will say to us, "Hurry brings worry, and worry wears you out." When you're hurrying, you end up making a whole bunch of mistakes. I keep thinking about that, because time-allocating a bill that is supposed to provide the biggest health care transformation that we have ever seen has to be something that you take your time with. You have to take your time because there are so many moving pieces.

I agree that the health care system needs to be improved. Everybody agrees with that on all sides of this

House, and I would argue that many, many people in all of the ridings we represent would agree. But the fact that the health care system needs to be redesigned does not mean that nobody wants to speak to what that design looks like. Everybody wants to speak to what that design looks like, and the reason they do is because health care requires specific things to make us feel okay. In order for me to get better, to go on to my healing journey, I have to feel like my needs are being heard and felt.

I say this from a lifetime of experience. My dad, who I quoted earlier, has been in and out of hospital for heart problems, diabetes, ulcers, gallstones, horrible asthma. I've lived a whole life, from when I was young until the time that I'm still young—just a different kind of young—and have seen different things as my dad has gone through that. I've also had, as I've said in this House before, a partner who went through the sudden realization that he had cancer. We'd gone in and out of specialty hospitals—Princess Margaret, just up the street. We spent a lot of time there.

Our front-line nurses and the doctors are doing everything possible in a broken system. We all agree with that. But that does not mean that the voices of the individuals who are accessing the system should not be heard. I think that's the piece that's missing.

Hurry brings worry, and worry wears you out. It wears you out because now you will have to spend oodles of time, years and years, trying to fix something that you could have just taken your time to pay attention to.

Here are a couple of examples:

One, racialized people—as the anti-racism critic and the chair of the ONDP's black caucus—accessing health care are not treated the same way as white folks accessing health care. Sometimes it's a confluence of things. Sometimes it's because they're dealing with poverty and race; sometimes it's religion and race; sometimes it's ethnic norms and values that they have that come into tension with the way that Ontario is trying to provide their health care. If we don't speak to organizations like Sanctuary, for instance, which is a health organization that works with refugees and new immigrants who are settling in the Waterloo region and is located in my riding, we will never know how to ensure healthy settlement for those folks. They deserve care.

I found out that within Waterloo region, because of the swiftness with which this change is taking place—and this is prior to even knowing that this bill would be time-allocated—people have been losing jobs. We've seen nursing staff losing jobs because nobody knows what the budget will hold, and so they cannot retain the people. I think everybody would agree that you should be paid for the labour that you provide in this lovely province. Well, in Waterloo region, we no longer have access to a nurse who specializes in diabetes. Diabetes is a massive problem for many, many people, and if you don't have specialized care, it can get worse very quickly. It can be detrimental very quickly.

So what is this Ontario health team to do if the care isn't available? What happens for all of the people, then, in this area, in this little region, who don't have access to the

actual specialty care that they need? What does it matter if these Ontario health teams come together if there is nobody there to provide the care?

I think that's the exact same issue that we've seen when we've spoken about the autism portfolio, where it's great to have a diagnosis, but what happens when I actually need to access specialty care and I can't afford it? What does that do to a parent? What does that do to a child who is looking after an aging parent?

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With that, I just want to reiterate, from my daddy to everybody in this lovely House: Hurry brings worry, and worry wears you out. Travel this bill.

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

Mr. Stephen Crawford: It's an honour to be able to speak today on Bill 74 and its time allocation. I'd like to start out by giving a little bit of history of our medical system here in Canada and Ontario and then bring in why we need Bill 74 and why we need to time-allocate it.

From the discovery of insulin and radiation therapy to the development of infant formula and vaccines, Canadians have always been at the forefront of medical innovation. While much has changed since 1921, the year that Frederick Banting and his colleague, Charles Best, discovered insulin while conducting research at the University of Toronto, it is clear that Ontarians have been and continue to be innovators and develop significant contributions to international medical knowledge. Ontarians are proud of their public health care system.

Bill 74 will create the legislative framework for the government to achieve its objective of creating a new model for a patient-centric, integrated public health care system. I am proud to stand in the Legislature today and speak in support of this bill. This reform is important for the people of Ontario. Noting that we have had ample time for thorough debate on this bill, I am in favour of time allocation so that we can pass this legislation, start modernizing our health care system and begin delivering better for the people of Ontario.

I regularly hear from constituents their concerns with respect to delivery of health care and wait times and their suggestions to improve this. They tell me of wait times to see a doctor, wait times in the emergency room and long overall wait times to enter long-term-care homes. I also know from my own experience, personally, in which my daughter had to wait almost two years to see a specialist. That was about a third of her life at the time. That's simply unacceptable.

These challenges have compounded over the previous 10 years as a result of spending more and more money on administration and not adequately supporting our front-line workers. In fact, over the last 15 years, the number of health care administrators in Ontario grew by approximately 86% when, in the same time frame, the number of registered nurses grew by only 9%. We know that spending more money on bureaucrats instead of nurses and doctors and front-line workers is not in the public interest.

Right now care is fragmented, particularly at patient transfer points, for example, from hospital bed to home care. Patients, families and caregivers experience frequent gaps in care where they have to repeatedly start back at square one with a new provider, feeling that their concerns are not listened to, and all because of gaps in care, continuity and transfer of knowledge between providers. Community health care providers are not incentivized with the previous structure to work together in teams, which diminishes the strength of what otherwise would be patient-centred, community-based health care.

Simply put, the potential of our health care system to deliver better outcomes for Ontarians is being held back by the current structure. We need a better way to deliver health care in our province, and this bill will do that. This is made more frustrating by the fact that as Ontario is home to some of the world's best doctors, nurses, researchers and health care teams. Ontario medical professionals excel in creating globally recognized medical techniques and a number of researchers are leaders in the global community.

I regularly hear from health care providers and constituents alike who tell me that they want a health care system that encourages collaboration and partnership—one that is free from a system slowed by bureaucracy constructed from within it. We need to help our front-line workers, not hinder them. That is the message I have repeatedly heard from stakeholders and constituents. In this place, we, too, have had great discussions on the work that this bill will deliver for the people of Ontario and everyone who needs care in our province. This change is important for the residents of my community, and since we've had ample time for thorough debate on this bill, I'm in favour of time allocation so we can pass this legislation and start modernizing our health care system.

Our health care professionals work hard to connect Ontarians to the services they need, though they will need to be better supported. They should be able to easily link us to care we need, whether it's physiotherapy, rehabilitation services or other needs. And once they make that transfer of care, the provider should receive a seamless transfer of health records and previous medical history so they can focus on the patient's needs, not on assessing them.

Right now, we are leaving Ontarians behind because we have a health care system that is disconnected. Efforts to improve care are not coordinated toward a common goal, but are dispersed and siloed in the current system. That's why, throughout this government's process of developing a vision for our health care system, we have always said to the people of Ontario that our primary objective is and always has been to strengthen our publicly funded health care system. We committed to the people of Ontario during the election campaign that we would end hallway health care, and we are committed to that promise.

More than 1,000 patients are receiving care in hallways every single day, and the average wait time to access a long-term-care bed is 146 days. Patients and families are getting lost in the health care system, falling through the cracks and waiting too long. The health care system is facing pressures today. It does not have the right mix of

services, beds or digital tools to be ready for a growing and rapidly aging population with more complex care needs. We have a plan to address the structural deficiencies and improve the effectiveness of our public health care system. These improvements are crucial for the residents of Ontario. We have already discussed this bill at great length, so I'm in favour of time allocation so we can pass this legislation, start modernizing our health care system and begin delivering better for the people of Ontario, not only in my riding, but throughout Ontario.

The well-being of patients across Ontario is at stake. They are in need of better, smarter care, the type of care that this bill will deliver. Our plan starts right at home in our communities where our priority as a government is to deliver local, community-based care while not being hindered by bureaucracy.

Our vision for patient-centred community care will be achieved through the creation of local Ontario health teams. These teams will be made up of local health care providers: our neighbours and our friends from our communities. They will be organized to allow collaboration, forming a patient-centred partnership of providers—a system where family doctors, hospitals, home and community care providers work in unison as a team. Within these teams, providers can communicate directly with each other, providing a seamless care experience for the patients and their families—a system where patients are supported when transitioning from one health care service to another; a system that truly puts patients at the centre of care.

Through these Ontario health teams, patients would have an increased say in what they want regarding their health care. With safeguards in place, patients would have an option to securely access digital health records, such as making online appointments, talking to a specialist virtually or having access to their own electronic health care records. The Ontario health teams would rely on leadership that exists in their community, rather than another level of bureaucracy and management.

We envision a community health care delivery model that connects different types of care together. This includes primary care and hospitals, home care, long-term care, mental health and addiction supports. The vision is to build a patient-centred system of care; one that will look holistically at the needs of patients and draw on resources from multiple providers in a seamless resource of care. Not only is this change important for the residents of my community, but every community throughout Ontario. In noting again that we have had ample time for thorough debate on this bill, I'm in favour of the time allocation so we can pass this legislation swiftly and begin improving the health care system for Ontarians.

Previously, we continued to add, not integrate and coordinate, new agencies and health care programs. This approach to system planning led to the development of many agencies, each working with a separate mandate, siloed from each other and building a significant structural barrier to innovation and better patient care. They each followed a distinct and different strategic plan instead of

policies and procedures and embraced at times divergent views on how to deliver the best possible care to patients. These agencies often also focused on specific patient populations or disease states; however, we need a system that looks more holistically at the whole person, the entire spectrum of patient needs, and better coordinates care, which spans multiple areas of focus. This is not the fault of any one organization or any individual, but the system that was set up. It represents a deficiency in how the health care system was designed by the previous government.

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The fact is that our world-class programs are being developed and delivered through various agencies, but over-bearing structures have prevented more thorough adoption and coordination for the benefit of the public. We have a genuine opportunity and a real responsibility to review what is working, what is not, and what we can do differently.

I encourage the opposition here to support this bill. We need to bring a consistency of approach to our health care system, one that shares a common vision, a single point of oversight, and a united effort to get from where we are to where we need to be. To achieve that, our government has established a new agency, Ontario Health. This agency and our plan will improve the health system so that we have access to faster, better-coordinated public health care where it is needed and when it is needed.

I know that my constituents are looking forward to seeing their public health care system improve. Modernizing the system will take time, but I know the government will continue to listen to the people who plan and work on the front lines, including nurses, doctors and other providers, as we implement this change. The Oakville Trafalgar Memorial Hospital is home to a wonderful team of health care professionals, and I want to publicly commend them for the tremendous commitment that they have, and the way they conduct themselves on a daily basis to care for our society's most vulnerable and deliver real results to the residents in my community.

We need to modernize and improve our public health care system. We need to leverage the human resources that we have of thousands of health care providers in this province, thousands of innovators, and take advantage of it so we can work together.

Mr. Speaker, we have been talking a lot about the importance of health care and the excellent changes that this bill will deliver to the people of Ontario. Because of that, I am in favour of the time allocation so we can pass this legislation swiftly.

In conclusion, the principal reforms this bill will accomplish in order to improve health care delivery and patient care in Ontario are:

- (1) improve patient access to medical records through secure online systems;
- (2) create a more efficient and seamless transfer of care for patients from hospitals to home care, and accessing other services that meet their needs;
- (3) create local, integrated health care teams to better coordinate between providers; and

(4) ensure that tax dollars are being deployed effectively to support our doctors, nurses and front-line health care professionals.

I want to thank the Minister of Health, Christine Elliott, for her dedication through this review, and for presenting the bill to our Legislature. I am proud to stand in the Legislature in support of this bill, and its positive impact on the health of all Ontarians, and speak to why we need to pass this bill in a timely manner.

The provincial government was given a mandate to fix our health care system, not put a Band-Aid on it. These changes are important to the people of Ontario. Bill 74 will create the legislative framework for our government to achieve the objective of creating a new model of a patient-centric, integrated health care system, ending hallway health care once and for all.

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

Ms. Jill Andrew: Good morning, Mr. Speaker. I stand here in front of this House to add some words—I was going to correct myself—

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Percy Hatfield): I'm sorry; my mistake. It's the member for Toronto–St. Paul's.

Ms. Jill Andrew: I would have just integrated the correction in with my comments, but thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

I'm standing this morning proudly as the MPP for Toronto–St. Paul's, adding my words to our debate on the government bill, The People's Health Care Act. What I'd like to say is that I have spoken to many of the people in Toronto–St. Paul's, particularly the people who access our Out of the Cold program, people who are homeless, people from Na-Me-Res, people in transitional housing, people in precarious employment. What they're saying to us at our community offices is, "We haven't been consulted."

While I understand that the government, for their own agenda, seeks to time-allocate this bill, what the people—and I keep stressing the words "the people," because we are supposed to be working in this building for all Ontarians. But I can guarantee you that the dozens, if not more than 80 people, that we have connected with in our riding, particularly around issues of health, access to health, the social determinants of health—they're not part of that "people." They're not feeling heard.

I would strongly urge the government to rethink this idea of time allocation, put their agenda aside—because, again, it's our work in this building to do the agenda of Ontario—and reach back to communities. Reach back to Toronto–St. Paul's and many of the seniors, actually, who are also part of that group of precarious housing, precarious health, and who are seeking answers, who want more front-line workers. Our residents are worried, quite frankly. They're worried that this notion of a centralized agency, this notion of a lack of transparency and the opaqueness of this bill is going to result in them not being able to have front-line access to good nurses and good doctors.

It's been said previously: Our nurses, our doctors, our staff are doing the best they can in a broken system. As someone who has experienced hallway medicine myself—

I have lived with chronic health issues since being a kid. One could say I was a poster kid for SickKids, all the way up to my last stay a few years back. This bill is not really addressing hallway medicine. This bill is not addressing—really addressing—the bureaucracy that leaves thousands of people in ERs every evening, every morning, every afternoon, and which also cost lives when people fall through the cracks and they demise.

I'm also really concerned about equity, as has been said many times in this building. Health Quality Ontario was the one government agency that really had a focus on equity, that recognized the way the social determinants of health impact Ontarians' access to health care. We're talking income, social status, employability, education, literacy, physical environments and access to health services—just some of the social determinants of health. Health equity was about ensuring that all people living in Ontario could access the appropriate, effective and timely services that they needed to feel better. That's all we want in Ontario, for everyone to feel good enough so they can be contributing citizens to this great province. When the government removes Health Quality Ontario, that is lost. For me, that's not good enough for the people of Toronto—St. Paul's.

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

M. Guy Bourgouin: Ça me fait toujours plaisir de me lever pour parler de ma circonscription de Mushkegowuk—James Bay. Je pense qu'il n'y a personne aujourd'hui qui dit qu'on n'a pas besoin d'améliorer notre système de santé. Je pense que tout le monde reconnaît que, à quelque part, notre système de santé doit être amélioré. Mais quand on entend qu'on veut expédier un projet de loi sans consultations publiques, je pense que c'est un manque de « accountability ». En français, le mot c'est—

M. Gilles Bisson: Comptabilité.

M. Guy Bourgouin: Non, pas comptabilité, mais de gérance envers un gouvernement, de faire certain qu'il entend les « concernes » du peuple.

M^{me} France Gélinas: Imputabilité.

M. Guy Bourgouin: En tout cas. On n'a rien qu'à regarder—puis je pense que c'est mon confrère d'Algoma qui l'a dit le mieux. Il a dit : « Qu'est-ce qu'on fait des régions du Nord, des Premières nations? » On n'entend aucune consultation. On ne veut pas faire de consultations. Je peux vous dire que, dans ma région de Mushkegowuk—James Bay, on a beaucoup de problèmes. Vous ne réalisez pas les problèmes qu'on peut avoir dans le Nord comparé au Sud. Je me demande de quoi le gouvernement a peur. Il a peur de quoi, le gouvernement? Ils disent que le projet de loi est un bon projet de loi; on a eu le débat en Chambre. C'est bien d'avoir le débat en Chambre. Il faut avoir ce débat-là en Chambre. Mais il reste qu'il faut faire plus que ça. C'est pour ça que la consultation publique est si importante. Je peux vous dire, on pense qu'on connaît tout, en étant député, mais on ne connaît pas tout. On devrait prendre notre temps. C'est pour ça que la consultation est si importante—qu'on entende du monde parler—parce que si on ne fait pas de consultation, monsieur le Président,

je peux vous dire qu'on érode la démocratie. Puis, comme députés ou comme gouvernement, si on érode la démocratie, je pense qu'on fait une grave erreur. C'est une grave erreur d'éroder une démocratie et de ne pas être prêt à entendre le monde parler sur un projet de loi parce qu'on a peur de la critique. Il semble que ce gouvernement-là a peur de la critique, d'entendre ce que le peuple pense vraiment de leur projet de loi.

Dans le nouveau projet de loi, on n'a rien qu'à regarder—j'ai eu la chance, comme critique francophone, de parler à l'AFO et de parler à d'autres agences francophones, et elles ont dit : « Guy, on n'a eu aucune consultation. » Aucune consultation sur les services en français que, veux, veux pas, on se rend compte que nos services en français en Ontario se font éroder graduellement. On ne rentrera pas dedans, là, parce que je pense que je pourrais en parler encore pour une demi-heure ou une heure, juste sur l'érosion, mais un point que je veux amener, par exemple, ce sont les agents de planification des services en français.

On a encore un projet de loi où il n'y a aucune mention de la planification des services en français dans le système de santé. On nous dit qu'on va consulter avec la ministre. Je pense que c'est une erreur que le gouvernement fait en ne mettant pas le langage dans le projet de loi pour faire certain qu'ils entendent les communautés francophones et des agences de planification pour faire certain qu'on donne les services appropriés, dans la langue française, aux personnes qui parlent seulement français. Je pense que c'est un gros manque du gouvernement. Je pense que le gouvernement fait une grande erreur de vouloir garder ça, d'expédier un projet de loi sans consultation publique, parce que je pense que le monde mérite mieux que ça. On mérite, comme étant élu, de faire certain qu'on entend la voix du peuple quand on fait des projets de loi.

Je vais vous donner un autre exemple, un autre exemple qui est cher, parce qu'on traite avec ça dans ma circonscription. Pour les soins à long terme, s'il y avait de la planification, le gouvernement entendrait de ma circonscription ce qu'on est obligé de vivre au jour le jour—les personnes âgées, ce qu'elles vivent au jour le jour dans ma circonscription. La moyenne pour les personnes qui veulent rentrer dans une maison à long terme dans la province est de 142 jours à 148 jours. Dans ma circonscription de Mushkegowuk, si je regarde la communauté de Hearst, de Kapuskasing, on parle de trois ans à quatre ans d'attente, monsieur le Président. Puis, on ne veut pas avoir de consultation publique? On ne veut pas entendre parler de ça? C'est une réalité qu'il y a dans le Nord. Ça, c'est un exemple—un exemple. Puis, ce monde-là, ils ont payé des taxes toute leur vie; ils ont droit à la dignité, et on n'est pas capable de l'avoir.

On peut revenir sur le sujet. Il y a trois ou quatre ans, j'ai entendu—c'était dans un débat. Il y a un de mes collègues de l'autre bord de la Chambre qui disait : « Huit mois, c'est trop long. » Huit mois, c'est trop long? Je vais lui échanger ses huit mois pour mes trois ou quatre ans; on va voir comment il va se sentir envers son monde, quand le monde dans notre circonscription attend trois ou quatre ans pour avoir une place dans le long terme.

Monsieur le Président, je demande au gouvernement de reconsidérer et d'aller faire de la consultation publique sur ce projet de loi. Merci, et bonne journée.

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

Mr. Joel Harden: It's a pleasure to rise today in responding to this bill and the government's intent to time-allocate this bill.

I just want to begin by borrowing on what many of my friends have already said, Speaker, with a lesson that I learned early in politics. It's from a friend of mine who sat down with me at the end of a tough day when I was going door-to-door trying to sign up union cards. I didn't have a very good day. She said, "Joel, politics is not about talking; politics is about listening. The success of your politics will depend on how good of a listener you are." It was hard advice, but I took it to heart and I thought a lot about asking people at the door what they felt about the union, what their concerns were about the workplace. As luck would have it, as the lesson panned out, it worked out dramatically better for me in that particular union drive from that day forward.

What I've been thinking about with this bill ever since I read through it is that the intent would appear to be good, to get services to the front line. Nobody in this room will disagree with that. But what concerns me is that Ontario Health, as a super-organization, and its health care teams that are being dispatched across the province, as the bill would lead us to believe, are not being informed by those front-line workers. We're not asking them, what should those health teams do? What should their jurisdiction be? What would efficient, consultative health care look like? We're not asking the nurses. We're not asking the orderlies. We're not asking the personal support workers. We're not asking the doctors, by any stretch of imagination.

Speaker, the scope of Ontario Health under this particular bill doesn't include most doctors in the province of Ontario. It only includes doctors working for community health care centres and other specific niche organizations. The government is prepared to stampede forward with a health care transformation bill that offers no scope for doctors. Think about that. That's what happens when you don't listen and when you are in a hurry. You'll have a massive mess to clean up later, as the member from Kitchener Centre said so very well.

I want to worry for a moment, Speaker—because that's what happens to me when I see someone in a hurry—about who is steering the ship here. I'll take the point that I made earlier again. The minister responsible for this file has a lot of experience in this sector, no doubt. There are many people in this government who have direct front-line experience, no doubt. Is that enough knowledge to steer this ship? My worry is that the same people who have been driving health care transformation policy for decades are the ones involved in steering the ship, people like Michael Decter, who have worked for government after government advising the same thing. As my friend the member from Oakville said very well: more bureaucracy, more money to the top.

In Ottawa, we have a situation where a person managing the Ottawa Hospital network makes a salary of almost \$700,000 while a shocking amount of people in our health care system are working for minimum wage or barely over it, if you include personal support workers. I ask you, Speaker, is this the legacy our grandmothers and grandfathers wanted in health care, that we would have these disparities? It can't be.

The only way forward—I'm going to tell my friends on the record here—is to put the brakes on time-allocating a transformation agenda and open it up. Here's my advice, free of charge: Take the salary you're currently spending on Dr. Rueben Devlin, who does not have a great record in health care administration, take that \$350,000, fund a town hall movement across this province, and listen to the front-line workers. That's what you should do. You should be listening to them. You should be asking them, what will help people? What will help patients?

You should also open up serious lines of communication with physicians in this province. That is health care transformation—not in a rush, but with listening in mind.

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

Mr. Gilles Bisson: I just want to thank the members who have participated in debate so far on both sides of the House, but specifically the members on our side of the House, in the official opposition, who are trying to give the government a pretty simple message. That is, if you're seriously believing that this is the largest health transformation in many years in the province of Ontario, you should have the conviction of what you believe in and put that bill out in committee so that the people of Ontario can comment. To have a scant day or two of hearings here in Toronto on this particular bill doesn't do justice to what you're trying to do. If we're going to do this type of transformation, where we're going to overhaul the health care system—I know our whip and health critic is going to speak to it the next time we have a chance to debate this—and you're going to do the type of privatization that you're suggesting in this bill and other things, well, then, go out and listen to what the people of Ontario have to say.

I want to send you a little news flash: Guess who pays for all of this? It's the people of Ontario. It's their tax dollars that we go get in this Legislature to be able to pay for the organization of health and other services in our community. When you're out there saying that we're going to spend almost—it's, what, \$60 billion almost that we spend on health care in this province—and you're not prepared to go out and do consultations across this province other than a scant day or two here in downtown Toronto, I think that is completely opposite to the message that you're trying to sell, which is, apparently, that you're the government of the people.

Well, you're only for some of the people. You're for those who are going to benefit by way of privatization. You're the government for the people who will benefit with this bill, which is basically your friends. I think what we need to do is that we need to listen to the people of Ontario.

With that, Mr. Speaker, I have an amendment to this particular motion that I'd like to put forward—and I'll grab my glasses. If I can have a page please come up here. I need a page. I've got to send you back—there we go. If you could give this to the table, and one to the Speaker.

It reads as follows: I move that the motion be amended by deleting all of the words following the word “meet” in paragraph 1 and replacing them with “anywhere in the province during the constituency weeks in April and May for the purpose of public hearings on Bill 74 and that the subcommittee should meet to organize all deadlines related to committee business for Bill 74.”

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Percy Hatfield): Mr. Bisson has moved that the motion be amended by deleting all of the words following the word “meet” in paragraph 1 and replacing them with “anywhere in the province during the constituency weeks in April and May for the purpose of public hearings on Bill 74 and that the subcommittee should meet to organize all deadlines related to committee business for Bill 74.”

Mr. Bisson?

Mr. Gilles Bisson: The amendment is pretty straightforward. As was said by all of our caucus members who got up, this, according to the government, is the largest transformation in health care we've seen in a long time. But—flash—I want to let you know there are other parts of Ontario that need to be heard, not just downtown Toronto. I love the city of Toronto. It's the best city in the world. I've travelled around and I'll tell you, Toronto is hard to beat when it comes to being a wonderful city to call home. But there are places in Sudbury, in Kenora, in Fort Frances, in Ottawa, in Niagara Falls. There are different places across this province where people need to be heard.

If you're going to do these kinds of changes in health care, you need to be able to make sure that you hear from the people who first pay for the system, because it's our tax dollars that pay for this health care system, and the people who run the system, being those who are employed within the system of health care that we have at whatever level—community clinic, hospital, long-term care, lab maybe, wherever it is—and also the patients, because they're the people who in the end are going to be utilizing the system and they, too, need to be heard.

You're about to do this large transformation in the dark. You're essentially saying that we're going to go down into a dark committee room here at Queen's Park, we're going to have a day of hearings where people have I think it's a total of eight minutes in the motion to be able to make their presentation, and that will be it. That will be all of the presentations. If you can't come from Moosonee, if you can't come from Kiiwetinoong, if you can't come from Sudbury or Ottawa or wherever because you can't afford it, you're just out of luck. You don't have your say.

So when it comes to a democracy working, a government has to have the respect of the people. And for this government to pretend that it's a government of the people, who is not prepared to respect the public by allowing public hearings on this very important bill, I think is,

quite frankly, a disservice to democracy and it's a disgrace to the people of Ontario.

Shall I continue, Speaker?

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Percy Hatfield): If you had another sentence or two, but at this time I could move that we recess until question period, and the next time that this motion is up, you would continue your debate.

Debate deemed adjourned.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Percy Hatfield): Seeing that it is almost 10:15, this House will stand in recess until 10:30, when we resume with question period.

The House recessed from 1013 to 1030.

INTRODUCTION OF VISITORS

Mr. Faisal Hassan: I would like to welcome my assistant Abdurahman Gureye to the chamber today. Welcome to Queen's Park. Here you are.

Mr. Kaled Rasheed: It is my pleasure to introduce my campaign manager, all the way from Alberta: Lanny Westersund. Lanny, welcome to Queen's Park.

Ms. Suze Morrison: I would like to give a warm welcome this morning to my very good friend Mike LeSage, who's here with us today—also a resident of Toronto Centre. I'd like to give an even warmer welcome—sorry, Mike—to my husband, Trevor, who's also here today. It's his birthday.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): We have an esteemed former member of the Legislature in the Speaker's gallery today: the member for Elgin—Middlesex—London in the 37th, 38th and 39th Parliaments and the Speaker of the Legislature in the 39th Parliament, Steve Peters. Welcome back, Steve. It's great to have you here.

M^{me} Nathalie Des Rosiers: It's a pleasure to welcome the Citizens' Climate Lobby today—many members, some from Ottawa. Cathy Orlando, Alex Neufeld and Natty Urquizo were here this morning.

I also want to welcome the Ontario Retirement Communities Association, which met with the MPP from Orléans earlier today: Cathy Hecimovich, the chief executive officer; Dennis Boschetto, the vice-president of operations, Verve senior living; and Susan Schutta, vice-president, corporate affairs, for Revera. Welcome to Queen's Park. Bienvenue à Queen's Park.

Hon. Christine Elliott: I'd like to introduce Dawn Tymianski, the CEO, and Marnee Wilson, the president, of the Nurse Practitioners' Association of Ontario. Welcome to Queen's Park.

Mr. Jamie West: Two quick introductions of people who came all the way from Sudbury to be at Queen's Park today: first, from the Catholic Health Association of Ontario is Jo-Anne Palkovits from Sudbury's St. Joseph's Villa; as well as Cathy Orlando from the Citizens' Climate Lobby, also from Sudbury.

Mr. Mike Schreiner: I'd like to welcome all the members from the Citizens' Climate Lobby here at Queen's Park today, especially Anita Payne and Guy Hanchet.

I'd also like to welcome Matt Jotham, who is the president of the Guelph Police Association. Welcome to Queen's Park.

Hon. Victor Fedeli: It's a pleasure to announce that Quinto Annibale, the new vice-chair of the LCBO, is in the gallery today.

Mr. Percy Hatfield: There are two members from Windsor here today, with the Catholic Health Association. I'd like to welcome Bill Marra and Janice Kaffer from Hôtel-Dieu Grace Healthcare.

Hon. Michael A. Tibollo: I'd like to welcome some very special guests to the Legislature this morning: Ms. Christine Fiorini, the mother of one of our pages, Katherine Trimboli; as well as Katherine's grandparents, Mr. Frank Fiorini and Dr. Wendy Meschino.

Katherine is serving as today's page captain here in the Legislature. To her family, welcome, benvenuti, to Queen's Park.

Mr. Kevin Yarde: I'd like to welcome Bruce Chapman here, the president of the PAO, as well as Rob Jamieson, the president of the OPPA.

Mr. John Fraser: I always like to say that a lot of religious orders had a big part to play in building up Ontario's health care. I know that members of the Catholic Health Association are here today. I want to thank them for their presence and welcome them here to Queen's Park.

Ms. Andrea Khanjin: I want to welcome my esteemed visitors from the Special Olympics: Special Olympian Jason Helmond; his mother, Michelle Helmond; and his sister, Kathryn Helmond; as well as the guests from Ducks Unlimited: Kevin Rich, Sean Rootham, Aurora Vargas, Mike Williams and Lynette Mader.

M^{me} France Gélinas: It's a pleasure to introduce Dawn Tymianski, Shawn Dookie, Leanna Lefebvre, Jennifer Clement and Brooklyn Mattinson, all nurse practitioners, here at Queen's Park.

I would also like a shout-out to St. Joseph's Health Centre CEO and president Jo-Anne Palkovits, who is here with the Catholic Health Association of Ontario, as well as Cathy Orlando and Dr. Cox from Sudbury with the Citizens' Climate Lobby. Welcome to Queen's Park.

Ms. Jill Dunlop: I, too, would like to welcome members from the Catholic Health Association of Ontario. From my riding of Simcoe North, from Waypoint Centre for Mental Health Care, we have president and CEO Carol Lambie and board member Betty Valentine. Thank you for being here, ladies.

Mr. Terence Kernaghan: It gives me great pleasure to welcome Dr. Gillian Kernaghan, the president and CEO of St. Joseph's in London North Centre. She's also the chair of the Catholic Health Association. Welcome to Queen's Park.

Ms. Jill Andrew: I'd like to welcome Lynn Adamson and George Biggar, who are both residents of my riding and who were here earlier this morning with Citizens' Climate Lobby.

Miss Monique Taylor: I would like to give a nice warm welcome to the Speech and Stuttering Institute. I met with them last week, and they're here visiting members again. Joining them are Frank Ientile, Dr. Bob Kroll,

Margit Pukonen, Wilma Koehler and Emanuel Tusca. Welcome to Queen's Park.

Ms. Judith Monteith-Farrell: I would like to welcome to Queen's Park Gary Johnson, from the board of directors of St. Joseph's Care Group from our riding.

Ms. Andrea Khanjin: I have one more introduction. I want to introduce Nick Stacey from my office in Barrie-Innisfil, as well as Mike Lake, member of Parliament, who is joining us here today.

WEARING OF RIBBONS

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

Mr. Stephen Lecce: Today is Purple Day, the internationally recognized day for epilepsy awareness. With over 95,000 people living in the province of Ontario with epilepsy, I seek unanimous consent for members to wear purple ribbons today to help spread awareness about epilepsy.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): The member for King-Vaughan is seeking unanimous consent of the House to allow members to wear purple ribbons in recognition of epilepsy day. Agreed? Agreed.

ORAL QUESTIONS

HEALTH CARE

Ms. Andrea Horwath: My first question is for the Premier. In recent weeks, private, for-profit health care providers have been coming forward to declare their interest in being part of the government's health care scheme. In London, Ontario, a private clinic owned by the Advanced Medical Group says they're ready and willing to take on surgeries at their private operating room. In Toronto, a private-option clinic calling itself Mom and Baby Depot says they're "excited to build and be part of an Ontario health team."

Can the Premier tell us, will for-profit corporations like these ones be allowed to be a part of Ontario health teams, yes or no?

Hon. Doug Ford: Through you, Mr. Speaker: I just have a couple of quick comments. We may disagree in this chamber, we may spar back and forth with each other, but I just want to pass on my condolences to the MPP from Essex. His father passed away. On behalf of the PC caucus and myself, I gave him a call. When it comes to family and politics, we separate family and then we come back in here and we go back and forth. But I just want to give him all my respects and wish him and his family all the blessings.

Applause.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Supplementary.

Ms. Andrea Horwath: I want to thank the Premier very much, of course. The member for Essex lost his father on the weekend, and I appreciate very much the Premier's remarks, as well as the condolences from the rest of your team as well as the other members. It's very much appreciated.

Back to the question: The Premier insists that his multi-billion-dollar mega health merger isn't opening the door to private health care, but families are finding that pretty hard to believe. To give just one example, the London-area private clinic that I mentioned isn't just pushing for more for-profit care; they also hosted the Premier at an event during last spring's election campaign. It seems like a pretty cozy relationship.

1040

Again, my question to the Premier is: Will for-profit corporations like these be allowed to be a part of Ontario health teams? Yes or no?

Hon. Doug Ford: The Minister of Health.

Hon. Christine Elliott: I thank the leader of the official opposition for the question, and I extend my condolences to the member from Essex and his family as well.

To the specifics of your question, what we have stated from the very beginning is that we are trying to strengthen our public health care system with the introduction of the plan that's contained in Bill 74. That is what it's all about. We want to make sure that people get the connected care that they need and deserve.

We are going to be working with Ontario Health, issuing very strict criteria for any organizations that want to band together to become local Ontario health teams. They're going to have to, first of all, meet the criteria of being able to manage the funds that will be allocated to them, they have to make sure that they maintain the quality of care that will be expected from them, and they also need to continue to involve patients and families in all aspects of designing the care and delivering the care—

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

Ms. Andrea Horwath: Well, what I was hoping to hear from the minister is that they can do all of that work in a not-for-profit manner, Speaker. That's what we're wanting to hear from this minister and this Premier.

But here's what families see: A Premier who has promised no layoffs is already firing nurses, front-line health care workers and other health professionals; meetings are being held behind closed doors without any public input or accountability; and private, for-profit health interests seeking to profit from our health care system already seem to have the Premier on speed-dial.

Will the Premier do the right thing by the people of this province and be very, very clear: Will for-profit corporations like this be allowed to be a part of Ontario health teams? Yes or no?

Interjections.

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

The question has been referred to the Deputy Premier and Minister of Health and Long-Term Care.

Hon. Christine Elliott: First of all, I can assure the leader of the official opposition that the people of Ontario will be receiving the care that they expect and deserve should Bill 74 pass, which I urge you to support, because we are strengthening our public health care system. It will be up to the local organizations to decide how they wish

to band together, whether they wish to form a partnership or a joint venture with anyone.

I can tell you that I have been travelling throughout the province and I have been speaking with groups that are already providing integrated care in Barrie and Bracebridge and North Bay and Arnprior and Newmarket—Aurora. Across this province, I can tell you that health care providers are excited about having some of the roadblocks taken away that the Ministry of Health has put up over the years, and that patients and providers are also very excited about it because they know that we are going to connect care for them and make sure that they get care throughout their entire life.

That's not happening right now. That's what we are going to do.

FUNDRAISING

Ms. Andrea Horwath: My question is for the Premier. This is a question about the integrity of our electoral process and comments made by the Premier in this assembly.

Last week, the Premier raised serious allegations and even threatened to call police concerning what he called illegal fundraising by my party. As it happens, New Democrats on this side of the House have serious concerns of our own about a fundraising event organized by the Progressive Conservative Party.

Will the Premier agree that serious concerns like these deserve a thorough investigation?

Hon. Doug Ford: Through you, Mr. Speaker: We're doing fundraisers all over the province. I was just in Ottawa. Our base is made up of average, common folk going to \$25-a-night spaghetti dinners—unlike the Leader of the Opposition, who charges \$800, and if you go to the fundraising event you get a reward: You get to meet the Leader of the Opposition.

I'll tell you, we give rewards, too. We give rewards to the people who voted for us and the rest of Ontario by lowering their heating costs, lowering their gas prices, lowering their taxes and creating good-paying jobs. That's the reward the people of Ontario get.

Interjections.

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

Supplementary?

Ms. Andrea Horwath: Well, I think the Premier is going to be pretty shocked when he finds out that they didn't want to be rewarded with the privatization of their health care system, Speaker.

If the people of Ontario are going to have confidence in our democracy, they need to know that all parties are playing by the rules. The Premier made a serious allegation last week. He repeated it just now in the House. I think it's important that we clear the air. I'm confident that an investigation will clear up any concerns he has about NDP fundraising. That's why I'm inviting all parties to join me in asking Elections Ontario to thoroughly investigate all political party fundraising in the province.

I have a letter here that I sent to the Premier's office already. I'll ask a page to send it back over to him now. The question is, will the Premier add his name to this request to the Chief Electoral Officer?

Hon. Doug Ford: Through you, Mr. Speaker: Our donors are grassroots. Our donors make the \$5, \$10, \$15 donations. I am so proud. We sent out a letter a couple of weeks ago—just a simple one-, two-, three-line letter—and guess what? We raised \$100,000 on \$5 and \$10 and \$15 donations. That's grassroots. That's standing up for the people. That's who we represent.

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

Ms. Andrea Horwath: Speaker, the Premier made serious allegations about party fundraising, and we need to clear the air to ensure that his concerns are properly investigated. But the Premier seems reluctant. Perhaps that's because there are also very serious concerns about his party's fundraising: allegations that lobbyists will lose access if they don't sell tickets to the Premier's dinner; that media are locked out while well-connected donors talk shop with the Premier at \$1,250-a-plate dinners.

If the Premier insists that he has nothing to hide, then why won't he put his name on the dotted line and join us in calling for a full and complete investigation by Elections Ontario?

Interjections.

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

Premier?

Hon. Doug Ford: Mr. Speaker, you can't help but laugh in the chamber. You listen to the rhetoric—I just can't believe it.

We're focused, again, on making sure that we take care of the grassroots people. They don't need access to Doug Ford. They call me on my cellphone. I get hundreds of calls a day. I return their phone calls. I meet these people at these \$25-a-night spaghetti dinners—and you can tell I haven't missed too many spaghetti dinners. I love them, and that's how we're going to continue moving forward.

Ms. Andrea Horwath: I must say I'm pretty disappointed that a simple ask for accountability is being denied by this Premier.

GOVERNMENT ACCOUNTABILITY

Ms. Andrea Horwath: My next question is also to the Premier.

The Premier and the minister have claimed that the process that appointed Ron Taverner OPP commissioner was independent. In fact, to quote the minister, "the hiring committee was independent of government." However, the Integrity Commissioner's report released last Wednesday reveals that the secretary of cabinet told the Premier's chief of staff, Dean French, in no uncertain terms that the process should not be described as "independent" and that the word should be dropped altogether.

Is the Premier prepared to correct his record?

Hon. Doug Ford: Minister of Economic Development.

Hon. Todd Smith: Unfortunately, the NDP is going to continue on this line of questioning, which actually has already come to a culmination thanks to the findings of the independent Integrity Commissioner of the province of Ontario, who issued his report last week, which completely, I must say, exonerated the Premier of any involvement in what the NDP and Democracy Watch were alleging.

Democracy Watch has instigated eight different investigations into this government, all of which have been frivolous—all of them. It's like they're on some kind of political crusade themselves.

What I can tell you is that the member opposite, the Leader of the Opposition, should be respecting the decision of the independent Integrity Commissioner of Ontario. That's what we're doing here. We thank him for his findings and his report.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Supplementary?

Ms. Andrea Horwath: I think the House leader would remember that the Integrity Commissioner also recommended a full public inquiry because there are lots of questions not answered by that report.

1050

Look, if the Premier is confident in Mr. Orsini, as he claims to be in the media, in this House and in his testimony to the Integrity Commissioner, it's odd that the Premier and his minister repeatedly continue to call the hiring process independent when Orsini was begging him not to do so.

The Premier told the people of Ontario, and he told this House, that the process was completely independent. We have a lot of witnesses here today in the chamber, so I want the Premier to think carefully before he answers this question: Is he standing by those claims, or is he ready to admit that he was wrong and clarify his record?

Hon. Todd Smith: Thanks to the member opposite for the question. It's shameful, really, that the NDP just won't accept the findings of the Integrity Commissioner of the province of Ontario.

The member opposite has now asked five consecutive questions this morning that have absolutely nothing to do with government policy, and I can understand why, because the government policy we're introducing here in Ontario is having a positive impact on the people of Ontario. It's tough for them to criticize when we're reducing taxes, getting rid of the cap-and-trade program. It's tough for them to criticize when Minister Rickford is tackling the electricity mess in Ontario by introducing legislation to take that on.

It's tough for them, really. It's tough for them to ask questions about job creation when the Premier's plan has created 95,000 jobs in Ontario in the last three months. I can understand why the member opposite wants to stay in the gutter because, when it comes to policy, we're bringing Ontario back.

PUBLIC TRANSIT

Mr. Jeremy Roberts: My question is for the Premier. I was pleased to see the Premier and the Minister of Transportation in Ottawa last week to make a very important

announcement that our government is providing \$1.2 billion for phase 2 of Ottawa's LRT, the largest infrastructure project in Ottawa's history. This is big news for the people of Ottawa. I know myself, my colleagues from Ottawa and my constituents are very excited about this announcement.

I'm proud to represent the people of Ottawa West-Nepean and by expanding rail service all the way out to Moodie Station and Algonquin College, we're going to make it easier for my constituents to get around our great city and see all that it has to offer.

Can the Premier tell us more about this exciting announcement that he and the Minister of Transportation made in Ottawa last week?

Hon. Doug Ford: Great question. I want to thank the outstanding member from Ottawa West-Nepean. Jeremy, you're an absolute champion, a great guy, a great representative. You couldn't ask for a better person.

The member has mentioned we had a great visit up in Ottawa, met Mayor Watson. Mayor Watson is just an incredible mayor. He's doing a fantastic job up there.

We're partnering with the city of Ottawa, putting \$1.2 billion into phase 2 of the LRT. We had our whole team there, the Minister of Transportation and other representatives from Ottawa. I can tell you, Speaker, we're building 44 kilometres of track—

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Response.

Hon. Doug Ford: Sorry?

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Conclude your response.

Hon. Doug Ford: Thank you. Through you, Mr. Speaker—I still couldn't hear what you said.

Through you, Mr. Speaker, we are providing transportation to the people of Ottawa—again, the largest infrastructure project in Ottawa's history. I'm so happy that we can move 24,000 people an hour—

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

Mr. Jeremy Roberts: Thank you to the Premier for that great response and for your kind words.

Our government and our Premier are both strong supporters of public transit and making life easier for the people of Ontario. I know that this project will transform the way the people of Ottawa and our commuters move around our great city.

The new LRT will reduce gridlock and help people get to work, school or appointments more quickly and conveniently. However, this is not just good news for public transit users, it's also great news for people who drive, because this will reduce congestion on the roads, thereby freeing up time spent at work so that people can be at home with their family and friends.

Can the Premier tell us more about phase 2 of Ottawa's LRT?

Hon. Doug Ford: Thank you to the member. This project will make it a lot easier for nurses to get to the hospital in Ottawa, or CHEO. It will make it a lot easier for students to get to Algonquin College up there. My friends, we're going to move 24,000 people an hour. Do you know

what's the best news of all, Mr. Speaker? It's creating 1,000 great-paying jobs.

CURRICULUM

Ms. Marit Stiles: My question is to the Minister of Education. The government's plan to have high school students take the equivalent of an entire semester of coursework online is raising alarms with parents and experts alike. While the data is scarce, what we do know is that far too many students fail to complete these courses because they don't have the supports they need. Questions are swirling about access to technology, suitability for all types of learners and the overall quality of the educational experience.

Can the minister provide any evidence that shifting 440 hours of in-person learning out of the classroom and online will be good for students?

Hon. Lisa M. Thompson: It's a pleasure to stand today in this House and talk about the amazing ways we're bringing education back in Ontario. We're making education work for you, your sons, the families of our members in this House, our teachers and every single person who cares about making sure that we correct the mess that the Liberal government, the past administration, mired us into.

Let's talk about online learning for a second. Do you know there are school boards across this province that lead by example, and their students are embracing online learning? It doesn't matter whether it's rural Ontario, northern Ontario or urban Ontario; teachers and boards are leading the way.

My question back to the member opposite is, why is she so caught up in the past? Why on earth is that member in the past and not embracing the technology for the good it can bring into our classrooms? All I can say to that, Speaker, is shame on her—

Interjections.

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

Restart the clock. Supplementary.

Ms. Marit Stiles: Mr. Speaker, that minister knows perfectly well this is not about preparing students to use technology or building resiliency. It is about less face-to-face learning, less one-on-one attention, because this government is cutting 10,000 teaching jobs and forcing students into mandatory online courses.

The government didn't just unilaterally change graduate requirements with a stroke of a pen here; it also signalled that the delivery of e-learning programs would be shifted away from school boards and centralized. Parents don't know who will be delivering these courses, where or how students will take them, or what will happen if students fail to complete the courses.

Minister, who will be delivering online courses to Ontario students?

Hon. Lisa M. Thompson: You know what, Mr. Speaker? Honest to goodness, to the people watching I say, please don't get caught up in the rhetoric of this opposition party, because it's absolutely nothing but nonsense that they're spewing across Ontario.

The fact of the matter is that in my home riding of Huron–Bruce, Avon Maitland is doing a phenomenal job bringing math into the classroom and supplementing it with online facts and learning. Honest to Pete, there are great examples that we can use. It's best practices.

Seriously, Speaker, this party is doing nothing but fear-mongering. To that end, I want to quote the CBC fact-check from yesterday. We've heard this party opposite go on and on and cause fear in parents and teachers alike. But the CBC fact-check just yesterday said, "Boosting the average secondary class size to 28 would still see Ontario rank on the lower end of the spectrum" across Canada. So—

Interjections.

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

I'll inform the government members again that once the standing ovation erupted, I could not hear the Minister of Education even though she's quite close to me. I had to stand up and interrupt her.

Interjections.

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

Start the clock. Next question.

1100

ENERGY POLICIES

Ms. Andrea Khanjin: Our government for the people has been working hard to deliver on our campaign promises. We promised to end the Liberal culture of waste, and that is what we are doing. There's no better example of our government's commitment to this promise than the recent announcement made by the Minister of Energy, Northern Development and Mines.

Last week, the minister tabled the Fixing the Hydro Mess Act, the start of reform for our electricity system so that it works for the people, not the insiders. Unlike the Liberals, we are actually listening to the people, and they told us the system was inefficient and it was not transparent. The Ontario Energy Board was out of date. It was neglected by the previous government for 15 years—15 long years—while the OEB held up key projects.

Can the minister please tell the members of this House about the steps our government is taking to reform the OEB in Bill 87?

Hon. Greg Rickford: I want to thank the member from Barrie-Innisfil for her outstanding work for her constituents and her support on this important piece of legislation.

There couldn't be a more important time for us to modernize the Ontario Energy Board. We've heard it from stakeholders across this province. I spoke at the Electricity Distributors Association meeting last night. More than 400 people involved in the business of local distribution companies applauded loudly when we told them that we would be putting an end to thousands and thousands of pages of submissions to the energy board for fairly routine regulatory matters. We heard loud and clear from Indigenous communities when the east-west tie was announced, over-

riding unforeseen delays and stalling hundreds of Indigenous people from across northern Ontario who wanted to get to work on this important project.

It sounds like we have some support here. I'm going to read a quote here from the member from Toronto–Danforth: "I would say that at best, the Ontario Energy Board, the regulator, is a drowsy chaperone, and at worst they're a ... glove puppet." Will he stand with us and support to clean up the—

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

Ms. Andrea Khanjin: Thank you to the minister for taking a strong lead on this important file and listening to the people of Ontario. We know that the previous Liberal government didn't listen. They destroyed our electricity system through their misguided ideological policies that forced families and businesses to pay way more on their hydro bills.

Our government has already taken significant action to replace these faulty policies in favour of initiatives that promote a competitive, low-cost electricity market. Now we're continuing with our plan to eliminate the waste and unnecessary costs to our electricity system.

Can the minister please elaborate on the steps our government for the people is taking to overhaul the electricity system to make it more efficient and transparent?

Hon. Greg Rickford: Of course, what the member's talking about is the now-famous trust fund cover-up, hydro's accounting scheme that kept the costs of this program hidden from the people paying the bill, from the people of Ontario. That's why it was so important for our government to replace the global adjustment refinancing structure with a transparent on-bill rebate. This transparent structure will save the people of Ontario more than \$4 billion in borrowing costs.

What does the NDP stand for on this matter? Are they against transparency? Are they against the Ontario Energy Board modernization? Are they against conservation programs that are focused on vulnerable families, seniors and Indigenous communities? It's time they stood with us to support this important act.

We're hearing it from the people of Ontario. We're hearing it from stakeholders. Get with the times and support this bill.

AUTISM TREATMENT

Miss Monique Taylor: My question is for the Minister of Children, Community and Social Services. The new Ontario autism program starts in a week, and service providers are still being laid off. Child and Community Resources, which serves a large part of northern Ontario, has cut 19 staff. We already know that northern and rural communities are underserved, and this disastrous new autism program is making it worse.

Did the minister anticipate layoffs in northern communities when she designed this program?

Hon. Lisa MacLeod: Let me be perfectly clear: Any layoffs related to the changes to the Ontario Autism Program are completely premature, and we're encouraging

agencies to find a better way. We are going to clear the wait-list over the next 18 months with 23,000 more children receiving some support from their Ontario government, which I expect would mean we would need more service providers to support that.

We've also said that we are going to eliminate the income test. We listened to parents. We've also listened to parents by encouraging more choice for occupational therapy and speech and language therapy. We've decided to enhance the grace period for those on the existing program to an additional six months.

And just yesterday, I met with Autism Ontario to prove we are reaching out and we are listening. We signed a \$750,000 contract with Autism Ontario yesterday so that they can continue to work with parents as we navigate through this new system.

But let me be perfectly clear: As a result of this plan, 100% of the children—not 25% of the children—with autism in Ontario will receive support from their Ontario government.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Supplementary?

Miss Monique Taylor: As a result of this plan, families have been put in crisis, and we have a complete disaster of an autism program right now in the province because the minister failed to communicate before she put the policy in place.

There were not enough trained therapists in northern Ontario before the changes to the Ontario Autism Program, and now there will be even fewer, as organizations like child and community resource centres are forced to make layoffs. The new autism program is making services harder to access for northern and rural Ontarians. Instead of investing and strengthening autism services, this minister has gutted them.

Did the minister know that her program would make it harder for children in the north to access services?

Hon. Lisa MacLeod: As the member opposite knows, we are doubling our investment into the diagnostic hubs so that we can clear the 23,000-child wait-list, including making sure we have greater investments in northern Ontario because of the great leadership of our northern members, including the Minister of Finance and including the minister of northern affairs.

I will personally assure this member that we have decided to invest more money than any other jurisdiction in North America in terms of autism services. It could almost be double the \$321-million investment that we talked—

Interjections.

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

ANIMAL PROTECTION

Mr. Mike Schreiner: My question is for the Premier. In January, an Ontario Superior Court decision ruled that enforcement of animal welfare laws had to change. In early March, the OSPCA gave notice that it would no longer enforce these laws as of April 1—just six days from

now—yet the government has not announced a plan to cover the gap.

The Guelph Humane Society has asked the government for the authority to continue its enforcement efforts until a long-term solution is in place. Will the government commit to protecting animals by allowing humane societies to continue using their expertise to enforce animal cruelty laws until a long-term plan is in place?

Hon. Doug Ford: Minister of Health.

Hon. Christine Elliott: Thank you very much for the question.

Animal welfare will always be of the utmost importance to our government. We are committed to ensuring that animal welfare continues in the province. Both our government and the OSPCA have a long history and a shared commitment to protect animals in Ontario. We are actively reviewing the implications of this change to find a solution that works for everyone.

As we indicated earlier this year, we are actively exploring improvements to the animal welfare regime here in Ontario—even before the OSPCA's announcement. We are continuing to work to find a solution that's going to continue to protect animals within this province.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Supplementary?

Mr. Mike Schreiner: Mr. Speaker, the clock is ticking: six days and we will not have an enforcement regime in place in Ontario.

I've received thousands and thousands of emails about this issue, asking for the government to step up and make sure an interim plan is in place. Protections for animals should not be left in limbo. We clearly need stronger laws to protect animals in human care.

1110

Will the government commit today to putting in place a transition plan for the enforcement of animal cruelty laws and start immediate consultations for a permanent plan to bring the investigation and enforcement of animal cruelty laws under public jurisdiction?

Hon. Christine Elliott: I thank the member opposite for your interest in and your commitment to animal welfare, which we obviously share on this side of the House. We want to make sure that there is a solution that is in place for all animals that's going to work for everyone across the province. We are certainly well aware of the time commitments involved here. We are actively working on this file and we will have more to say in the very near future.

CHILD PROTECTION

Ms. Donna Skelly: My question is for the Minister of Children, Community and Social Services. The Toronto Star posted an article over the weekend and the headline was shocking: "A 14-Year-Old Girl is a 'Sexually Mature Young Woman,' Not a Child, Children's Aid Society Lawyer Argues in Sex Abuse Suit."

As a member of the governing caucus, I found it disturbing to read such a thing, as I know for certain that this is not a position held by our government or the Ontario Progressive Conservative Party.

Can the minister please shed some light on this case?

Hon. Lisa MacLeod: Thank you very much for that important question. As I read that article, I was embarrassed that somebody making that statement would represent a children's aid society in Ontario.

Let me tell you what I did. I have a 14-year-old daughter. She is a child. Any 14-year-old child in the care of this province is a child that we must protect. I immediately reached out to my deputy minister to inform her that the position of that defence lawyer was not the position or the view held by me as the minister, the Progressive Conservative Party of Ontario or the government of Ontario today. It is not the position of our Premier or this government caucus, and, as I understand it, that lawyer is no longer with the children's aid society of Ontario.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Supplementary?

Ms. Donna Skelly: Back to the minister: When I read the story, I was confident that our government would not accept this situation. Unfortunately, this House is reminded of the failures of our child welfare system far too often. Last fall we heard from Ontario's chief coroner, who tabled a report on the death of children in care, and we were reminded that Indigenous children are disproportionately represented in care.

Minister, we know this cannot continue. Can you please tell what our government is doing to improve the child welfare system?

Hon. Lisa MacLeod: The coroner's report that we've spoken about many times in this assembly was one of the most troubling documents I have ever read, where young girls in the care of the province of Ontario, up to 2017, were trafficked in group homes. This is not the first time—when we see what's happened in Kenora—that the standards that should be in place have not been met by our child welfare system. That is why we will bring in robust legislation to hold the children's aid societies of this province to a higher standard.

These are vulnerable children who deserve our protection, not turning a blind eye and certainly not with the defence that the previous defence lawyer brought. We are going to encourage more consultation with our Indigenous children as well as those who are Black and those who are in custody and care with three new round tables. We recognize those children are overrepresented. In addition, we will be embedding within my ministry a children's advocate.

But let me be clear: If you are receiving government funding to protect a child, I expect you to protect a child.

LONG-TERM CARE

Ms. Teresa J. Armstrong: My question is to the Minister of Health and Long-Term Care. Today, a new poll revealed that 80% of long-term-care workers experience constant, daily or weekly occurrences of violence on the job. These statistics are deeply disturbing, but, unfortunately, we all have heard these stories too many times over the years.

The violence is a direct result of understaffing in long-term-care homes and the increasing needs of residents with dementia or other complex behavioural issues that come with aging. Speaker, what concrete steps is the minister taking to ensure adequate staffing levels in our long-term-care homes so that this degree of workplace violence becomes a thing of the past?

Hon. Christine Elliott: I thank the member very much for the question. This is a concern, I know, throughout the province of Ontario. But let me be clear: Our government has a zero-tolerance policy when it comes to violence of any kind in the workplace, and the health and safety of all Ontarians is a priority for our government. Every person who works in a long-term-care home should be able to go to work without feeling in danger or feeling that they are under attack from anyone in the home.

But there are increasing levels of concern here, mostly as a result of the increasing levels of dementia for the residents in the long-term-care homes, resulting in patient-on-patient violence and patient-on-staff violence.

We are studying this. We are looking at solutions to it. Some of it has to do with finding solutions to dementia. We've had a number of interesting proposals that have come forward to us in the Ministry of Health that can help diminish this kind of behaviour and allow patients to feel more comfortable and to feel less stress in their circumstances and less likely to act out.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Supplementary?

Ms. Teresa J. Armstrong: Speaker, I know the government has announced creating new beds, but without supporting those beds with more staff, we will not be able to help the prevention of the resident violence that's happening in long-term care.

Today's poll on long-term-care workplace violence is the second report since January to highlight the understaffing and lack of resources in Ontario's long-term-care sector. Action is needed to be taken now. The Ontario government must create a long-term-care strategy that properly plans for Ontario's aging population and includes a human resource strategy.

Will the Minister of Health commit to immediately developing a long-term-care strategy to fix the problems in long-term care, address workplace violence and support front-line health care workers?

Hon. Christine Elliott: There are a number of actions that are already being taken, but of course more needs to be done, and we are already taking a look at health human resources issues across all levels, whether it's long-term-care homes, hospitals or home care, to make sure that we are going to be able to meet the increasing need as we are building more long-term-care homes. We're already at about half of our commitment to reach 15,000 new long-term-care spaces in the next five years.

We are working hard on that to make sure we have the people available there, but we also need to make sure that we continue with the training of staff who work in long-term-care homes who receive training in dealing with patients with dementia or behavioural issues. We're also working with our partners, such as the Public Services

Health and Safety Association, to make sure that long-term-care homes protect their employees.

So there is a lot of work that is currently being done. We want to make sure that everyone can be safe in their workplace and—

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

FUNDRAISING

Mr. Michael Coteau: My question is to the Deputy Premier. I think we can all agree in the Legislature that the file on autism is a very tough file, and there were no easy solutions in this Legislature for this government or even previous governments. I've said many times, Mr. Speaker, that this is not a partisan issue.

So through you to the Deputy Premier, Mr. Speaker: Does the Deputy Premier think it's appropriate that the Minister of Children, Community and Social Services sent out an email yesterday using autism and families who are in crisis to fundraise for the PC Party? And does the Deputy Premier think it's appropriate to use a government press release in that email?

Hon. Christine Elliott: To the Minister of Children, Community and Social Services.

Hon. Lisa MacLeod: The email in question was sent out by the Progressive Conservative Party of Ontario, and it was sent out because we're proud that we're going to be eliminating the wait-list for 23,000 children, or three out of four children, in the province of Ontario who were denied support by their Ontario government when that member opposite was the minister responsible.

What we have done is, we are investing almost double the amount of money from the \$321 million we initially announced over five weeks ago, and we are looking forward to clearing the wait-list but also making sure that more children get the type of support that they need in this particular case. That's why we are going to continue to double the investments in the diagnostic hubs. That's also why we are going to provide more choice for parents with the childhood budget, including speech and occupational therapy. We are also going to continue to consult with families over the next six months as we develop a needs-based severity test, as well as extending those children, the 25% who are currently in service, to receive additional service over the next six months.

That's what our plan is about, and that's why we're proud of it.

1120

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Supplementary?

Mr. Michael Coteau: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I don't believe I heard an answer there. This is a question about the tone, the appropriateness, of sending out such a fundraising request.

The Premier was elected by going out there and telling people that he was going to put more money in the pockets of people, and I actually believe that he wants to do that. I believe he actually meant it. But this new program is doing something different, Mr. Speaker. It's actually bankrupting families here in Ontario. I believe that the changes the

minister made, in fact, put us backwards, and sends us backwards. It's not good enough for families.

I'm going to ask the question again. To the Deputy Premier: Does the Deputy Premier think it's appropriate to send out a PC Party email asking people to donate money back to the party, and within that email, Mr. Speaker, to embed an actual government press release? Does the Deputy Premier think that's appropriate? It's a simple question.

Hon. Lisa MacLeod: Let me be perfectly clear: Under the previous Liberal administration, they spent \$256 million on autism. Under the Ontario Progressive Conservative Party, that will be over \$600 million. If they want to talk about being bankrupt, they bankrupted our province, they bankrupted the Ontario Autism Program and when they left office they were bankrupt of ideas. I am standing here today to say that we will clear the wait-list of 23,000 children. We will ensure every single child with autism gets a level of support from their Ontario government. There will not be an income test. There will be lots of choice in how they spend their annual childhood budget, including in speech and occupational therapy.

We are going to continue to consult. As I mentioned yesterday, I met with Autism Ontario who will be our chief navigator with families on how they work through and navigate through the system. We are going to ensure that those children who are currently in service, those 25% of the children that the previous Liberal administration supported, will have an additional grace period of six months of the service that they currently have. So let me be perfectly clear: We're proud of the program we're building. We're proud—

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Order.
Next question.

PROPERTY TAXATION

Mr. Paul Calandra: I appreciate the opportunity to rise. Our government, as you know, was elected on a promise to stand up for taxpayers. We promised, of course, during the last election to put more money into the pockets of Ontario families. That's why my question to the Minister of Finance is this: After 15 years of the Liberal-NDP coalition tax-and-spend policies, policies that I believe hurt Ontario families, I built on the work done by the member from Milton for insurance policyholders and introduced my Respecting Property Taxpayers Act, 2019. Mr. Speaker, the bill, if passed, will give taxpayers an equal voice on the board of the Municipal Property Assessment Corp. My private member's bill will actually bring taxpayers to the table. I wonder if the Minister of Finance could comment on the importance of this initiative.

Hon. Victor Fedeli: Thank you to the member from Markham-Stouffville for his leadership on this file. The Respecting Property Taxpayers Act, if passed, will make sure that the taxpayer has a greater voice when it comes to property taxes in the province of Ontario. The bill proposes moving from four taxpayer representatives to

seven on the MPAC board of directors. By doing so, the bill, if passed, would ensure that there is an even representation between municipal interests and the interests of the taxpayer.

The bill shows exactly the kind of initiative we need to see in order to restore respect to the Ontario taxpayers. We look forward to debating this bill in the weeks to come and to stand up for the hard-working people in the province of Ontario.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Supplementary?

Mr. Paul Calandra: I want to thank the Minister of Finance for that response. It's great, obviously, to see the support that this bill is already getting. I'm confident and I'm hopeful that when the bill makes it to this place for further debate that we will see support from all the members of the Legislature because all the members, I'm sure, would agree that Ontario families deserve better.

Mr. Speaker, I hope we can all work together, because taxpayers have asked for this change. It's about time, as well, after 15 years of Liberal-NDP coalition tax-and-spend policies, Ontario taxpayers are finally optimistic. They're optimistic that they have a government that is focused on putting more money back in their pockets, but is also focused on respecting them and their hard work.

I wonder if the minister could go further and comment a little bit further on how important this initiative is to property taxpayers across Ontario.

Hon. Victor Fedeli: After ignoring the people of Ontario for 15 years, the Liberals left behind a disastrous record. The Liberals, supported by the NDP, were spending \$40 million a day more than they took in. There was no accountability in the tax-and-spend policies of that government; taxpayers had no voice. Our government is changing that, and the member from Markham–Stouffville is changing that through his proposed bill. His bill, if passed, would be yet another way to restore respect for taxpayers and make sure they have their voices heard when it comes to property taxes. Speaker, our government is standing up for the taxpayers, and we look forward to debating this bill in the weeks to come.

ADDICTION SERVICES

Ms. Bhutla Karpoche: My question is to the Minister of Health and Long-Term Care. We've learned that there was a 15% increase in the number of people who died from opioid-related deaths in the first six months of 2018. New Democrats have called on the government to declare a public health emergency and direct immediate resources where they're needed to combat the growing crisis. Yet, while a record number of people are dying, the minister has delayed improving consumption and treatment centre applications, and the future of these harm reduction services remains unknown after Sunday. Will the minister immediately approve and fund all of the existing overdose prevention sites and commit to funding additional sites beyond the arbitrary 21-site cap?

Hon. Christine Elliott: The opioid issue is an important concern for all of us in the province of Ontario. It is a

public health emergency, and it is something that we have put our attention to.

The consumption and treatment centres are still already open. They have been able to remain open throughout as they transition from overdose prevention sites to consumption and treatment services sites, which is what we want to see. We want to see people have their lives saved, of course, but also get into the treatment services that they want and need. The services and the sites are still open. We are aware of the March 31 deadline. We are working very hard on that. We are reviewing those applications and making final decisions. I will have more to say about it in the next few days.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Supplementary.

Ms. Bhutla Karpoche: Back to the minister: The federal government has earmarked \$1.9 billion for mental health and addictions care if the provincial government agrees to match the funding—money that could go towards the worsening opioid crisis and improving mental health and addiction services for Ontarians. All 629 opioid-related deaths could have been prevented. However, the bilateral agreement shows that this government isn't spending a dime as part of the agreement in the first term. Why is the minister leaving \$1.9 billion on the table when mental health and addiction services are in a state of crisis and more lives are being lost every day?

Interjections.

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

Minister.

Hon. Christine Elliott: The member is correct: There has been a commitment made by the federal government of \$1.9 billion, which is being matched by the provincial government—the same amount—for a total of \$3.8 billion over 10 years to deal with mental health and addictions issues in the province of Ontario.

We are actively working on it. We are working with the federal government, and I can say that there have been investments that have been made already. That is where you are not correct. There have been investments that are being made. We are actively in consultations; we've had many across the province. Many great solutions have appeared, but we are putting together a comprehensive and connected mental health and addiction system.

I look forward to discussing your ideas with the members of your caucus, with the members of the other parties, to make sure that we get this right, because \$3.8 billion is a lot of money. We want to make sure that we can put it towards issues and services that are going to save lives, including more detox beds, more mental health beds, more community services and so on. I look forward to hearing your thoughts on it at another time in a discussion with you—

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

TAXATION

Mr. Mike Harris: My question is to the Minister of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs.

Ms. Goldie Ghamari: Good guy.

Mr. Mike Harris: He is a good guy.

Many Ontarians are concerned by the federal government's carbon tax, and certainly those in the agricultural community are no exception, Mr. Speaker. It is no secret that a carbon tax would increase the cost of putting food on tables across the province. When production costs increase, less money goes into the pockets of farmers and workers. All the while, consumers feel the strain in their wallets at the checkout.

1130

Stakeholders across Ontario's agri-food sector have also raised concerns about economic impact, job losses, cost of production, and they feel that the carbon tax will not help the environment or reduce emissions at all.

Could the minister please tell the House about the work our government is doing to stand up for farmers and oppose the carbon tax?

Hon. Ernie Hardeman: I thank the member from Kitchener–Conestoga for that excellent question.

Speaker, it was great to have the Premier and the Minister of the Environment, Conservation and Parks join me in my riding for a round table to discuss the job-killing federal carbon tax.

Our farmers are already leaders in environmental stewardship.

I've heard time and time again from farmers, agribusiness leaders and experts in the agriculture sector about the damaging impact the carbon tax will have on agriculture in Ontario. It will stifle growth and innovation, and it will cause a significant increase in costs, from heating fuels to transportation costs.

This government has been against a carbon tax of any kind from day one, and standing up against the federal carbon tax is just one way we will continue to advocate for Ontario's farmers and farm families.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Supplementary.

Mr. Mike Harris: Thank you to the minister for his answer. I am proud to be part of a government that is working tirelessly to advocate on behalf of Ontario's farmers and farm families.

Farmers in my riding have told me loud and clear that this carbon tax is only going to drive up their costs of production and make their businesses less competitive.

The federal carbon tax is nothing but another cash grab from the Trudeau Liberals to keep taxing and spending as they head into an election year. This tax will do little to help the environment or reduce carbon emissions.

I know our government is committed to protecting our environment while also creating jobs and making life more affordable for hard-working Ontarians.

Could the minister please tell the House how our made-in-Ontario environment plan will balance economic and environmental sustainability?

Hon. Ernie Hardeman: To the Minister of the Environment, Conservation and Parks.

Hon. Rod Phillips: Last week, I did have the opportunity to be with the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Affairs and the Premier down in Oxford. It was a real pleasure to

meet with our agriculture community and be in a place where they call him Ernie, not Minister.

Mr. Speaker, farmers and members of our agribusiness community are very concerned about what's going to happen next week. They're very concerned about Justin Trudeau's carbon tax—five cents a litre; 7.5 cents on diesel fuel. That just goes up and up from there. They are worried, and they're rightly worried, about the cost of food that they put on the tables of Ontarians. How much is that food going to cost a week from now, a month from now, a year from now, as that carbon tax costs more and more and more?

They know, like Ontarians know, that you don't need a carbon tax to fight climate change. We have a made-in-Ontario plan that will reduce greenhouse gas emissions and not punish Ontario families and not punish Ontario farmers. We're going to make that point every day and every week to make sure Ontarians know—

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

FOREST INDUSTRY

Mr. Michael Mantha: My question is to the Minister of Natural Resources. Over the last 15 years, mills and forestry operations have closed all over northwestern Ontario—that includes at least five in Thunder Bay, two in Dryden, two in Kenora, one in Sioux Lookout and one in Fort Frances. Those closures came with devastating job losses that hurt thousands of families.

A company wants to use wood from the Crossroute Forest to bring back forestry jobs to Fort Frances. The town contends that the company is transferring crown fibre from the Crossroute Forest to its other operation in northwestern Ontario, contrary to the terms in the sustainable forest licence agreement.

And the forest industry is in crisis again. Just a couple of weeks ago, in Thessalon, Midway Lumber laid off 30% of their workforce, as well.

Will the minister tell the families in Fort Frances, Thessalon and across the north that he will ensure that mills and forestry operations have the wood they need to operate and support the hundreds of direct and indirect jobs that depend on them?

Hon. John Yakubuski: I thank the member for his question. Wood supply is a critical issue for my ministry and all across Ontario. It is one of the things that, in the past 15 years, the previous government lost sight of, the importance of forestry in this province. We are not doing that. In fact, I've been holding a series of forestry round tables throughout the province. Recently, I was in Thunder Bay. That was the fifth of a series of seven or eight that we will have.

I want to say to the member that the issue of wood fibre for the potential Fort Frances mill—and I want to give credit to my colleague from Kenora–Rainy River, the Minister of Northern Development and Mines, for the work he has been doing, working with the town of Fort Frances to try to broker a solution to this. The reality is that we must wait until such time as there is a purchase for the mill in Fort Frances before we can discuss the issue of wood supply for any mill.

There are mills currently working in the north. The Crossroute Forest, under the SFL, has commitments. Should a sale be finalized, we will reopen those discussions.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Supplementary?

Mr. Michael Mantha: Minister, the mill sale cannot happen without a wood allocation to it.

Again to the minister: Let me quote the MPP from Parry Sound–Muskoka who, as PC critic, asked this question to former Premier Wynne in 2014:

“The sustainable forest licence in the Fort Frances area is controlled by the past operator of the paper mill. They’re no longer interested in running the mill but continue to control the crown forest, the Crossroute Forest. Don’t you think the licence to harvest wood, or at a minimum an economic supply of fibre from nearby forests, should go to the company willing to locate operations and reopen the mill in Fort Frances?”

Minister, your government controls the wood rights on crown land. It also has the obligation to involve First Nations communities in meaningful consultations. But as the Liberals did before, the Ford government is sitting on its hands instead of taking action.

Will the minister ensure that Fort Frances and Thessalon have the wood fibre they need?

Hon. John Yakabuski: The issue in Thessalon, as the member knows, is an issue of negotiations between Thessalon First Nation as well. It is not simply a matter of wood supply.

The issue in the Crossroute Forest, as you know—there is a wood allocation that has been made and the wood is being used in other mills. Should a deal be brokered together by someone who is prepared to operate the Fort Frances mill location, we would relook at that allocation.

But I want to point out very much that our government would like nothing more than to see mills operating that have been closed in the north. They were closed under the previous government; we would love to see them operating. That is why we have embarked on a new forest strategy to ensure that there is adequate wood supply. We used to harvest 24 million cubic metres of fibre in Ontario and we’re down to about 15 million. If we can increase that by having a proper forest strategy, we can ensure that there are good jobs in the north—because the previous government saw that dwindle down and saw jobs lost. We’re focusing on jobs, creating jobs in the north—

Interjections.

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

FOREST INDUSTRY

Mr. Norman Miller: My question is for the Minister of Natural Resources and Forestry. Our government for the people understands how significant the forestry sector is to the economy of Ontario. For 15 years, the previous government ignored and neglected an industry that is extremely important to communities across rural and northern Ontario.

I know that the Premier and our Minister of Natural Resources and Forestry have both been working very hard to make Ontario open for business and open for jobs, including forestry jobs. I was pleased to hear that businesses from my riding were invited to a round table in North Bay earlier this month. Can the minister inform the House who is being consulted to help build and regrow Ontario’s forestry sector?

Hon. John Yakabuski: I want to thank the member for Parry Sound–Muskoka for his question and the tremendous advocacy that he has had for his community and the forest industry for over 18 years in this chamber.

He’s right, we are making Ontario open for business and open for jobs. Since November, as I said in the previous question, we have embarked on forestry round tables throughout the province as we develop a new forestry strategy that puts Ontario’s forestry industry at the front—not the back, like the previous government, where they ignored it for 15 years. We’re putting it back at the front. It’s a bedrock industry in this province, and we’re going to treat it as such.

Last Friday, I was in Thunder Bay where I heard many great suggestions about how our government can reduce barriers and promote economic growth in this tremendously important industry. While the previous Liberal government stifled growth in the forestry sector by prioritizing special interest groups, our government for the people and I and my ministry will continue our work to make sure that Ontario is open for business and open for jobs.

ONTARIO CRAFT CIDER ASSOCIATION

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): I recognize the Minister of Government and Consumer Services on a point of order.

Hon. Bill Walker: I just wanted to remind all the members of the Spring into Cider reception being hosted by the Ontario Craft Cider Association between 11:30 and 2 p.m. today down in the legislative dining room in the side bar area.

DEFERRED VOTES

COMPREHENSIVE ONTARIO POLICE SERVICES ACT, 2019

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

Deferred vote on the motion for 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): We have a deferred vote on the motion for third reading of Bill 68, An Act with respect to community safety and policing.

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

The division bells rang from 1141 to 1146.

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

On March 25, 2019, Ms. Jones moved third reading of Bill 68, An Act with respect to community safety and policing. 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	Parsa, Michael
Baber, Roman	Gill, Parm	Phillips, Rod
Babikian, Aris	Hardeman, Ernie	Piccini, David
Bailey, Robert	Harris, Mike	Rasheed, Kaleed
Barrett, Toby	Hogarth, Christine	Rickford, Greg
Bethlenfalvy, Peter	Jones, Sylvia	Roberts, Jeremy
Bouma, Will	Kanapathi, Logan	Romano, Ross
Calandra, Paul	Karahalios, Belinda	Sandhu, Amarjot
Cho, Raymond Sung Joon	Ke, Vincent	Sarkaria, Prabmeet Singh
Cho, Stan	Khanjin, Andrea	Schreiner, Mike
Clark, Steve	Kramp, Daryl	Scott, Laurie
Coe, Lorne	Kusendova, Natalia	Skelly, Donna
Coteau, Michael	Lalonde, Marie-France	Smith, Todd
Crawford, Stephen	Lecce, Stephen	Surma, Kinga
Cuzzetto, Rudy	MacLeod, Lisa	Tangri, Nina
Des Rosiers, Nathalie	Martin, Robin	Thanigasalam, Vijay
Downey, Doug	Martow, Gila	Thompson, Lisa M.
Dunlop, Jill	McKenna, Jane	Tibollo, Michael A.
Elliott, Christine	Miller, Norman	Triantafilopoulos, Effie J.
Fedeli, Victor	Mulrone, Caroline	Wai, Daisy
Fee, Amy	Nicholls, Rick	Walker, Bill
Ford, Doug	Oosterhoff, Sam	Yakabuski, John
Fraser, John	Pang, Billy	
Fullerton, Merrilee	Park, Lindsey	

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

Andrew, Jill	Hassan, Faisal	Shaw, Sandy
Armstrong, Teresa J.	Horwath, Andrea	Singh, Gurratan
Begum, Doly	Karpoche, Bhutila	Singh, Sara
Bell, Jessica	Kernaghan, Terence	Stiles, Marit
Berns-McGown, Rima	Lindo, Laura Mae	Tabuns, Peter
Bisson, Gilles	Mantha, Michael	Taylor, Monique
Burch, Jeff	Miller, Paul	Vanthof, John
Fife, Catherine	Monteith-Farrell, Judith	West, Jamie
French, Jennifer K.	Morrison, Suze	Yarde, Kevin
Gélinas, France	Rakocevic, Tom	
Harden, Joel	Sattler, Peggy	

The Clerk of the Assembly (Mr. Todd Decker): The ayes are 70; the nays are 31.

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 3 p.m.

The House recessed from 1150 to 1500.

ROYAL ASSENT

SANCTION ROYALE

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): I beg to inform the House that in the name of Her Majesty the Queen, Her

Honour the Lieutenant Governor has been pleased to assent to certain bills in her office.

The Clerk-at-the-Table (Ms. Valerie Quioc Lim): The following are the titles of the bills to which Her Honour did assent:

An Act with respect to community safety and policing / Loi portant sur la sécurité communautaire et les services policiers.

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

INTRODUCTION OF VISITORS

Mr. Tom Rakocevic: I'd like to welcome Ijade Maxwell Rodrigues, chief of government and community relations at York University and a long-time friend. Welcome.

Mr. Will Bouma: I'd like to welcome my good friend Rick Postma to the House this afternoon. Rick has dedicated his life to helping the less fortunate in the world, both spiritually and physically.

Ms. Andrea Khanjin: I just wanted to introduce my esteemed guests one more time: I have Jason Helmond, who's a Special Olympics athlete, as well as his mom, Michelle, and his sister Kathryn. Welcome.

MEMBERS' STATEMENTS

INVESTING IN WOMEN'S FUTURES PROGRAM

Ms. Suze Morrison: The Investing in Women's Futures fund supports more than 20 organizations across Ontario that provide front-line services to women, including counselling, career programs, referrals and more.

With only six days remaining until the end of this fiscal year, the government has yet to confirm that these organizations will receive any funding at all come April 1. As a result of this uncertainty, many organizations are being forced to make tough decisions, like laying off staff and, in some cases, shutting their doors completely.

Times Change is an organization in my own riding that provides free employment and training services and has had to give a layoff notice to one employee and is being forced to reduce hours for others.

Speaker, this government is letting down dozens of women's organizations and hurting women across this province. Thousands of vulnerable women and families rely on the services these organizations provide, and this government's decision to leave them in the dark is callous and cold. Women across this province deserve better. The women's organizations that work day in and day out to support women deserve better.

I am calling on the government to commit to funding the Investing in Women's Futures fund for the next fiscal year and the years beyond.

MUNICIPAL FUNDING

Mr. Mike Harris: Mr. Speaker, I'm pleased to rise today to commend our government's recent announcements affecting the municipalities in my great riding of Kitchener–Conestoga. More specifically, I'm referring to the recent funding announced by the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing providing a one-time investment for Ontario's small and rural municipalities.

Since taking office, our government has made one thing crystal clear: Modernization matters. Red tape and inefficiency hurt job creation and economic growth. It is refreshing to be part of a government that places a strong emphasis on the modernization of services not only at the provincial level and relating to the biggest industry players, but also to those municipal levels of government impacting everyday Ontarians.

On March 18, the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing announced a one-time investment for Ontario's small and rural municipalities through the municipal modernization fund.

Three townships from my riding of Kitchener–Conestoga will directly benefit from this investment: Wilmot township received \$725,000, Wellesley township received \$676,040, and Woolwich township received \$725,000, Mr. Speaker—and I see you smiling over there. This is good news, as we share riding borders.

Our government is committed to modernizing the way we do things here in Ontario across both levels of government. We are here to support our rural municipalities, including opening up \$30 billion, over 10 years, of joint federal-provincial infrastructure spending, and the first stream of that went to rural and northern municipalities.

I will continue to advocate strongly for Waterloo region municipalities, both rural and urban, in the coming years.

BANGLADESH INDEPENDENCE DAY

Ms. Doly Begum: Speaker, it was my honour this morning to join leaders of the Bangladeshi Canadian community, along with yourself, outside the Legislature to raise the Bangladeshi flag.

March 26 is the Independence Day of Bangladesh. As a proud representative of the diverse riding of Scarborough Southwest, home to many Bangladeshi Canadians, including myself, it is an honour to stand today and recognize the over 70,000 Ontarians of Bangladeshi origins and their contributions to this province. The community has worked hard and integrated well in Canada. They contribute to our economy and enrich our society in many ways. From local businesses and entrepreneurs to arts and culture, you'll find Bangladeshi Canadians thriving in every sector.

Forty-eight years ago, on March 7, one great leader stood and in Bengali declared [*Remarks in Bengali.*] “This fight is for our liberation and this fight is for our freedom.”

These words were from the father of the nation of Bangladesh, Bongobondu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman. On

March 26, another brave man, Major Ziaur Rahman, made this declaration on behalf of Sheikh Mujibur Rahman. The nine-month-long war of liberation cost three million lives. Many were displaced, and hundreds of thousands of Bangladeshi women were systematically raped. It was one of the most brutal genocides in history. But the people of Bangladesh took up arms to fight for their freedom, and in December 1971, Bangladesh got its independence.

We also recognize March as Bangladeshi Heritage Month. Andrea Horwath and I look forward to hosting community leaders here at Queen's Park on Thursday to celebrate the vibrant culture of Ontario's Bangladeshi community.

JASON HELMOND

Ms. Andrea Khanjin: It is my great honour to have Jason Helmond from Barrie–Innisfil here today with his mom, Michelle, and his sister, Kathryn.

Jason is a multi-sport athlete who, in the winter, competes in bowling, swimming, alpine skiing and curling. In the summer, he competes in track and field, golf and bocce. Jason is an active advocate of the riding of Barrie–Innisfil and has always wanted to give back to his community. He has volunteered for a variety of community events such as Barrie Out of the Cold, where he helped serve dinner to the homeless, as well as helping coordinate Christmas cheer for the less fortunate.

Jason, this winter, also participated in the Polar Plunge, where he raised \$5,000 for the Special Olympics. Jason is in the middle of organizing his fourth annual head shave to support cancer research. Over the last three years, Jason has raised \$12,000 for the cause. Jason is a true inspiration.

You are a true inspiration, Jason. You always go above and beyond, every single day. On behalf of the government of Ontario, I would like to thank you for your hard work and your devotion to our community.

KIDS COUNTRY CLUB

Ms. Peggy Sattler: As of April 1, Kids Country Club in London West will be forced to close for 29 days over the next fiscal year, leaving southwestern Ontario families of medically fragile children with 2,000 fewer hours of respite care available to them. Kids Country Club is the only facility across our region that provides 24/7 respite care for medically fragile and/or technologically dependent children. The children whose families rely on Kids Country Club have conditions ranging from autism, epilepsy, Down's syndrome, FASD, leukemia and other rare syndromes. They may have feeding tubes, home oxygen or tracheotomies. About three quarters are in wheelchairs.

Exhausted parents use respite services about four times a year to spend time with their other children, catch up on their sleep or attend appointments. Here's what one parent had to say: “Knowing I can drop my son off at Kids Country Club with no fear is huge. I sleep like I'm in a

mini-coma because I know he's having the time of his life learning new things and yet staff are trained ... to deal with his G-tube, as well as if his skin changes colour due to his heart, or if he goes clammy, or blue lips."

1510

Speaker, families of medically fragile children have enough to deal with. They need respite. I call upon this government to act now to maintain respite services at Kids Country Club.

SEXUAL VIOLENCE AND HARASSMENT

M^{me} Nathalie Des Rosiers: Sexual assault and sexual harassment are serious issues. Going through a situation of sexual misconduct in a workplace is a terrible thing. As leaders of this province, we all have a duty to do the right thing when someone comes forward with allegations.

When Kathleen Finlay reached out to my office to tell me about her experience, I wanted to ensure that I did everything in my power to get her the outcome that she needed to heal. A long time ago, Ms. Finlay told me about her violent assault while she was under the employ of an agency of this government. She told me that she reported the assault to her boss and he gave her a choice: Keep quiet or lose your job.

Inspired by the #MeToo movement, Ms. Finlay wrote to the Premier to ask for his help in rectifying this situation. She never got any answer and, indeed, some things that were done by the office made things worse for her. So I wrote to the Premier to simply ask him to revise the protocol in his office for dealing with sexual assault or sexual harassment allegations and to make sure that they are victim-friendly. Ms. Finlay has come a long way in her journey to heal and she's looking for action from this government to get closure. I wrote to the Premier's office twice, with Ms. Finlay's permission, and I never received anything.

Ms. Finlay this week wrote a piece in *Now Toronto* where she said, "We all have a duty to ensure that women are protected—not harmed—whenever they decide to come forward." She paid a steep price for this with her own health and peace of mind.

I hope the Premier is serious about taking a leadership role in ending sexual violence, and I hope that today it will start with this case, that he will answer Ms. Finlay's case and respond to her and fix the position in his office.

EVENTS IN MARKHAM-STOUFFVILLE

Mr. Paul Calandra: I appreciate the opportunity to rise today, Mr. Speaker. I had a wonderful opportunity over the weekend to join with the mayor of Stouffville, a number of councillors and participants at the 55 Plus Club in Stouffville to have the grand opening of the new centre. When I was the federal member of Parliament, I had the distinct honour to be able to provide funding through a Canada 150 grant. I was there with my federal counterpart,

the Honourable Jane Philpott, a Liberal member of Parliament who had been working very closely in order to make sure the centre was completed on time. They did a spectacular job, so I just want to congratulate the town and I want to congratulate the seniors who were part of the committee to make sure it happened.

Later on, I was also joined, of course, by the Minister of Health and Long-Term Care for another very exciting announcement. Honestly, Mr. Speaker, since I was elected in June, we have announced over 500 long-term-care beds in my riding alone. I was joined, of course, by the parliamentary secretary, Effie Triantafilopoulos. They are doing extraordinary work not only in my riding but across the province of Ontario, ushering in over 7,000 new long-term-care spaces for the people of this province. If there's one thing I've heard—it's something I heard at the seniors' centre opening; it's something I've heard door-to-door—it's that we have to do a better job of bringing people closer together, bringing health care into our communities, and when those need to transition into long-term-care beds, to make sure that they're available. I just want to congratulate the minister, her two great parliamentary assistants and the entire staff at the ministry for doing an extraordinary job.

YORK UNIVERSITY

Mr. Tom Rakocevic: It's an honour to rise in the House today and speak about my old alma mater, York University. I'm also proud to say that my mother, Aileen Rakocevic, worked at York for 25 years and earned the coveted Ronald Kent Medal there in 2005.

Today marks 60 years since the passage of the York University Act here at Queen's Park. What started out as a small liberal arts university in northwest Toronto has now grown to be Canada's third-largest university, including two campuses in India and Costa Rica. With one of the campuses located in my riding of Humber River-Black Creek, York has a distinct identity as a forward-looking and progressive institution that is committed to the public good. Its renowned programs in law and business as well as the expansion into programs that represent emerging needs, such as artificial intelligence and global health, are enabling future graduates to be better suited for the demands of an increasingly competitive job market.

With students from over 178 countries, York is one of Canada's most diverse universities and embodies everything that is great about Ontario. Mr. Speaker, several members of this House are proud alumni of York University. I ask them and all members of this House to join me in wishing York University a happy birthday. Happy birthday, York University.

GREEK INDEPENDENCE DAY

Ms. Effie J. Triantafilopoulos: March 25 this year marked 198 years since the declaration of Greek independence. Canadians of Hellenic origin and Hellenes

around the world celebrate the revolution against the Ottoman Empire that began the liberation of Greece.

On Sunday, Hellenic Canadians and their friends and family marched along the Danforth to celebrate this day. This traditional parade dates back more than 60 years in Toronto. I want to thank the Premier and the many members of our PC caucus and other parties who joined us on this joyous occasion.

Today's Hellenic republic lives proudly as a free and democratic nation, and remembers that it was the ancient Greeks in the Athens of Pericles who first practised and developed democracy. Hellenes are proud to have given the gift of democracy to the world and to share the culture, literature and history of their civilization. In the words of the Greek patriot Rigas Feraios, better one hour of freedom than 40 years of slavery and prison.

Ontarians of Hellenic origin today contribute to every field of work in our province, and modern Greece is a friend to Canada and part of the European Union and NATO. In this spirit, I will be leading the debate this Thursday on my private member's bill entitled the Hellenic Heritage Month Act, which, if passed, will recognize Hellenic heritage every March in Ontario.

Thank you to all who joined in celebrating Greek Independence Day, and may I say, Zhto H Ellada.

YORK UNIVERSITY

Mr. Deepak Anand: Mr. Speaker, 60 years ago today, the York University Act was passed here at Queen's Park. In the fall of 1961, with only 76 students, York moved to its first campus, Glendon College, and began to emphasize liberal arts and part-time education. In 1965, the university opened a second campus, the Keele campus.

I stand here today as a proud York University alumnus. Today, York University is Canada's third-largest university, home to over 50,000 students and 7,000 faculty and staff. With over 300,000 alumni across the globe, York is graduating leaders in all areas of society.

The university offers many experiential learning opportunities to equip students with job-readiness skills, provides training in areas that are highly sought after by employers, and has expanded entrepreneurship offerings that empower students to start and grow businesses—businesses that meet market and society needs. York is helping to develop Ontario's talent pipeline and is an important partner in helping us grow Ontario's economy.

Mr. Speaker, as a graduate of the Schulich School of Business, I'm proud to say that my post-secondary school is ranked among the leading business schools in the world, and number one in Canada. I'm also thrilled to share with you that York University is also a key NASA and Canadian Space Agency partner. York University has accomplished many things over the past 60 years and I'm proud to be a York U Lion.

On behalf of all York University stakeholders, I would like to say, happy 60th anniversary, York University.

REPORTS BY COMMITTEES

STANDING COMMITTEE ON GOVERNMENT AGENCIES

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): I beg to inform the House that today the Clerk received a report on intended appointments dated March 26, 2019, of the Standing Committee on Government Agencies. Pursuant to standing order 108(f)(9), the report is deemed to be adopted by the House.

Report deemed adopted.

1520

SELECT COMMITTEE ON FINANCIAL TRANSPARENCY

Mr. Prabmeet Singh Sarkaria: I beg leave to present the final report from the Select Committee on Financial Transparency and move adoption of its recommendations.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Mr. Sarkaria moves the committee's report and moves the adoption of its recommendations. Does the member wish to make a brief statement?

Mr. Prabmeet Singh Sarkaria: As Chair of the Select Committee on Financial Transparency, I'm pleased to table the final report today on behalf of the committee. I would also like to take this opportunity to thank members of the committee: the member from York Centre, the member from Barrie–Springwater–Oro–Medonte, the member from Waterloo, the member for Eglinton–Lawrence, the member for Durham, the member for Sault Ste. Marie, the member for Hamilton West–Ancaster–Dundas and the member for Timiskaming–Cochrane.

The committee also wishes to thank all witnesses who appeared before it. The committee also wishes to acknowledge and recognize the assistance provided by the Clerk of the Committee and the staff in the legislative research service.

I move adjournment of the debate.

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

Debate adjourned.

PETITIONS

EDUCATION FUNDING

Ms. Suze Morrison: I have a petition here entitled "Don't Increase Class Sizes in Our Public Schools." It reads, "To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas the vast majority of parents, students, and educators support smaller class sizes and the current model of full-day kindergarten and want the best education possible for the students of Ontario; and

"Whereas larger class sizes negatively impacts the quality of education; reduces access to teaching resources

and significantly diminishes teacher-student interactions; and

“Whereas the impact of larger class sizes will be particularly detrimental to students who need additional support; and

“Whereas Ontario has an internationally recognized public education system that requires careful attention and the investment to ensure all of our students can succeed;

“We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to commit to reducing class sizes, maintain the current model of full-day kindergarten, and make the necessary investments in public education to build the schools our students deserve.”

I fully support this petition. I will be signing it and giving it to page Erynn to deliver to the table.

EDUCATION FUNDING

Ms. Bhutla Karpoche: I'd like to thank the parents in my riding of Parkdale–High Park who have signed this petition titled “Don't Increase Class Sizes or Cancel Full-Day Kindergarten.”

“Whereas the vast majority of parents, students, and educators support smaller class sizes and the current model of full-day kindergarten and want the best education possible for the students of Ontario; and

“Whereas larger class sizes negatively impacts the quality of education; reduces access to teaching resources and significantly diminishes teacher-student interactions; and

“Whereas the impact of larger class sizes will be particularly detrimental to students who need additional support; and

“Whereas Ontario has an internationally recognized public education system that requires careful attention and the investment to ensure all of our students can succeed;

“We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to commit to reducing class sizes, maintain the current model of full-day kindergarten, and make the necessary investments in public education to build the schools our students deserve.”

As a parent of a child in full-day kindergarten in our public school system, I couldn't agree with this more and I'm proud to affix my signature to it.

EDUCATION FUNDING

Ms. Rima Berns-McGown: I have a petition to the Ontario Legislative Assembly:

“Don't Increase Class Sizes in Our Public Schools.

“Whereas the vast majority of parents, students, and educators support smaller class sizes and the current model of full-day kindergarten and want the best education possible for the students of Ontario; and

“Whereas larger class sizes negatively impacts the quality of education; reduces access to teaching resources and significantly diminishes teacher-student interactions; and

“Whereas the impact of larger class sizes will be particularly detrimental to students who need additional support; and

“Whereas Ontario has an internationally recognized public education system that requires careful attention and the investment to ensure all of our students can succeed;

“We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to commit to reducing class sizes, maintain the current model of full-day kindergarten, and make the necessary investments in public education to build the schools our students deserve.”

I wholeheartedly agree with this petition, will be affixing my signature to it and giving it to page Saniya to take to the Clerk.

CHILD ADVOCATE

Mr. Terence Kernaghan: It's my honour to present a petition on behalf of Sarah and Dr. Tyler Rouse of Stratford, and Brad McMurray, along with the parishioners of Rowntree church in London. The petition reads:

“Protect the Provincial Advocate for Children and Youth.

“To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“Whereas children and youth are Ontario's most valuable resource and deserve the best start in life we can provide;

“Whereas Ontario's most vulnerable children and youth are too often underserved by our child welfare, mental health, youth justice and special-needs sectors;

“Whereas that lack of service can result in health challenges, lower educational outcomes, reduced opportunity, injury and sometimes even death;

“Whereas children and youth, and in particular vulnerable children and youth, often have no voice and few adults to speak on their behalf;

“Whereas the Provincial Advocate for Children and Youth is charged with the responsibility of providing an independent voice for children and youth by partnering with them to bring issues forward;

“Whereas the Provincial Advocate for Children and Youth provides a necessary focused approach, putting children and youth at the centre of all their work, that cannot be provided by any other office;

“Whereas the closure of the Office of the Provincial Advocate for Children and Youth represents a step backwards for Ontario that will harm our most vulnerable children and youth;

“We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to direct the Doug Ford government to reverse its decision to close the Office of the Provincial Advocate for Children and Youth.”

I fully support this petition, and will be affixing my signature to it and giving it to page Saad.

LONG-TERM CARE

M^{me} France Gélinas: I would like to thank June Langlois from Garson in my riding for this petition. It reads as follows:

“Time to care.

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

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

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

They “petition the Legislative Assembly to amend the LTC Homes Act (2007) for a legislated minimum care standard of four hours per resident per day, adjusted for acuity level and case mix.”

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

FULL-DAY KINDERGARTEN

Ms. Catherine Fife: This petition is entitled “Stop the Cuts to Full-Day Kindergarten.

“To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

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

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

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

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

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

“Whereas evidence is clear that smaller class sizes mean big benefits for Ontario’s students”—I had to say it twice;

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

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

1530

CHILD CARE WORKERS

Ms. Doly Begum: I have a petition regarding the Wage Enhancement Grant. Now we have about 12,000 signatures for this petition, and the deadline is March 31. This petition is a “Petition to Maintain the Provincial Wage Enhancement Grant for Registered Early Childhood

Educators and Child Care Workers in Licensed Child Care.

“To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

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

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

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

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

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

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

I fully support this petition and will affix my signature to it and give it to page Julia.

EDUCATION FUNDING

Mr. Tom Rakocevic: My petition is entitled “Don’t Increase Class Sizes in Our Public Schools.

“Whereas the vast majority of parents, students, and educators support smaller class sizes and the current model of full-day kindergarten and want the best education possible for the students of Ontario; and

“Whereas larger class sizes negatively impacts the quality of education; reduces access to teaching resources and significantly diminishes teacher-student interactions; and

“Whereas the impact of larger class sizes will be particularly detrimental to students who need additional support; and

“Whereas Ontario has an internationally recognized public education system that requires careful attention and the investment to ensure all of our students succeed;

“We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to commit to reducing class sizes, maintain the current model of full-day kindergarten, and make the necessary investments in public education to build the schools our students deserve.”

I fully support the petition and will be signing it and giving it to page Saniya.

SCHOOL FACILITIES

Ms. Jessica Bell: I have a petition to fund our schools.

“To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“Whereas too many children are going to school in buildings without proper heating or cooling, with leaky roofs or stairways overdue for repair;

“Whereas after years of Conservative and Liberal governments neglecting schools, the backlog of needed repairs has reached \$16 billion;

“Whereas during the 2018 election, numerous members of the Conservative Party, including the current Minister of Education, pledged to provide adequate, stable funding for Ontario’s schools;

“Whereas less than” a short period “into the legislative session, Doug Ford and the Conservative government have already cut \$100 million in much-needed school repairs, leaving our children and educators to suffer in classrooms that are unsafe and unhealthy;

“We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to direct the Minister of Education to immediately reverse the decision to cut \$100 million in school repair funding, and invest the \$16 billion needed to tackle the repair backlog in Ontario’s schools.”

I fully support this petition. I’ll be affixing my name to it and I’ll be giving it to page Saad.

ANIMAL PROTECTION

Ms. Bhutla Karpoche: This petition is titled “Animal Welfare in Ontario.

“To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“Whereas the people of Ontario care about the animals who live among us and believe all animals deserve our protection but are largely going unprotected at this time;

“Whereas the Ontario Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals has abandoned its responsibility to enforce animal protection laws in this province as of April 1, 2019, leaving Ontario as the only province in Canada without a functional animal welfare system;

“Whereas the Superior Court of Ontario has concluded that the level of accountability and transparency required of a law enforcement agency can only be found in the public sector;

“Whereas the animal protection elements of the current law, the OSPCA Act, are sound but require enforcement that is dedicated, effective and accountable;

“We, the undersigned, hereby petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario through the Ministry of Community Safety and Correctional Services, which has the lead for animal protection in our province, as follows:

“Immediately implement interim measures to ensure animals are protected in Ontario, which includes changes to the OSPCA Act to enable the minister of MCSCS to appoint a new chief inspector with the ability to appoint staff from municipalities and provincial ministries as investigators under the act;

“Introduce legislation that establishes a new animal welfare system for Ontario that will be effective and accountable, with provincial oversight and service delivery by the public sector including municipalities and provincial ministries;

“Appoint a trustee to administer the affairs of the OSPCA and merge its assets into the new animal welfare system.”

Thank you.

CHILD CARE WORKERS

Ms. Rima Berns-McGown: I have another almost 400 signatures to add to a petition to maintain the provincial Wage Enhancement Grant for registered early childhood educators and child care workers in licensed child care.

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

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

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

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

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

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

I agree with this petition, and will be affixing my signature to it and passing it to page Ishwarejan to take to the Clerk.

EMPLOYMENT STANDARDS

Ms. Bhutla Karpoche: This petition is titled “Don’t Take Away Our \$15 Minimum Wage and Fairer Labour Laws.

“Whereas the vast majority of Ontarians support a \$15 minimum wage and better laws to protect workers; and

“Whereas last year, in response to overwhelming popular demand by the people of Ontario, the provincial government brought in legislation and regulations that:

“Deliver 10 personal emergency leave days for all workers, the first two of which are paid;

“Make it illegal to pay part-time, temporary, casual or contract workers less than their full-time or directly hired co-workers, including equal public holiday pay and vacation pay;

“Raised the adult general minimum wage to \$14 per hour and further raises it to a \$15 minimum wage on January 1, 2019, with annual adjustments by Ontario’s consumer price index;

“Make it easier to join unions, especially for workers in the temporary help, home care, community services and building services sectors;

“Protect workers’ employment status, pay and benefits when contracts are flipped or businesses are sold in the building services sector;

“Make client companies responsible for workplace health and safety for temporary agency employees;

“Provide strong enforcement through the hiring of an additional 175 employment standards officers; and

“Will ensure workers have modest improvements in the scheduling of their hours, including:

“—three hours’ pay when workers are expected to be on call all day, but are not called into work;

“—three hours’ pay for any employee whose shift is cancelled with less than two days’ notice; and

“—the right to refuse shifts without penalty if the shift is scheduled with fewer than four days’ notice;

“We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to honour these commitments, including the \$15 minimum wage and fairer scheduling rules set to take effect on January 1, 2019. We further call on the assembly to take all necessary steps to enforce these laws and extend them to ensure no worker is left without protection.”

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

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Percy Hatfield): The time for petitions has expired.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

RESTORING ONTARIO’S COMPETITIVENESS ACT, 2019

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

Resuming the debate adjourned on March 25, 2019, on the motion for 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 Acting Speaker (Mr. Percy Hatfield): The last time we had this in front of us, the member for Kingston and the Islands had just finished, and so it’s now time for questions and comments.

I recognize the member for Markham–Stouffville.

Mr. Paul Calandra: I appreciate the opportunity to rise again.

I was in the House yesterday. I did listen to the member’s speech. I thought he gave a thoughtful dissertation on the points that he both agreed with and disagreed with. One of the points that I took in particular, though, was his disagreement with the repeal of the 2009 Toxics Reduction Act. As you know, Mr. Speaker, I was a member of the federal Parliament that brought in the Chemicals Management Plan in—sorry, the date escapes me. But one of the reasons why the Chemicals Management Plan is so important is that it lifted up all provinces. It lifted up all provinces and provided certainty across Canada. It provided certainty for the business community. It provided certainty for jurisdictions that were dealing with it.

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That’s, in part, one of the reasons why we have decided to repeal the less effective Ontario version. That’s not to say that the Ontario Toxics Reduction Act didn’t perform

an important role when it was first introduced, but part of the reason why we’re doing red tape is to look at things just like this.

I did note that there was some agreement on some other areas—and it wasn’t this member in particular, but one of the areas that I found a little bit disconcerting in the opposition’s commentary on this is the underlying principle that somehow business is not to be trusted, whether it’s with sub-metering, whether it’s with daycare. Obviously, we can’t have that type of commentary leaving this place, because I think we all would agree that small, medium and large job creators are not only the backbone of the economy, they’re the engine, and they are what allow us to do everything Ontarians expect us to do in this place.

Again, I appreciated the member’s comments. I appreciated the areas we disagreed on and the areas we agreed on. I look forward to passage of the bill.

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

Ms. Teresa J. Armstrong: I know the member from Kingston and the Islands probably had, like the member from Markham–Stouffville said, some thoughtful comments in debate, because on this side of the House, we have very much looked at the legislation, and we have contributions that will make things work better. So we’re glad the members opposite are listening.

But Bill 66, opening up Ontario for business, Ontario’s competitiveness act—there is one schedule in here that kind of leaves me thinking, what does this have to do with competitiveness in Ontario? Maybe if the members could help me out here: It’s schedule 2, whereby they repeal the Pawnbrokers Act so that municipalities will have to assume the responsibility of documentation of property that goes to pawnbrokers.

This particular act had a good piece in it. Police officers were able to use it in order to help with theft. Repealing the Pawnbrokers Act and putting that responsibility on municipalities—the other piece they don’t actually identify is if a municipality doesn’t have a bylaw in order to do that; Toronto and Hamilton do, but other ones, perhaps, do not. They don’t give direction to those municipalities to enact that, to make them do that.

Opening up Ontario for competitiveness—I don’t understand the logic of repealing the Pawnbrokers Act and making it easier for stolen property to be given to a pawnbroker. No one has the tools—in some cases, municipalities don’t have the registration in that act to go through and actually look at property to avoid that. So I would say to the government that that didn’t make any sense with regard to opening up Ontario for competitiveness.

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

Mr. Kaled Rasheed: Mr. Speaker, our government was elected with a clear agenda by the people of Ontario. They elected a government that believes in fiscal responsibility and accountability, a government committed to cleaning up a regulatory mess and paving the way for job creators to ensure Ontario is open for business.

Our government, through Bill 66, has introduced regulatory and legislative changes targeting the redundant and unnecessary outdated regulations that were preventing the growth of business in Ontario. The Restoring Ontario's Competitiveness Act will establish consistency and clarity, with equity for all employees. This will lead to better-paying jobs and attract investments as it will lessen the burden of redundant regulations, thus making Ontario open for business.

I remember participating with my very good friend and colleague Michael Parsa for some of the round tables, and I remember that small businesses were literally begging us and saying, "Please help us remove these red tapes in the blue binder." They were so afraid that they won't be able to succeed in this province due to these unnecessary regulations. I'm so proud of our government, because we heard them and we are bringing changes to make sure that these small businesses succeed, or any business succeeds, in our province of Ontario.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Percy Hatfield): Just as a reminder to the members: When you make reference to another member, you should always attach the name of the member's riding, as opposed to just naming the member. I believe it's Aurora–Oak Ridges–Richmond Hill.

Questions and comments?

Ms. Jessica Bell: I do believe it is the responsibility of government to provide reasonable protections, to safeguard our children, to safeguard people and to protect the environment for current generations and future generations to come—our children, our grandchildren and so on.

When I look at Bill 66, I know that there is an argument that this will be reducing red tape and that the tape that they're reducing is being called redundant and unnecessary. But I don't really see it that way. Some of the changes that are being made are pretty concerning to me.

One change that I see is around schedule 3, the changes to the child care rules, the legislation that is in place to protect our kids when we drop them off in the morning and they stay there until we pick them up at night. Every parent out there wants to make sure that their child is given the best-quality care that they can receive and that their child is safe. It deeply concerns me that there are changes being made around the number of children allowed in care—both infants and older children.

It has led many experts to speak out and express their concern about this bill or this schedule, including Linda White. She's a child care policy expert and a professor at the University of Toronto. She said that the regulations for unlicensed daycare providers shouldn't be loosened but, in fact, they should be strengthened to ensure better quality of care. She noted the reason why we strengthened the regulations in the first place, and that was because there were four infants that died in daycare settings over a period of seven months in 2014. The government at the time realized that changes needed to be made.

I don't believe we need to make that mistake again. That is a regulation that isn't red tape; it's a regulation that keeps our kids safe.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Percy Hatfield): That concludes questions and comments. We return now to the

member from Kingston and the Islands for a two-minute response.

Mr. Ian Arthur: Thank you very much, Speaker, and thank you to the members from University–Rosedale, Mississauga East–Cooksville, London–Fanshawe and Markham–Stouffville for the contributions they made to the debate.

The member from Markham–Stouffville said something interesting. He talked about businesses being trusted. I used to help manage a business that I think was very trustworthy, and I was very, very proud of that. But I began this debate by talking about the long-term repercussions of this bill and thinking about them. I know that the member from Markham–Stouffville was at the table when we signed the bailout package for General Motors. He was at the table. He was integral to those negotiations. I wonder, at the time, looking forward at the long-term repercussions of what was done then, seeing what GM has done now, if there's any regret attached to that. We signed this bailout without sufficient assurances that GM would continue operating.

So when we're talking about business and the trustworthiness of business, I believe that for the vast majority of companies but I believe that, when faced with some difficult decisions and changing markets, businesses do not always make choices that are in the best interests of Ontarians. I know that the member for Markham–Stouffville had a front-row seat to that very thing happening, and we've seen the repercussions of that play out now. The success that we've had in this area, in fighting back against the company that we helped bail out, and then we sold our shares and we no longer have a stake in what they are doing—I know that the success in pushing back against those actually came from unions, and not this government or the Premier who said that ship has sailed.

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When we talk about business trustworthiness, yes, there are many fantastic companies out there, but let's be careful to temper our language, because sometimes they go against the people of Ontario, and that's when we come in to fight back against that.

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

Mr. Lorne Coe: I am pleased to enter the debate on Bill 66, An Act to restore Ontario's competitiveness by amending or repealing certain Acts.

For 15 long years, Ontario suffered under a Liberal government, a government that didn't care about job creation for families or meaningful investment in our province. Quarterly, I meet with the advocacy group of the Whitby Chamber of Commerce. In those meetings, we discussed this very bill, the bill that was sponsored by the Honourable Todd Smith, the Minister of Economic Development, Job Creation and Trade, ably helped by his parliamentary assistant from Flamborough–Glanbrook. In those discussions with the advocacy group, we talked about that 15-year period, and we talked about the 300,000 manufacturing jobs that left our province—300,000 jobs. Speaker, no government can be for supporting jobs but against the very

companies that create them. You know it just doesn't work that way.

That's why our government is committed to creating an environment where businesses can grow, thrive and create good jobs right here in Ontario. As I walk up Brock Street, which is downtown Whitby, in my riding, talking to small business owners and mid-sized businesses and, yes, larger manufacturers that employ hundreds of people, I've heard the same message as I did when I met with the advocacy group from the Whitby Chamber of Commerce. They told me this: "Make it easier for us to compete, create employment opportunities and provide a more inviting environment for commerce and families." Since June 7, 2018, that goal is exactly what our government has been tirelessly pursuing.

Before our government came to power, businesses in Ontario faced the highest cost of compliance with regulations of companies in any Canadian province. Statistics tell us that the average compliance cost for businesses in Ontario was \$33,000 per year, a full \$8,000 higher than the average in other provinces. Worse, small businesses bore the brunt—small businesses like those in the town of Whitby facing the highest costs on a per-employee basis. That is the very reason that our government is committed to cutting red tape that impacts businesses by 25%, especially targeting regulations that are unnecessary, duplicative and simply outdated.

Speaker, on March 20, 2019, there was an interesting opinion piece published in the *Globe and Mail*—you might have read it. The article was titled "We Must Shine the Spotlight on Regulation." The authors pointed out that government impacts our lives in three ways: through taxation, spending and regulation. Regulation is rarely in the spotlight, but as the authors rightly pointed out, it has a profound impact on our lives—those who are watching this afternoon and those in our respective communities. Like over-taxation, too much regulation undermines the very things we care about. Ontario, relative to other provinces, is a heavyweight—it always has been, a place where businesses of all sizes are buried—buried—in a mountain of 77,000 restrictions.

As the authors concluded, excessive regulation raises prices, lowers incomes, fans the flame of income inequality and frustrates entrepreneurship. This is quite a compendium of very bad results, and while regulation forms a key component of government's role, what's clear in this discussion is that excessive regulation becomes a costly burden and an impediment to business growth and, especially important, job creation.

Spending needless hours mired in filling out and submitting paperwork is not an effective way to run a business, and the costs, both human and financial, are absolutely enormous. No business person from my riding has ever said to me, "I really love filling out all that paperwork. I find it inspirational"—quite the contrary. And so, making this province open for business has been our priority. As I said in my introduction, when businesses and job creators thrive, all of our communities thrive, especially the town of Whitby.

Speaker, we need to create an environment where the people of Ontario are able to build a career and support their families. That's what I would want. That's what I expect that every other MPP in this Legislative Assembly would want. We need to create an environment where Ontario is once again a top-tier destination for job creation, investment, entrepreneurs and growth.

I'd like to turn now to some of the key components of deregulation in Bill 66, starting with health and long-term care. It provides a simple yet effective insight into this government's approach. It has a special interest for me in my riding of Whitby, where we have exceptional long-term-care facilities. In my riding alone, I have close to five, four of which are operated by the region of Durham, and the other is operated by Schlegel Villages, a well-regarded long-term-care provider. Speaker, the goal here is to reduce barriers that impede access to quality long-term care. You know—and others would support this—that it's what residents and families expect, and it is indeed what those families and residents deserve.

During my time on the Durham regional council, where I was the chair of the health and social services committee, long-term care fell within that particular committee. Along with a period of time where I was the president of the Association of Local Public Health Agencies of Ontario—these roles combined gave me an insight into the health care system in our province.

We are also helping to reduce red tape and the administrative bottleneck in the long-term-care sector by increasing flexibility when issuing temporary emergency licences. Our proposed amendments will improve the timeliness and process for issuing long-term-care emergency licences by expanding the scope—this is an important point—to include all types of circumstances where long-term-care beds are needed to accommodate people impacted by a temporary emergency. There are lots of examples where that has occurred in my municipality, the town of Whitby, and, I'm sure, yours as well. This has been a long-standing issue that has been finally addressed with this particular amendment.

Speaker, this approach will ensure a more efficient system for the development and redevelopment of long-term-care facilities, which we certainly need in the region of Durham. It's been chronically underserved for a number of years. That's somewhat surprising when you consider that, in Whitby and the region of Durham, we're in the largest local health integration network in the province of Ontario.

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Over the past months, the Minister of Health and Long-Term Care has unveiled our continuing commitment to the expansion of long-term-care beds across the province. She has reiterated the growing demand for beds and has told us how her ministry is addressing that growth. As recently as this past Friday, she announced new long-term-care projects that will add 1,157 beds in facilities across the province, including my riding of Whitby and others in the region of Durham. Bill 66, if passed, will assist in supporting the ministry's plan. It's the right thing to do for my riding of Whitby and the right thing for the entire province.

Speaker, I'd like to now look at the proposed changes in the bill to the Labour Relations Act. If passed, Bill 66 will amend that act with the central focus being on increasing competitiveness. I will reference changes particularly outlined in schedule 9 of the proposed legislation and, specifically, section 127 of the Labour Relations Act describing those entities that are deemed non-construction employers. Speaker, by deeming that public bodies, including municipalities, school boards, hospitals, colleges and universities, are non-construction employers, it opens the bidding process to a broader range of contractors. If passed, the legislation would result in a more open, flexible and competitive bidding process.

These proposed changes are also expected to result in significant cost savings as well. Now, I know, Speaker, that you served with distinction on municipal councils, as well as I did, and this has been a long-standing issue within municipalities across the province. There's one study, though, I want to cite that I think supports some of the narrative I just provided. One study estimates that eliminating closed tendering in the broader public sector may result in as much as \$370 million in savings for publicly funded construction projects. Can you imagine that impact in municipalities, particularly with the infrastructure that they put in place?

In its submission to the Standing Committee on General Government, the Association of Municipalities of Ontario that you were involved with for a long period of time, as I was, stated that the current construction employer designation for municipalities drives up the cost of municipal infrastructure projects by limiting competition and excluding qualified eligible contracts. It's clear that it's time to increase competitiveness and fairness in Ontario, and that is exactly what the Labour Relations Act proposed amendments will accomplish with some certainty.

I want to turn to examine another part of Bill 66, and it deals with agriculture and the agri-business sector. In preparation for today's presentation on Bill 66, I reread with interest the region of Durham's agricultural strategy and its relevance to the proposed legislation that's before us this afternoon. That particular strategy recognizes that when developing policy, it's important to recognize that profitability is a key component of a sustainable agricultural industry—and we have a big one. We have a big agri-business sector in the region of Durham and in parts of my riding of Whitby.

The strategy goes on to speak about the importance of profitability and the need—and this is another important distinction—to manage the balance between protecting both agricultural resources and the environment.

It talks, as it should, about the considerable regulations that are in place at the provincial level to which farmers must adhere. But the proposed changes to farm registration will allow the registration program to operate under electronic service delivery, simplifying the process and changing how the program is delivered, and improving the timeliness of its decisions.

Speaker, Keith Currie, who you're well familiar with—and others would be, in rural communities and others like

mine—is the president of the Ontario Federation of Agriculture. He had this to say, and I think it's worthwhile to read it into the record: "The Ontario Federation of Agriculture is pleased with the province of Ontario's actions taken to reduce regulatory burdens for our members. Streamlining the farm business registration process is another way in which the Minister of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs, Ernie Hardeman, and the Ford government are reducing ... paperwork for our membership."

The process surrounding loan guarantees has long been another source of aggravation for farmers. That's why the government, through the proposed implementation of Bill 66, will be removing outdated and time-consuming reporting requirements under the Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs Act, including many required for loan guarantee programs.

Agriculture may not be the first business that comes to mind when we discuss regulations. But when I speak with farmers in Blackstock or Ashburn or Myrtle Station, which are in the north part of my riding, I realize very quickly what a huge component of their businesses it is—what a huge component.

Helping people in rural Ontario is as important, I believe, as any other group, and the proposed legislation before us this afternoon does just that.

Speaker, as I'm conscious of the time—there are three minutes left—I'd like to address some of the proposed changes pertaining to training, colleges and universities, something very close to my heart since I have three in very close proximity and two in my riding.

The proposed legislation will introduce more efficient processes, thereby reducing costs and paperwork for some of the private career colleges in my riding. This will allow them to concentrate on providing students with the skills-focused education they need to enter Ontario's workforce.

By reducing the costs for private career colleges, this proposal encourages businesses to invest savings in quality programs, instructors and infrastructure, leading to a more vibrant and competitive vocational training sector. It allows the government to target unduly costly and unnecessary burdensome regulations while maintaining rules that keep students safe.

From the outset, we've been very focused on ensuring that Ontarians have the skills they need to fill those jobs. Private career colleges provide graduates with the knowledge and skills they need to acquire jobs in a specific vocation.

Speaker, I have a minute and 35, so I'm going to wrap up for you.

Eight months ago, the citizens of our province made a definitive statement with their vote, bringing hope back to businesses and families in Ontario. The requests of our residents are reasonable: to bring the kind of common-sense changes that will help make life more affordable on a day-to-day basis.

Ours is a government for the people, and this government has listened to the needs of the people of Ontario. We will eliminate redundant, ineffective and outdated regulations, and streamline and modernize many others.

We will maintain rules that are needed to keep Ontarians safe and healthy, while making sure that businesses don't have to jump through hoops to comply with the regulations we do need. We are going to get government out of the way of our job creators because we refuse—absolutely refuse—to accept that our kids will have fewer opportunities than we did.

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Speaker, making Ontario open for business is our number one priority, because when job creators thrive, our communities thrive.

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

Mr. Ian Arthur: It's a pleasure to rise once again and contribute to this debate a little bit more today. The member opposite spoke about how they wanted to get rid of outdated regulations, and I want to attach a time frame to some of the regulations that they're calling outdated. The changes to the child care ratios were brought in in 2015, so four short years ago. Those changes in regulations and legislation were brought in four years ago, so I question how we can call those changes outdated. They were brought in to protect the safety of children—four years ago—because four children died. They can call that an outdated regulation; we certainly won't be calling it that on this side of the House.

A previous section of this bill, which has been withdrawn, was getting rid of regulations that were brought in because of Walkerton—again, because people died. So when we're talking about “outdated,” I don't think that actually fits with what this government is doing in this bill. Certainly, there are parts of it—and I said this in the longer debate earlier—that I don't have huge problems with, but they've paired it with such terribleness in other sections of this bill that it makes it universally impossible to support.

He talked about supporting farmers, but I would draw attention again to the pushback against the former schedule 10 that was part of this.

Ms. Goldie Ghamari: But we repealed it.

Mr. Ian Arthur: You did repeal it because people pushed back, including farmers. Farmers had a massive problem with that. So to say, on one hand, that you're representing farmers, but to introduce something, with no consultation, that is so adverse to farming in Ontario and then have to step back from it later—that's just poor governance.

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

Mr. Will Bouma: It's so great to be able to rise again in the House today and speak about Bill 66 and the great things that we plan on doing to Ontario.

I appreciate the fact that the member from Whitby can be so eloquent in talking about the great things we're doing. Yesterday, I was talking about my good friend Jim, who just opened a business in the industrial park that the county of Brant has been constructing. It's interesting. That industrial park—they were planning on it taking 10 years to build out; it has only taken five and it's completely full. And yet the headaches that so many of our businesses

face on a daily basis in order to just get things done—to get a building permit, to be able to do just routine things, and the cost involved in all those things. How many employment opportunities have been lost?

The members opposite are often, and rightfully so, very concerned with the rights of the worker, and yet, at the same time, if we don't make a business-friendly environment for the people of Ontario, those jobs just won't happen. And that red tape and regulation and slowing things down just get in the way of all those things.

That's why I can't say enough good things about what we're hoping to do with Bill 66. Because we're not doing this even for ourselves. We're not even doing this right now for the people of Ontario. We are, but in reality, Mr. Speaker, these are things that we're doing for our children and our grandchildren because we want them to be able to have a better standard of living than what we've enjoyed. We want them to be able to have better housing, better jobs, better health care than what we've had, and that's why Bill 66 is so important to this.

I look forward to its passage here. Thanks for putting up with me for another two minutes, Mr. Speaker.

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

Ms. Rima Berns-McGown: One of the frustrations of this debate is the continual contention by the government benches that this is a bill about red tape and that it is a debate about liking red tape or not liking red tape. That's not what this debate ought to be about. When we point out consistently that there are regulations that were put in place in order to keep people safe, in order to keep children safe, in order to keep drinking water safe, we're not talking about red tape; we're actually talking about health and safety. We would like, in the course of the debate, thoughtful, intelligent and informed answers to those issues.

There's an equity aspect to the debate as well that has not been picked up sufficiently, if at all, by the government benches. That is the question of what happens when you are a parent without resources who has no choice but to put your child into a daycare situation where you are not sure whether they'll be safe. If you're a parent of means, you can simply decide not to put your child in an overcrowded daycare environment. You can decide you're going to stay home so that your child won't be subject to those dangers. But if you're a parent who absolutely has to get to work and you have no choice, then your child is going to potentially be in more danger.

These are questions that are going to rest on the government's shoulders and on its head. I think that they at least deserve to consider them seriously in debate, and not simply talk over and over about red tape.

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

Mr. Vijay Thanigasalam: Over the past seven months, our government has been working hard at reducing the taxes, fees and also the skyrocketing bills that have left so many families and businesses hurting. This is why we are committed to cutting the red tape affecting businesses by

25%. We are targeting red tape that is unnecessary, that is duplicative and outdated.

For the last 15 years, Ontario suffered under the previous Liberal government, who didn't care about job creation for families and investment in the province. We saw over 300,000 manufacturing jobs leaving our province under their watch, under the previous Liberal government's watch. You can't be "for jobs" but against job creators. It just doesn't work like that. We cannot continue to drive companies away from our province.

Our plan is to make sure that our government gets out of the way of job creators and lowers business costs. It will make Ontario more competitive. We will target unduly costly and burdensome regulations while maintaining rules that keep Ontarians safe and healthy. We'll make it easier and faster for companies to do business with their government. We promised to build prosperity in this province. This plan, Bill 66, is a huge step forward to restoring our province to its rightful place as the economic engine of Canada.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Percy Hatfield): That concludes this portion of questions and comments. We'll return to the member from Whitby for his two-minute summation.

Mr. Lorne Coe: Thank you, Speaker. I thank all the members who participated in the questions and comments.

I'd like to recap a few of the key points I made in my presentation. In total, we're taking over 32 actions to cut red tape. In that process, we're saving job creators an estimated \$23.5 million in annual cost savings each year, once fully implemented. These actions combined will, if passed, reduce the regulatory burden across a wide variety of industries: manufacturing, construction, the auto sector, and agriculture and food processing. We're also proposing, within Bill 66, actions to lighten the burden on companies operating in any sector.

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What's clear in the process and why we're here today is that over the past eight and a half months, our government has been hard at work, reducing the taxes, the fees and the skyrocketing bills that have left so many families and businesses in Ontario hurting—absolutely hurting. I hear it every day. When I'm in my constituency office on Fridays, I hear it pretty frequently, and I know you do too. Speaker, we believe that business owners should spend more time growing their businesses than filling out paperwork, because when our job creators thrive, our respective communities thrive.

Thank you for the opportunity to speak on Bill 66 today. Thank you for your attention.

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

Ms. Catherine Fife: It's a pleasure to join the debate on behalf of the citizens of Waterloo today. I do appreciate the government's agreeing to stand down the lead. I'll be speaking for an hour on Bill 66. I could easily speak for a day on Bill 66. But I do want to say thank you to the government side for agreeing to do that, because I was able to participate in a Passion for Fashion fundraising show

yesterday with my daughter, who is volunteering there. This organization was raising money to ensure that women can escape domestic violence. We're still fundraising to keep women safe in the province of Ontario. It was an eye-opener for her as a young woman, and I was really very happy to be there in the riding yesterday. So thank you for allowing that.

Now, Bill 66: I remember so well, Mr. Speaker, the government, when they were exactly sitting right here on this side of the House, criticizing the former Liberal government for their omnibus legislation. I mean, if there were three consistent things that they would argue, omnibus legislation, which obviously is created to squeeze the opposition members on various issues, was almost their number one complaint.

There were some good points made around why omnibus legislation, like Bill 66—which is really a compilation of various pieces of legislation affecting 12 different ministries that really have no relation to each other and then they slapped on a title called "restoring Ontario's competitiveness." I have to tell you, we didn't even support the name of this bill during committee, because it does not do that.

I want to actually honour the voices of the citizens who really tried to engage with this PC government on this piece of legislation. Unfortunately, one day was set aside for committee—one day—and very few delegations were accepted. Many, many submitted applications to speak to this piece of legislation.

If the government were indeed proud of this legislation, Bill 66, then they would have agreed to travel it. We used to do that in the province of Ontario. We used to take pieces of legislation which you truly felt would make a difference, would make the province more competitive, and take it around the province, take it to our northern region, take it out to our rural areas, go into the cities and listen to the people about it. But, no, not this government. This government gave one day—one day. We received boxes and boxes of delegations who wanted to ensure that the government heard them, and so I feel a very deep responsibility here today as the lead on this piece of legislation to ensure that those voices are heard in this Legislature.

I must tell you, as well, during the clause-by-clause—which didn't even last a whole day. Bill 66 essentially got a day and a half's worth of work. It wasn't for lack of trying. The member from Guelph was part of the committee sessions and we agreed to allow him to ask questions, particularly from an environmental perspective. Even that little bit—you pull back a layer of this legislation, you scratch the surface, and there's more surface. This legislation will have far-reaching impacts on the people of this province for many years to come and it's going to take us a long time to undo the damage that's contained within this bill.

I will note that today, the Select Committee on Financial Transparency—you'll remember this committee; it started back in November. It is now March. This committee looked at the ethics, the financial transactions that the

former government engaged in on the energy file, in particular. I will predict that come the next session following the passage of this bill—because it will pass. There were no amendments. There was no debate, really, even at the committee. The government side was essentially quiet, with the exception of one or two statements the entire day.

What I would like to say to my colleagues on the other side is that if you feel that schedule 3, in particular, on child care, schedule 5 on the full pulling out and the repeal of the Toxics Reduction Act, schedule 9, which will leave the province in court basically fighting for the basic labour rights of people in this province—if they feel that that is justifiable, then they had the opportunity in committee to speak up and defend it, but they did not. They did not speak up in committee.

There is this disturbing trend that I'm seeing whereby my colleagues—because we were all duly elected, all 124 of us. All of us have the responsibility to use our privilege and our power to represent and ensure that the voices of our constituents are heard in this place. That is a fundamental principle of our democracy. And I'm sure that it must be frustrating for some of them, but I have never, in all my years here—and who's counting, but we're going on seven—I have never seen in a committee members of a government, on their bill, not speak to it, not rationalize it, not defend it. There was absolutely no concern about ensuring that their constituents' voices were heard through that process. What I will say, as I have said before, is that the process in crafting legislation matters. It's not just for policy wonks like me. It matters to the efficacy of the laws that we are creating, and that we will be creating through Bill 66.

After we heard from the public the one day, and then the five hours of clause-by-clause, we were left with essentially the same bill—with a couple of exceptions, and I'll go through those. This is how this piece of legislation has been described. It's been described as a “patchwork of quid pro quo legislative favours to the very same insiders who have prospered under successive governments at the expense of everyday Ontarians.” That's from CUPE from the committee. “The very premise of the bill” they take issue with is that it will not, indeed, improve the competitiveness of this province. “We are told it is needed to eliminate red tape and burdensome regulations so businesses can grow, create and protect good jobs. That's a problem—that view that regulation is a burden to be eliminated.”

There is a fundamental difference between safety regulations versus bureaucratic red tape. One small example is that on schedule 9, the Canadian manufacturers came to the committee and said that an inspector—this happened last year—came into their workplace and there were two employment standards posters up. Apparently, according to the testimony, the inspector took exception that there were two posters up. Now, that's unnecessary. I would call that an abuse of power, from an inspector's perspective. But what does this legislation do? It eliminates the responsibility of an employer to even put up

the poster, to use Scotch tape. It's not red tape; it's just two pieces of Scotch tape up on the wall, so that employees understand that they have rights, that they understand that their employer understands that they have rights, just by the putting up of that employment poster.

Our view is that sacrificing the health and the safety of our children, our workplaces, our communities and the environment is a fundamental problem, Mr. Speaker. It should be a fundamental problem for all of us.

Some of the strong voices that came out here—and we heard this morning a question to the Premier that had to do with the autism fundraising email that's been going out across the province. The Premier answered that by saying, “We are here for the average person, the ordinary person, the little guy.” This is the language that we hear from the Premier. Well, I want to say that the Workers' Action Centre fully is in the corner of the workers in the province of Ontario. They are. These are people who fundamentally do not have, sometimes, union rights, who are trying to organize. These are part-time, temporary workers. A lot of racialized workers in the province of Ontario are working in that temp agency industry, which is booming in the province of Ontario. We've moved fully over to that side of the court.

1630

This is what the Workers' Action Centre said: “The tragedy is that there are employers who are setting an example, and who support decent wages and working conditions. Actually, this government has made it easier for employers to violate the law and reduced the fines for employers who violate the law. This is not a government that is standing up for working people; it's a government that's siding with corporations.”

That is the perception. When I talk to people in Waterloo region, in Cambridge, in Kitchener and in the rural areas in Waterloo, they understand that workers need to feel secure. They need to feel safe in their workplace in order to be productive. The research and the evidence supports this.

When the Workers' Action Centre came to committee, I want to tell you that I supported their concerns. “Responsible government means putting the health and the safety of citizens first across the board. That means at work, at home, on their commutes, in schools, in hospitals and shops.”

We have a bill before us—which will pass, because there's a majority government—that will reduce the environmental protections in the province of Ontario. It will give workers less protections, under schedule 9. It will give police less power to find your stolen goods because of the Pawnbrokers Act and the repeal of that act. It will make your children less safe in child care. This we know because we have a coroner's inquest report which confirms that when you reduce regulations, particularly for our most vulnerable, be they children or seniors in the province of Ontario, safety is compromised. This we know for sure.

Finally, this gives employers big breaks at the expense of the people of this province who are working, who are

building up the economy in the province of Ontario. That's something that we don't talk about: that employees are building up the province. When they have strong, progressive employers, that productivity increases. That's how you increase competitiveness in the province of Ontario. That is how you do it.

I want to quickly touch on a few things that we heard around schedule 10. We were relieved, of course, to read via Twitter that the minister was going to be repealing schedule 10 in committee. For months, many people across the province had written to my office and the offices of the member for Carleton and the member from Peterborough and the member from Oshawa. We were inundated. Any messaging that the provincial government wanted to get out on Bill 66 was being overridden by the fears around schedule 10. This was a crisis. Remember, at the time, we were already hearing fears around autism and around the education changes and the health super-agency. You've got to manage your fires. You can't have everything on fire at the same time. You've got to put out some of the fires, so schedule 10 was pulled.

I want to remind the government about this because, during the election, the Premier, who wasn't the Premier at the time, was caught on video very adamantly telling developers in a room, "We are going to open up the greenbelt." We've seen the footage. You've seen the footage. It's a matter of public record. So when schedule 10 was embedded in Bill 66, the environmental community was rightly concerned, justifiably concerned.

I think it speaks to trust, Mr. Speaker, of how the public feels about how this government is creating legislation, who they are listening to and where they are listening to these people. When the Premier said that during the election, we didn't know if it was going to be true or not, but when schedule 10 was there, we knew that this was a tangible piece of legislation which would undermine progressive planning. During the election, the Premier had said that they weren't going to touch the curriculum and that they were going to respect francophone people and that they weren't going to cut the basic income project—an unethical step—that they were going to support autism families 1,000% and that no jobs would be lost, and then revised that later to "no front-line jobs." To be clear, this government has been inconsistent.

When schedule 10 was pulled—although the public did speak to it at committee because they were rightly disconcerted, you would say, that it was there in the first place, because it was building on a pattern of behaviour of broken promises that are concerning for the public. I will say that that does not add confidence around competitiveness for the province of Ontario; it simply does not. So, thankfully, it was pulled.

I do want to get to the Ontario Federation of Agriculture, because they summed up nicely how wrong schedule 10 was. They say, "It was essentially undermining many, many years, even decades, of land use planning. Some of the core principles around planning are around compatible uses. Changes through schedule 10 were going to allow non-compatible uses in agriculture areas in particular, or

even in non-residential areas. It was allowing municipalities to supersede bylaws that were going to create those non-compatible uses. When you have an industrial site that's next to a farming operation, that's problematic"—especially now that the Toxics Reduction Act has been repealed. "What kinds of restrictions then get put on the agriculture properties? Do those uses go together? Is the infrastructure in place? We know that we're struggling now even getting infrastructure for existing development, let alone any new development." That was the OFA.

The OFA also commented—this is interesting—on the need for rural child care. We put out the call to them to weigh in on this issue, because the proposed changes in schedule 3 will not create more spaces; they just change the nature and the quality of that care. They agreed, and they're going to take it back and then they're going to come back to us.

So that actually was a pretty positive thing that came out of committee, and I want to thank the OFA for coming forward.

Moving over to schedule 5—because I do want to spend a lot of time on schedule 3 and schedule 9—schedule 5 is the Toxics Reduction Act. We heard two different perspectives on this, and I want to get them on the record.

Businesses: We heard that the existing Toxics Reduction Act was not as effective as it could be, so they wondered why they were doing it. But instead of making that piece of legislation, that schedule, stronger, the government decided to pull it altogether and cede its responsibility as provincial legislators, as lawmakers, to the federal government.

I've never heard a provincial government talk so much about a federal government in all my days. The fact that you are publicly ceding your responsibility as provincial legislators to Justin Trudeau is something that I never thought I would see in this place. There are a lot of reasons why ceding our responsibility as provincial legislators to the federal act is ineffective for the province of Ontario.

There are duplications in many of the regulations, but Bill 66 doesn't address those. It goes right to the core of just gutting toxics reduction in the province of Ontario.

Even the Canadian Manufacturers and Exporters mentioned in the committee that they support a balanced approach to toxics reduction. Many of them—and I've met with them—have created a responsible care program, and we're supportive of that. But it is not too much to ask for a company that is dealing with chemicals to have a plan. The bar is pretty low, in my thinking and as our critic on this file has also raised.

The chemical industry also said that the media is going to hold them to account. Yet we heard the Premier say that the cheese is slipping off the cracker, referring to the popular mainstream media. Just this weekend, he did that.

The other side was that the environmental groups—in fact, Environmental Defence came to committee. I think that at the end of the day, if you're still looking at this piece of legislation through a lens of, "Is it good for business? Will it improve investment? Will it strengthen our economy?", I can tell you that what is bad for business is

contaminated work sites. It's the downloading of the cleaning up of brownfield development to municipalities.

You know what else is bad for business? A sick population, Mr. Speaker. The correlation between toxics in the province of Ontario as a cancer-causing factor in our health care system is well documented.

When Environmental Defence came, they said, "Exposure to toxics, such as cancer-causing and hormone-disrupting chemicals, is increasingly linked to the rise in cancer rates, diabetes, asthma, infertility and behavioural conditions like ADHD. Up to 15,000 Canadians die prematurely every year because of air pollution, and in Ontario one in four children are affected by asthma."

1640

Evidently, we need to do more to protect Canadians and Ontarians from toxics, but the argument that the government came to the table with is that we don't need a made-in-Ontario plan, and that the federal plan is good enough.

In fact, the federal legislation has failed to adequately reduce our exposures and to tackle toxic chemicals. There are significant differences between the two systems. Unlike the federal reporting regime, the Toxics Reduction Act in Ontario requires facilities to report the use, the creation, and the addition of toxics into consumer goods. This information is critical for our understanding of exposures in Ontario, so why would the government wash their hands of this issue? This is a core problem around tracking chemicals in the province of Ontario and then dealing with them in a responsible manner.

Secondly, the Toxics Reduction Act requires facilities to consider ways to reduce toxics by developing reduction plans. In the few years since the implementation of the act, 40% of over 1,000 facilities that indicated plans to reduce toxics in their operations have actually achieved reductions. In Massachusetts, where there is a law that is similar to Ontario, reductions have reached up to 52%, and for toxic waste up to 92%. That is good for business. It actually inspires people to generate new business ideas and to be innovative around research and technology, Mr. Speaker.

If you have a progressive government that says, "You know what? We take the issues of climate change, of pollution, and of improving transit options that reduce air pollution"—this is a good thing for the province of Ontario, but that's not what Bill 66 does. It does not. The reporting in Ontario focuses on the creation, the use, and the addition of toxic substances into products.

One such example was makeup, Mr. Speaker. We need to ensure that what goes in makeup, what goes in perfume—perfume is completely unregulated—that people know what is in those products because people are applying them to their faces, to their bodies. Why would the provincial government say, "We're not so concerned about that"? There will be a health care cost, I believe, down the line on this file.

Finally, at the federal level, the Chemicals Management Plan, which is cited as a justification for why the TRA

should be repealed, has focused on assessing toxic chemicals, and has only regulated a select few of the thousands of chemicals that they have assessed. In fact, the federal government has basically given the green light to industry to continue use of a lot of toxic chemicals that we know are banned elsewhere.

The Toxics Reduction Act in Ontario is based on, or modelled after, a law that has actually proven to be effective. There is a cost to not being proactive. The smart money, actually, is on reducing the possibility of chemical spills and toxic accidents.

You know, I myself have had a relative who worked in the aluminum industry and contracted cancer. This was 25 years ago. The rubber workers in KW right now are fighting for their rights as employees who were absolutely exposed to chemicals during those years. The General Electric workers in Peterborough have had long-standing cases before the WSIB.

So you can pay for it now and you can pay less now and you can do the work now, or you can pay much later. And that includes payouts to employees who are justifiably asking for restitution for the impact on their health for the work that they did. I would say to the government that completely repealing the toxic waste act is a downright irresponsible action to take.

I note that there was an article this weekend on the quality of water in Lake Ontario and how fish stocks are drastically being cut because of pollutants, and primarily because of plastic in Lake Ontario. I note that the government has tried to give free fishing licences to veterans, which is a nice thing to do but it really is not that valuable if there are no fish to fish. Do you know what I'm saying, Mr. Speaker?

Interjection.

Ms. Catherine Fife: That's right. All right, that's as light as I get, because it's pretty, pretty heavy. I'm here all week. It's a heavy piece of legislation. I'm moving now to—

Interjection.

Ms. Catherine Fife:—thanks for the heckles; it breaks it up a little bit—schedule 3, child care. I became a child care advocate as soon as I became a parent. I think this is a very common experience for people across the province. The first time that I found out that two and a half weeks of my take-home pay was going to go for one month of infant care down here at the Orde Street daycare, I immediately joined the board and found out that this was the reality. This is 21 years ago now, Mr. Speaker, for my oldest.

We've had some very emotional, very dramatic, very powerful debates here in this House on child care, and for very, very good reasons. Many of you were not here during the report by the Ombudsman, Careless About Child Care. I have to tell you, when you have parents in this public gallery and you are talking about a child being left in a car for 10-plus hours, and that breach of trust that happened with Eva, in particular, you never forget those debates. That's what I thought. I thought: Nobody in their right mind is ever going to walk back these regulations on child care, because we witnessed a kind of pain that stays with you forever.

As a parent, I will tell you that dropping your child off at a child care centre or with a caregiver is one of the hardest things that do you as a parent. I remember being distinctly very angry with my husband that he didn't make more money so that I didn't have to do that. That said, I went on to do great things, and so I guess, in the end, it all works out, especially because, when you are in a child care situation where there is trust between you and the caregiver and you have that shared knowledge—you know, the more adults that care about a child in that child's life, the better that child will be: better health outcomes, better educational outcomes. I truly value and still have relationships with the early childhood educators who were in my life at that time.

So when we saw schedule 3 in Bill 66, I have to say that this was a huge red flag for us. The criticism came from the government side: "You didn't even try to amend this piece of legislation. You didn't try to make it better." You can't make a bill like this better, Mr. Speaker. This bill deserves to be in a trash can. It truly does, because schedule 3 is a non-negotiable item. It is a non-negotiable item to change the ratios.

I want to say, during clause-by-clause at committee, I told the government members, and I'm telling all of you as well right now, that what you're doing, the day you decided to vote for a bill to repeal legislation that saved infants, babies from dying in care—and I caution the government members in the House today to remember that as well, when they vote in favour of these changes in a few days' time. This is a turning point in the province of Ontario for child care, and it is not a turning point in a good way.

My colleague from Toronto–Danforth, during the clause-by-clause—I'll quote him:

"The Ombudsman's report *Careless About Child Care* came out after some fairly high-profile deaths of children in care. That was a real shock to all of us, not only because of the immediate report by the Ombudsman, but also because, when you look back, there were decades of coroners' inquests into deaths in child care that had been ignored by the government of Ontario, leading to further deaths.

"After all of those inquests, after the Ombudsman's report, which was scathing and which was used by the Conservatives and the NDP to beat the Liberals on the head relentlessly for weeks"—this is when we used to be on the same side on this issue. And it worked. We shamed the Liberal government of the day into doing the right thing for children in care, and schedule 3 undoes that. It walks it back. It walks the safety component back.

This is what happened after the PCs and the NDP worked together last session: The Liberals "brought forward something that moved towards a safer system. And yet today"—and this is quoting, again, the member from Toronto–Danforth—"you individuals are prepared to vote in favour of reducing protection for children in this province. It is extraordinary to me.

"I am going to be asking for a recorded vote because I think people's names need to be attached to this. When the

inquest happens further in the future—and I don't know whether it will be next year or 10 years from now—your names should be remembered, because you were complicit, will be complicit, with putting children at risk."

1650

Now, for those people who know the member from Toronto–Danforth, this is a very passionate and emotional and hard-hitting commentary from him. He is one of the more experienced members in this House, and he reaches across the aisle to work with members of all stripes, quite honestly. But he lived this in his riding. The people's names—he knows their names. He knows the parents' names. He knows the children's names. He was here even prior to the last Ombudsman's report, *Careless About Child Care*.

This isn't something that we should be proud of. A government of any stripe should be measured by the way you treat our most vulnerable people, be they our youngest children in child care or our eldest citizens in long-term care.

I'll just point out that the language that was used about this legislation was that this government is going to modernize regulations. These regulations are only from 2015. This is one of the regulations that was updated and modernized that you walked back. There will be a price. There's already a price around trust. You've destabilized an already fragmented sector, which is the child care sector.

That's why we stand up in our place every single day and we ask for that \$2 enhancement, the wage enhancement. The female-dominated field of early learning and care has been taken for granted for decades now. We were making some progress around the professionalization, and the acknowledgement of the professionalization, of those early childhood educators in our system, and they should be financially compensated because they do very important work. Those first five years: The research is very sound.

What the government said, though, about schedule 3 is that the Minister of Education basically promoted this change by letting three two-year-olds be in the care of an unlicensed or a licensed operator. As you know, you're getting really great value. It was like, "For \$9.99, you get this child care space—no questions asked, no strings attached. Call now." I've never heard language like this from a minister who was talking about early learning and care.

This is not a promotional advertisement. These are the measures and the conditions that we put in a very volatile and very informal field. Some 80% of the child care that happens in the province of Ontario is off the grid. There is essentially an underground business in Ontario where children are taken care of and negotiations happen around the cost of that care.

But the inspections that she promised will not happen, because there has been a pause on the public service hiring. You can't tell us that you're going to create greater risk in a child care situation but you're going to monitor it, when you don't have the staff to do the inspections. And already, the inspections were not working.

This is a fundamental difference between us, as New Democrats, and you, as PC members: We don't believe that child care is a business. The corporatization of early learning and care is not in our lexicon of beliefs. We believe in the service of delivering quality care, because the return on the investment for that care is one to eight. For every dollar that's invested, the return to the economy, to the well-being of our society, to the equity and the gender equity of women who are trying to enter the workforce, is profound.

If 28% of the women right now in the province of Ontario can only work part-time, it's because they can only find part-time care. If you want to talk about improving competitiveness or being open for business, then ensure that child care options are on the table that will meet the needs of working women in the province of Ontario. Schedule 3 does not do that.

In fact, I would argue that if I was a parent of an infant, and I had a good job, and the home care operator, who we also heard from, said to me, "Your infant will be the third child that I'm taking care of," I would not leave my child in that situation. Do you want to know why? Yes, you do. Do you want to know why? Because the home care providers that I spoke to in Waterloo region said, "You know what? I don't think I can take care of and ensure the safety of three infants"—a nine-month-old, a 10-month-old, a 12-month-old, whatever it is—"and then have three other children in my care and then my own children."

We had a very powerful message that came from the Ontario Coalition for Better Child Care. She's a nonpaid member of the Ontario Coalition of Better Child Care. Her name is Dr. Brooke Richardson. She came before the committee—and this is what the coalition said. I love the coalition because they used to have this T-shirt that I had a copy of and that we bought because I was part of a child care action network. It said, "The hand that rocks the cradle needs to rock the boat." This has been one of their mottos from—I'm dating myself now—back in 1990.

But they said: "We are not suggesting amendments to the schedule;"—this is schedule 3 of Bill 66—"rather, it is our position that the inclusion of these education issues in an omnibus bill on business competitiveness is inappropriate and seems hasty and haphazard. We are especially concerned that the proposed home child care changes under schedule 3 put young children's health, safety and well-being at risk."

Dr. Brooke Richardson went on to say, "To review, simply put: safety first. The changes proposed in schedule 3 put the safety, security and immediate well-being of very young children at too great a risk." This is what the government is willing to gamble on, Mr. Speaker. "The justification for these changes is simply not adequate to warrant these proposals, and we are recommending that schedule 3 be removed from Bill 66 in its entirety."

The government has claimed that the changes to child care ratios will increase the number of spaces. The Ontario Coalition for Better Child Care does not believe this to be true: "The problem is that as I talk to parents across the country, parents are not interested in—they want more

than a place where their child is hopefully going to be alive at the end of the day, right? We need to set higher goals for child care in this country, and if that's what we're going by, that's a real problem."

Having your child be alive at the end of the day is probably the lowest benchmark that you could possibly have for child care regulations.

Dr. Brooke Richardson goes on to say, "It's commodifying children, so ethically—and I am an ethics-of-care researcher. I have, certainly, major issues with it being included in Ontario's competitiveness act. Yes, child care is a key component of a competitive economy, but that's in creating high-quality, licensed child care spaces and not in downloading this work onto the backs of already marginalized, racialized women, who are very underpaid and undervalued."

Then she went on to say—because there was a comment about, "We want to give parents choice." This is the "choice" argument that we always hear. There is no choice if there are no safe options, Mr. Speaker; it's a walking contradiction. It's contradictory on every level that schedule 3 would be embedded in this piece of legislation.

I want to say that I've been here, as I said, around seven years. I've never been to a committee where AMO and the Ontario Coalition for Better Child Care were on the same side, but to their credit—and I want to thank the Association of Municipalities of Ontario for coming to the committee. They said, "We know that there is a need for more child care spots across the province; however, we are concerned that these changes will lead to health and safety concerns. We are concerned that they may reduce the quality of care."

This is the Association of Municipalities of Ontario, who sometimes become the municipal managers of child care systems. So they don't want the possible injury of a child in care on their backs. This is what they asked. They said, "Our children and working parents deserve the best quality of child care possible. We need to make sure that our children are safe. Our advice to the standing committee is to take a pause on schedule 3." We would support the pause. This is something that we would actually support, Mr. Speaker, with all the pausing that has been happening around here. "The ministry should consult with parents, child care providers and municipal service system managers. We need to focus on improving access to licensed child care without reducing service and compromising health and safety. More discussion is necessary so that Ontario can get it right."

So AMO agrees with us that the PC government of Ontario on schedule 3 on child care has got it wrong. You have got it wrong. If this is a line in the sand, Mr. Speaker, I would encourage any member on the PC government side to not support this legislation specifically because of schedule 3.

1700

I will say this to members as well: You will be in good stead. You will be well regarded in your communities for standing up for the well-being of children in Ontario.

Nobody will come crying to you and say, “Why didn’t you let an extra two-year-old be in the care of a home care provider?” No one is going to say that to you. No one is going to say, “Listen, there’s too much red tape in child care.” They won’t do that. You would have my deep respect, as a long-time child care advocate, and there would be no repercussions, I think, for members voting their conscience on Bill 66, specifically on schedule 3. That’s how strongly we feel about it.

We have made a very strong case around investment in early learning care to increase economic opportunities. The research is very sound on this front. I have a report here from Gordon Cleveland, backing to 1998, which really does focus—and this is where I would love to see government policy go, because when we do form government, that’s where we will be investing, in the not-for-profit sector, which ensures that every dollar that is invested in early learning and care actually goes towards the care of those children. The number one factor is the quality of the ECE who is in that classroom. The not-for-profit status also speaks to the affordability of that child care. It speaks to the quality of the care and, quite honestly, the sustainability of it. Right? So rural communities deserve quality child care, northern communities deserve quality child care, everyone in the province of Ontario who requires early learning and care services should have access to those services, and they should be focused on where the funding is going. If it’s going to profit, it’s not going to the kids.

The final word on this schedule 3: red tape. The government heard from people, especially on schedule 3, that this is hurting their business. We don’t see caring for children as a business. I need to emphasize that, Mr. Speaker. Changing the ratios for two-year-olds in home care fundamentally changes the safety standard for those children. There is no denying this is an indefensible course of action that the government is taking. To be clear, no government member at the committee spoke to it, because it cannot be defended. I hope that nothing happens, I truly do. I hope that we’re not doing a select committee on this particular schedule in the years to come. But I feel very strongly that those ratios are important to the safety of children in the care of licensed and unlicensed care and that this government has got it wrong on schedule 3. AMO thinks that you’ve got it wrong. The Ontario Coalition for Better Child Care thinks you’ve got it wrong. School boards think you’ve got it wrong.

I don’t want to spend too much time on this, because this is the Pawnbrokers Act—and clearly the government didn’t spend too much time on it either, because they didn’t do any consultation. But AMO does recognize that they are going to have to put mechanisms in place to deal with pawnbroker institutions and facilities in their municipalities because the government has repealed it. They’re just going out of the business. It’s going to be the Wild West out there, Mr. Speaker.

We did confirm during our briefing with ministry staff—I want to thank them for that briefing—that the government did not consult with police services, which

have previously called for a stronger Pawnbrokers Act. The chiefs of police never said to this government, “Listen, we don’t need an act. We’ll just figure this all out ourselves.” I feel strongly that this will end up as a major issue for municipalities.

AMO said, “The repeal of the Pawnbrokers Act without replacement by other legislation is concerning to municipal governments.” So AMO, also, was critical of the government on this. They did admit, and we would admit, that the Pawnbrokers Act was outdated, but it does provide “law enforcement with important tools to address criminal activity in pawnshops. It also helps police recover stolen items and return them to their owners. Without the act, municipal governments will have to fill the gap using limited tools and resources. Bylaw officers are certainly stretched as it is. They cannot take on additional functions. Instead of revoking the act, we would advise the province to consult with law enforcement and municipal governments. This can help determine how to best modernize the Pawnbrokers Act to reflect the 21st-century reality. This legislation needs to be modernized, not eliminated.”

But what did the government do? They eliminated it. This, obviously, is problematic.

Schedule 7, very quickly: changes and repeal of the Wireless Services Agreements Act. We heard through OpenMedia—they did get a time slot, which was great—thousands of people, actually. OpenMedia was speaking on behalf of thousands of people who emailed us, as their MPPs, calling on them to protect the Wireless Services Agreements Act. Who in their right mind thinks that allowing the language in cellphone contracts to be more complicated and more obtuse is good for business? Especially when a lot of businesses primarily use cellphones as their core means of communication.

OpenMedia did an excellent presentation at committee, bringing the voices of people who had written emails to their MPPs. I want to share one of those stories. I particularly chose this riding. It’s Stacey from Newmarket: “Over the past few years it has been getting easier to deal with cellphone companies [thanks] to the laws put in place to protect consumers. Do not repeal these laws”—

Interjections.

Ms. Catherine Fife: I know that there’s a lot going on here, Mr. Speaker. I’m happy to have the undivided attention of the government side but I do think that they should be concerned about repealing consumer rights legislation.

She goes on to say, “I do not want to go back to being charged unreasonable fees and having sales and marketing people being misleading, and forcing me to do hours of research to try and make sure that I am not being misled. Do not undo progress. Canada is still one of the worst places in the world for cellphone plans, and the provisions in Bill 66 will only set us backward...”

“The government spokespersons who claim that Ontario’s wireless consumer protections are redundant just because a federal code of conduct exists are ignoring the lived realities on the ground, where people are still victims of misleading sales tactics, predatory contracts and unreasonable fees. What these comments tell us, and what

the experience of thousands of people across Ontario tells us, is that, far from being redundant, this act is not only necessary but needs to be more strictly enforced.”

How do you rationalize reducing the rights of consumers to have open and transparent wireless contracts, and say that that’s a good thing for businesses? It’s a good thing for the major corporations that they don’t have to be open, be transparent, be honest, be clear with consumers. That doesn’t instill a lot of confidence from a consumer perspective, and certainly it’s not on brand with the little guy. But it speaks to the whole nature of this bill, that you have these contradictory schedules which actually undermine competitiveness in the province of Ontario.

Finally, schedule 9—

Mr. Mike Harris: The best part of the whole bill.

Ms. Catherine Fife: Oh, the best part. It’s interesting that the member from Kitchener Centre thinks that it’s the best part of the whole bill, because what it’s going to do is really employ a lot of lawyers. The lawyers are doing very well in the province of Ontario, and they will do so under schedule 9 too.

I want to make sure that all the government members understand that by passing schedule 9—they gave one opt-out clause, which I very quickly will have a chance to speak to. But not everybody would have heard this. This is a submission by the Provincial Building and Construction Trades Council of Ontario. You’ll know some of those. You definitely know the carpenters. They also came, and they concur with the potential legal action that is going to be taken as soon as Bill 66 passes.

They say, in conclusion, “In light of the above”—and they’ve tried to work with this government. They had some proposals on the table. They had some meetings, and sometimes it was the front room and sometimes it was the back room. They tried really hard to work with the government on schedule 9. But at the end of the day, they say, “We are of the view that a challenge to Bill 66, once enacted, is viable in the circumstances. We base this opinion on three potential means by which the bill may violate s. 2(d) of the charter”—so a charter challenge will come forward immediately after Bill 66 passes—“(i) it nullifies freely bargained collective agreements, without any consultation”—that’s nothing to be proud of—“(ii) it eliminates the bargaining rights of trade unions, which were acquired in accordance with the law and chosen by the employees to represent their interests; and (iii) it violates international treaties, covenants, and conventions to which Canada is a signatory....

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“Finally, though the government will likely seek to justify Bill 66 on the basis that it was an economic necessity, this may be seen as an insufficient justification for violating the freedom of association rights of Ontario workers and unions, given that less intrusive measures could have been adopted, such as the examples provided.”

Here you have the building trades of Ontario, You had the carpenters come in. They filled the second overflow committee room. They basically pleaded with the government to go back to the drawing board on this: “At least pull schedule 9 for now, and let’s try to figure this out.”

But instead, the government had one amendment, and that gave the 72 school boards and the 444 municipalities in the province of Ontario—it bumped this decision down to them. That amendment did pass in the committee, which is really interesting.

The minister was here yesterday, the Minister of Labour, and she said, “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.”

But that’s not what she did. What she did was, she bumped it down to the municipalities. She passed the buck to the municipalities and the school boards.

If this were true, you would own it. You would own the fact that the lawyers are going right down for a charter challenge in the province of Ontario. The legal brief is right here. I can send it over to the minister, if you would like it. The legal brief speaks for itself.

Schedule 9, which is very interesting, also undermines a number of the overtime averaging rules. You remember overtime—negotiating with your employer, trying to establish some rules of engagement if you are an employee and your employer wants you to work over 48 hours a week. Under the old legislation, a conversation had to happen. The terms and conditions of that overtime were discussed. They were agreed upon. With the repeal of schedule 9, those employees lose those rights.

What schedule 9 does not admit to—and context is very important when you’re creating legislation—is that there is always a power imbalance between an employer and an employee, especially in non-unionized work environments. Given the prevalence of part-time, precarious, contract work, this has never been more important.

When an employer comes to an employee and says, “I need you to do six more hours; it’s going to take you up to 54,” and then there’s an averaging out over that two-week period, and then that employee doesn’t get the overtime for that week—is it too much to ask, in the province of Ontario, that if an employee works overtime during that first week, they get paid for the overtime? It certainly is not. I think that it’s a competitiveness enhancer. Employees are going to want to work the overtime, because they know they’re going to get paid for it.

It’s not a very complicated system, but now it will be, and I think that’s actually very bad for the province of Ontario. It certainly doesn’t instill confidence.

Economic investment, as we’ve seen through the monthly job numbers every year—there is slippage when there’s volatility coming from the Premier’s office. We talk about predictability around economic policy and confidence of economic policy. When that volatility is coming directly from the top, or from the chief of staff to the Premier, and you create regulations whereby employees don’t fully understand or know their rights, because there’s no need for a publication of the Employment Standards Act, that certainly doesn’t instill, I think, confidence for the majority of people in Ontario.

Finally—those 55 minutes went really fast, I have to say—I want to focus some of my time, wrapping up, on what the government members perceive this bill to be and what we perceive this bill to be. First, I think we can all agree that we need to make sure that Ontarians keep having access to good-paying, stable jobs, and child care is a major factor in that. But the proposed changes that are in schedule 3 do not create more spaces, Mr. Speaker. In fact, they will undermine quality spaces, which will deter people, particularly women, who are 51% of the population in the province of Ontario, from engaging in the workforce. We need women to reach their potential in the province of Ontario. We need their productivity. We need their intellect. We need their innovation. And I might add that the government also needs their tax revenue, and child care is a major factor in that.

So we fundamentally disagree with the premise of this bill, right down to the very title of it. I think that, through the examples that I've given on schedule 5, schedule 3, schedule 7 and schedule 9, for many reasons, it was not supportable.

Yesterday, during debate, the member from Aurora–Oak Ridges–Richmond Hill said, “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.”

Interjections.

Ms. Catherine Fife: Yes—at the price of safety of workers in the province of Ontario.

Hon. Laurie Scott: No. That's wrong.

Ms. Catherine Fife: I just gave you examples.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Percy Hatfield): Order, please.

Ms. Catherine Fife: You didn't want to consult on it. You didn't want to have committee time for it. You didn't want to travel the bill. You don't, fundamentally, want to hear the truth and the evidence and the research which should actually guide how legislation is created.

The government members will slash any regulation they see, regardless of its merit. It could protect the environment, our health, our well-being or worker safety, but no matter; the government of the day will get rid of it, all in the name of the economy. But there is a cost to creating legislation in that manner. When you have a flawed process—as Bill 66 was created—it will create flawed legislation, and that is what we have before us. And the fallout from this piece of legislation, which will obviously result in legal action which will likely be successful in the province of Ontario, will be quite something.

So what I would like to say, Mr. Speaker, is that—

Interjections.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Percy Hatfield): The member for Carleton and the member for Kitchener–Conestoga will come to order, please.

Ms. Catherine Fife: I see that when the members are presented with evidence and research and documentation, they don't like hearing it, especially when it involves the

law. Thus far, this government has engaged in a fair number of legal battles, and thank goodness we have the courts and thank goodness we have the media to tell the real story about what's actually happening here in the province of Ontario. And you may not like what you hear, and certainly you're not going to any lengths to actually hear what the people of the—

Interjections.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Percy Hatfield): We've been doing really good up to this point; we really have.

I'm trying to listen to the member from Waterloo. I'm having difficulty because of the interjections from the government side, so please come to order. I know that the member from Carleton wants to speak for 20 minutes or something, and she may not get the chance if she keeps it up; she'll be out of here. Thank you.

I return to the member from Waterloo.

Ms. Catherine Fife: Thank you. I'd like to quote the lawyers, because they're very open about sharing their perspectives.

This one is Josh Mandryck from Goldblatt Partners LLP, and they conclude by saying, “Bill 66 now proposes to remove these safeguards” of oversight mechanisms and health and safety compliance. “An inevitable result will be the proliferation of overtime averaging agreements in workplaces where no justifying circumstances are present, and employers are simply seeking to cut costs at their employees' expense.”

It goes on to say, “Furthermore, with respect to both types of agreements, the director will also consider the employer's compliance with the act and health and safety legislation,” which will be repealed through removing schedule 9.

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I have to say, workers in the province of Ontario have fought long and hard over many years for their basic rights to have information about their rights in the workplace, which this schedule 9 removes: about their rights to organize, about their rights to gain information in the workplace. Bill 66 will set this province back in the past—way, way back, Mr. Speaker. I believe the legal opinions that have been presented to us. I believe that the minister has a responsibility to give due discourse and due diligence to these legal opinions.

As we go to court, we'll be tracking this very carefully, because when a piece of legislation intentionally and knowingly sends the province to court based on a well-documented charter challenge, that is irresponsible government. It is irresponsible legislation, and I would argue that it is not very competitive. It doesn't increase the competitiveness of the province of Ontario.

Thank you so much for your attention, Mr. Speaker, and I look forward to the comments from the government side and my side.

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

Mr. Mike Harris: I would like to commend the member for Waterloo for standing up and filling her hour's time. That's not easy to do. But honestly, I don't even

know where to start, Mr. Speaker. I think that the best place to start for someone who says that they're so in tune with what's happening in the region of Waterloo—I have here a letter from the regional chair that was sent to myself and some other members of the government back in January.

Ms. Goldie Ghamari: What does the letter say?

Mr. Mike Harris: The letter says—I'm going to paraphrase for the sake of time a little bit:

“Dear Premier,

“I'm writing to convey our council's unanimous support for the proposed Labour Relations Act amendment in Bill 66, Restoring Ontario's Competitiveness Act, 2018, specifically the removal of municipalities from the definition of construction employers.”

And, of course, we're referencing section 9 of Bill 66 here.

The letter goes on to say: “The region of Waterloo has long advocated for revisions to section 9 of the Labour Relations Act. The proposed amendments will lead to open and fair tendering in a competitive environment. The proposed legislative changes will impact job creation and potentially increase the number of local companies”—rather than having bids coming in from outside the region from the GTA, keeping dollars local—“who will be eligible to compete and work on regional projects, and it will result in savings that can be invested into municipal services and programs.”

To conclude, Mr. Speaker, “On behalf of regional council, I encourage you and your government to move forward expeditiously to approve the amendments to the Labour Relations Act that are proposed”—

Hon. Jeff Yurek: That doesn't mean “take it out,” right?

Mr. Mike Harris: No, that means “Let's move forward quickly,” Minister.

“Yours sincerely,

“Karen Redman,

“Regional chair of the region of Waterloo.”

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

Ms. Rima Berns-McGown: I sometimes think that this government is in the business of creating slogans and not policy, and that those slogans are meant to stand in for thoughtful policy-making. Because “cutting red tape” and “opening Ontario for business” do not suffice when what we're talking about is creating conditions that actually make Ontarians less safe.

I want to go back to the child care issue in schedule 3, because I think that this is absolutely serious, and I don't think that any one of my colleagues across the aisle is taking the critiques with the seriousness that they deserve. I have two daughters. They're 15 months apart. I have two step-kids who are older. When my two daughters were toddlers and infants, there is absolutely no way that I could have had a third infant in the house and felt that I was safe and that they had their needs taken care of.

I really have to ask, who were you consulting with? Who were you talking to? What are you going to do

when—God forbid—something happens and we're met with another child death and another inquest? You really need to think and take this very seriously. It is not very many years ago, as my colleague was saying, that Eva died.

Process matters, and when you have a very complex bill that deals with matters of health and safety with regard to child care, with regard to water safety, and you don't have sufficient time to examine it in detail and you don't speak to it in committee, that speaks volumes about where you are.

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

Ms. Donna Skelly: It's my pleasure to rise today to speak in favour of Bill 66, Restoring Ontario's Competitiveness Act.

Two weeks ago, members of the Standing Committee on General Government heard from stakeholders from across Ontario. Some raised concerns with some elements of the bill. Most, however, spoke to the need for the changes included in Bill 66 to ensure that Ontario can reclaim its status as the economic engine of this fine country.

Mr. Speaker, Bill 66 was introduced before Christmas. Members of the opposition had months, including the entire Christmas break, to come forward with amendments. But when it was time to actually vote on this bill, not one member of the opposition who sat on the committee—

Mr. Will Bouma: Not one?

Ms. Donna Skelly: —not one—including the member from Waterloo, brought forward an amendment.

I have listened intently to the arguments that the member from Waterloo has raised this afternoon, but I'm puzzled as to why the member did not provide any alternatives at committee when she had a chance.

Further, when the government side introduced our own amendments, again, members of the opposition appeared completely surprised.

Mr. Will Bouma: No.

Ms. Donna Skelly: Yes.

They had the amendments for a week yet did not seem to know the content of those amendments.

Mr. Speaker, the member from Waterloo has stated repeatedly that she is dissatisfied with the changes this government is introducing in Bill 66, yet the member did not find it worth the effort to raise those concerns when she had the chance to actually make a difference. I find that shameful.

Bill 66 is a bill that I am proud to support. It's a bill that will make Ontario competitive on the global stage—

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

Mr. Tom Rakocevic: I'm proud to rise in opposition to Bill 66, put forth by this perpetual cronyism party on the other side; it's the government now.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Percy Hatfield): The member will withdraw.

Mr. Tom Rakocevic: I withdraw.

I also want to thank the member from Waterloo for her tireless advocacy. Seven years is a lucky number, and the people of Ontario are lucky to have her tireless advocacy.

It's very ironic, because this government, I hear, was really, really against omnibus legislation that put together disparate pieces and tried to tape them together with red tape, and we see that here today—lots of things.

When you look at the common thread, I think it is about a lack of oversight—that is what, ultimately, this does in all of its sections. What is with this government's obsession to build on protected land, to build on the places we draw our water, the farmland? We saw it in the campaign. I remember partisan, Conservative voters coming to me and telling me, "We are not voting for this party anymore because of this."

Interjections.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Percy Hatfield): Order, please.

Mr. Tom Rakocevic: Speaker, I think the water cooler on the government side is certainly spiked today.

It comes up again here, once more. You will see them serving these developers, because they're not interested—

Interjection.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Percy Hatfield): Member for Kitchener–Conestoga, come to order, please.

Mr. Tom Rakocevic: This government is not interested in the \$25-spaghetti purchasers. They are interested in the big-ticket purchasers. That is who they're serving. That's why they're taking oversight when it comes to protecting stuffed animals, why they're lining up to help the cellphone industry—and taking away provincial oversight and leaving it to the federal Liberals to look after, whom they're always standing against. Go figure. They're always ironic, aren't they?

Interjections.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Percy Hatfield): I would caution the government side to come to order, please. The next time that I have to speak to a few certain members that I've spoken to already, you will be warned once, and then you'll be gone. Thank you.

I'll return to the member from Waterloo for her summation.

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Ms. Catherine Fife: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

I will say to the member from Kitchener–Conestoga, you know that the agreement around the construction employer status is now before the courts in the region of Waterloo, so I don't think that's a really good example to be using in this context, especially given the fact that Bill 66 is going to end up in the—

Mr. Mike Harris: It was filed by a union—

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Percy Hatfield): Okay. The member for Kitchener–Conestoga is warned.

Ms. Catherine Fife: Great. That's good.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Percy Hatfield): Once more and you're out of here.

Ms. Catherine Fife: And then also, the conversation around expeditiously moving this legislation forward is

not going to happen, because it's going to be stuck in the courts for three or four years. But if the government was willing to work with the construction council and the construction trades and the carpenters of Ontario, there were proposals that were on the table that actually would work. And then, in fact, they doubled down on it and they left all the responsibility for that decision-making at the school board and municipal levels—444 municipalities are now going to have to make that decision.

What does this legislation do? And also, to the member from Flamborough–Glanbrook—this is my opportunity to rebut what they've said—you cannot amend a piece of legislation that is this flawed. We made that very clear in the committee. Also, the government members did not speak in defence of this legislation at committee. If you thought it was defensible, that was your opportunity to do so and you failed to do so.

Bill 66 takes away bargaining rights, it repeals the Pawnbrokers Act, it undermines child safety and child care, it opens the door to sub-metering companies, it repeals the Toxics Reduction Act, it changes pension plan rules, it takes away valuable consumer protections and it changes the rules around inspections for long-term care. I think schedule 9, which is one of the most contentious pieces, really will undermine the labour force in the province of Ontario, because they've navigated it in a very irresponsible way.

Bill 66 has no place in this Legislature. We will be proud to vote against it, Mr. Speaker.

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

Ms. Goldie Ghamari: I would like to start off—

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Percy Hatfield): Sorry to interrupt. Stop the clock for her, if it's possible; if you can't, okay.

I have to read that I beg to inform the House that the following document was tabled: the 2018 annual report from the Office of the Provincial Advocate for Children and Youth.

Sorry for the interruption. I return to the member from Carleton.

Ms. Goldie Ghamari: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I would like to start off by taking this opportunity to thank the Minister of Economic Development, Job Creation and Trade for introducing this incredibly important piece of legislation. And just like every other bill that our government for the people has introduced, Bill 66, also known as the Restoring Ontario's Competitiveness Act, 2018, was introduced to better serve the people of Ontario.

Nine months ago, Ontarians made a definitive statement with their vote. Ontarians voted to bring hope back to the province of Ontario. They voted to bring jobs back to the province of Ontario. They voted to bring a brighter future for themselves, their families and future generations back to Ontario. They voted to bring back a government that is open, transparent and accountable. In sum, they voted to bring back a government that is here for the people.

What the people of Ontario expect and deserve from their government is reasonable. They expect and deserve a government that will help bring the kind of common-sense changes that will help—no matter how big or small that help is—make life more affordable on a day-to-day basis.

As the member of provincial Parliament for the riding of Carleton, I'm incredibly proud to be part of a government that is here for the people. I'm incredibly proud that the Premier of Ontario and all of our hard-working cabinet ministers, including the Minister of Economic Development, Job Creation and Trade, have taken the time to listen to the needs of the people of Ontario.

It is so great to stand here in the House and talk about Bill 66, Restoring Ontario's Competitiveness Act, a bill that will restore Ontario's competitiveness. After 15 years of waste, scandal and mismanagement that resulted in nothing but bungled and hastily drafted policies that decimated Ontario's economy, it is truly refreshing to finally see a bill that, if passed, will protect and grow jobs rather than forcing them out of our great province.

I don't want to say that we were perfect in crafting this bill; as we all know, there is always room for improvement. And as we have demonstrated time and time again, our government has been and always will be committed to the people. That means actually listening with both ears. It means always making ourselves available to receive feedback and, most importantly, Mr. Speaker, acting on that feedback. That is what it means to be a government for the people.

There were legitimate concerns raised by people regarding this bill, and I'm happy to say that we heard them loud and clear. We listened to Ontarians, including many from my riding of Carleton, to ensure that this piece of legislation truly serves the people by making sure Ontario's competitiveness is restored.

There are so many job-killing regulations that were introduced by the former Liberal government, and I genuinely do believe that members of the former government brought in these changes to make life better for everyday Ontarians; I truly do. That being said, however, the previous government lost its way. The actions of the previous government resulted in Ontario being the most overregulated province in Canada. We had over 380,000 regulations. How did this happen? How did the previous government lose its way? Well, Mr. Speaker, it happened because they forgot the reason they were here. They forgot that their sole purpose is to serve the people of Ontario. They forgot to listen, they forgot to consult and they forgot to serve.

The unintended consequences of the former Liberal government's policies, in fact, did the exact opposite of what they were supposed to do. The overall sum, taking into account all of the policies, regulations and legislation introduced by the previous Liberal government, discouraged job creators from hiring more workers. It discouraged entrepreneurs from starting businesses. And it stunted the growth of small businesses, killed jobs, and stunted Ontario's economic growth and development across all sectors.

It is so refreshing to finally see a government and to be a part of a government that takes into consideration job creators—job creators like Earl Stanley from Stanley's Olde Maple Lane Farm in Metcalfe; Adam McCosham of Manotick Home Hardware; Marcel Moncion of Moncion's Independent Grocer in Riverside South; Catherine Wood of Mahogany Salon and Spa in Stittsville; Gino Milito of Orchard View Wedding and Event Centre in Greely; and Dwight Foster of North Gower Grains. I could go on and on, listing the hundreds of small businesses and job creators in my riding of Carleton alone, but I think I've proven my point.

Our government is taking into consideration and listening to job creators like those I've listed in Carleton and across the province, because we realize that it's these job creators who will create and increase the number of jobs within our province, that it's these job creators who, through the creation of jobs, will also help and support those very same workers the previous government purported to be working for.

I'm proud to say that we have health consultations from Kenora to Ottawa, from Sarnia to Niagara Falls. In my riding of Carleton alone, I am proud to say that since being elected in June, in just nine months, I've hosted not one, not two, not three, not four, not five but six round tables in Carleton. My apologies for losing my voice. Since being elected in June, I've had the opportunity to host round tables for the Minister of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs, the Attorney General, the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing, the Minister of Economic Development, Job Creation and Trade, the Minister of the Environment, Conservation and Parks, and the President of the Treasury Board Secretariat. I've also attended round tables in Ottawa with the Minister of Health and Long-Term Care, the Minister of Children, Community and Social Services, and the Minister of Tourism, Culture and Sport.

Each of these round tables has been a huge success. And how do I measure success, Mr. Speaker? I measure success by the number of opportunities I have given the people of Carleton, the people I'm here to represent, the people who put their faith and trust in me to be their voice at Queen's Park. I measure success by seeing how many times I have been able to give the people of Carleton an opportunity to speak directly with our government for the people, while giving our government and our fantastic cabinet ministers an opportunity to take that feedback and to use it to better serve the people of Carleton and, in fact, better serve people all across Ontario.

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Let's use my round table with the Minister of Economic Development, Job Creation and Trade as an example of how I measure success.

Despite the fact that this round table was very hastily arranged—because I did not know that the minister was going to be in town until the last minute—on Friday evening, my office and I sent out invitations to business owners from across the riding of Carleton, inviting them to a breakfast round table with the minister on Monday

morning at 7 a.m. On the minister's end, he was gracious enough to agree to come to Carleton for this last-minute round table if he got a ride. So, I told the minister that if he was kind enough to agree to come to Carleton for a round table, I would drive to his hotel and pick him up myself and drop him off afterwards.

Needless to say, it was a very early day for me, Mr. Speaker. I woke up at 5 a.m. just so I could get ready and leave my house on time to make the 40-minute drive to the minister's hotel and then make a 25-minute drive back to the Rideau Carleton Raceway for a 7 a.m. arrival time.

Do you know what, Mr. Speaker? It was completely worth it. Even though I had planned this round table last minute, and I had sent out invitations Friday evening for a Monday morning event, I had over 40 business owners from across Carleton waiting for the minister. Imagine that, Mr. Speaker: Over 40 business owners made the trek to the Rideau Carleton Raceway, where I had booked a room, and were there at 6:45 a.m. waiting for the Minister of Economic Development, Job Creation and Trade to arrive so that they could speak with him.

This wasn't a fancy round table, Mr. Speaker. There was no fanfare, no decorations, no prepared speeches. What it was, though, was an opportunity to give 40 business owners from different sectors and industries all across Carleton an opportunity to speak directly to the minister, and an opportunity to be heard.

I know for a fact that the Minister of Economic Development, Job Creation and Trade heard the people of Carleton at that round table. I know that, because this legislation and the changes made in this legislation reflect what was said at that round table.

The issues and concerns faced by people and business owners of Carleton are not unique. They are shared far and wide across Ontario.

I am so proud to ensure that we can create the conditions to bring back good, high-paying, quality jobs to Ontario by supporting the Restoring Ontario's Competitiveness Act, a piece of legislation that was written for the people.

Mr. Speaker, we live in a world driven by globalization. Companies have the capacity to pick and choose where to settle, where to create jobs and where to invest in people and in capital. As legislators and as Progressive Conservatives, it is our duty not to create jobs; instead, it is our duty to ensure that we create the appropriate economic conditions that will attract not just any kind of job, but good-quality, long-lasting jobs that will turn into lifelong careers for Ontarians.

It is also our duty to ensure that these jobs stay in Ontario, so that the money they bring to our province goes to our schools, hospitals, education system, families and more.

I want to take this opportunity to emphasize why reducing red tape is so important.

Under the previous Liberal government, the number of regulations in Ontario grew to over 380,000. That's 380,000 pieces of regulation, and that is an incredibly difficult number to understand—more than any sub-national jurisdiction.

While the number of regulations may be a little-known fact, the effects of this overregulation are much easier to spot. After 15 years of overregulation and excessive red tape, companies have said that they have had enough of the high cost of doing business in Ontario. Many of them simply stopped investing in modernization and expansion of their Ontario operations, putting them at risk of falling behind their other provincial, United States and international competitors.

At the same time, under the previous government, other businesses in Ontario decided to take their capital, their investments and their jobs to more welcoming jurisdictions. Some are even actively exploring their options to relocate their entire base to other provinces or the United States. Under the previous government, at least five businesses in my riding of Carleton alone permanently closed their doors in just the one year leading up to the election.

What is truly concerning is that this is not limited to one sector of our economy, because the amount of red tape in our province covers every industry in Ontario. This is exactly the message that I have heard time and time again at round tables in Carleton. From farmers to construction workers, from local small business owners to construction companies, they all share the same view when it comes to red tape in Ontario: It needs to be reduced.

Rather than empty promises and vague guidelines, our government has committed to reducing red tape by 25% in the next few years. Quite simply, the kind of situation affecting companies in Carleton and around Ontario is completely unacceptable. The residents of Ontario depend on a strong economy to find jobs and to access the products and services that we have all come to rely on. It would be irresponsible for the government to let the situation continue, and that is why we are taking swift action to fix it.

Fortunately for the residents of Ontario, we now have a strong PC government here at Queen's Park, led by a Premier and a Minister of Economic Development, Job Creation and Trade who understand just how important it is to address the regulatory burden faced by Ontario businesses. Since forming government such a short time ago, there has been significant progress on this front, and we are just getting started.

This Legislature passed into law Bill 47, which was an ambitious first step to making Ontario open for business and open for jobs. Bill 47 made it easier for Ontario's businesses to thrive while maintaining strong protections for workers and changed regulations to allow businesses to hire more skilled workers. Bill 66, the Restoring Ontario's Competitiveness Act, if passed, will continue to support Ontario's businesses and foster a strong economy that will contribute to the creation, expansion and retention of good-quality jobs and careers—the kind that the people of Ontario deserve.

A short time ago, the Premier, alongside the Minister of Economic Development, Job Creation and Trade, announced the province's Driving Prosperity plan, a necessary and ambitious plan that will support Ontario's automotive sector. This plan helps to protect the industry

while ensuring that it can continue to meet the new demands of the 21st century. This commitment to reducing red tape is a fundamental pillar of our work and the kind of work that our government is doing.

Our commitment to reducing red tape is reflected in many of our other announcements as well. Whether we are eliminating the job-killing carbon tax or simplifying the process for commercial carriers, our government is on a mission to improve Ontario's prosperity, and we will not stop until the job is done.

The Restoring Ontario's Competitiveness Act covers a wide range of areas, from pawnbrokers to upholstery to telecommunications. In fact, Bill 66 increases competitiveness in a vast number of sectors. Most notably for the residents of Carleton, this includes agriculture and farming.

I'm sure that to many of the people watching here in the Legislature today or to those watching at home on TV, some of these things might seem boring. Honestly, this bill may not be the most entertaining or exciting piece of legislation, but it doesn't have to be. Fixing 15 years of mess left by the previous government is not exciting; it's hard work. But it needs to be done because this bill is going to help the people of Ontario.

I may not be a pawnbroker or a farmer or a telecommunications professional, but many people in my riding of Carleton are. However, as the member of provincial Parliament for Carleton, as a legislator and as Carleton's voice here at Queen's Park, it is my job and my responsibility, first and foremost, to look after the interests of the hard-working people of Carleton. That is the responsibility of every single member of this House. It's all of our responsibility to look out for all Ontarians, and that is exactly what our government is doing with this bill.

Over the course of the last nine months, it has been interesting listening to the comments of my colleagues from across the aisle. I would, however, suggest that they leave partisanship aside and actually take a look at the news and take some time to listen to the feedback we have received on Bill 66.

I can tell you, Mr. Speaker, we have heard far and wide from the people of Ontario on Bill 66, and we have acted on the feedback we have received.

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A clear example of this is our government's decision to repeal schedule 10. In my constituency office alone, I met with several local constituents and members of the Carleton Landowners Association, including Tom and Marlene Black and Shirley Dolan. We sat in my constituency office boardroom on Perth Street in Richmond and we spoke about Bill 66 for over an hour. What I'd like to say to Tom Black, Marlene Black, Shirley Dolan and to landowners all across the province is that we heard your concerns. We listened with both ears, we took your feedback and we decided to repeal schedule 10 of Bill 66.

I view this repeal as a victory, Mr. Speaker. Do you know why? This is a victory for our government because it is proof, it is irrefutable proof, that our government is for the people, that our government is here to listen, that our

government takes feedback and consultation seriously and that our government is here to serve. That is why I am incredibly proud to stand today in this Legislature and speak in support of Bill 66, the Restoring Ontario's Competitiveness Act.

Mr. Speaker, Carleton is home to a variety of businesses, small, medium and large. Under the previous Liberal government, the cost of doing business was oppressive. Businesses of all sizes were facing unprecedented regulatory burdens and red tape. It is clear that we needed to make changes to regain our competitive advantage, and it is clear that we needed to make changes to foster a strong economy that would promote job creation. That is why I am proud to support Bill 66. Bill 66, the Restoring Ontario's Competitiveness Act, simplifies the regulatory environment and makes Ontario open for business and therefore open for jobs.

I look forward to hearing the comments and discussions from members on all sides of the House, and I hope that all members of this Legislature will join me in supporting this important bill as an important first step to making it a reality for the people of Ontario.

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

Mr. Paul Miller: I have to say that we are all for eliminating red tape as well. However, while you're eliminating red tape, you don't want to eliminate safety and health. And I'm very concerned with schedule 9.

I spent 35 years in heavy industry. I have three trades. One of the things in their suggestions is to expand overtime. Well, I know from my history in these heavy plants that the bottom line is, if you work more than 60 hours in a week, you're more susceptible by 50% to injury. We fought for years to eliminate that, and they are setting us back.

Secondly, they're having non-union workers do traditional skilled labour work. That's a hazard waiting to happen. You have to be trained and have the ability to do certain specific work on all job sites, whether it's construction or heavy industries or plants. That's another thing that's bad.

This one really blows me away, Speaker: They want to eliminate employees' rights to have access to the Employment Standards Act on the job through posters or access to maybe even WHMIS—which is really scary, because for 40 years we fought for safety in heavy industry and now they're not allowing the employees to have access to this on the work site? How does an employee know what dangers to look for or what chemicals he's dealing with if he's in that situation?

This schedule 9 is a disaster for trades, for people working in heavy industry and manufacturing. If they go ahead with this, I guarantee you, Speaker, there's going to be a lot more injuries and there's going to be a lot of deaths in the workplace. This is a disgrace, schedule 9.

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

Mr. Sam Oosterhoff: As always, it's a pleasure to be able to stand and speak to debate that is brought forward

in this Legislature. Today I have the great, distinct privilege of commenting on the excellent debate that was contributed by the member for Carleton, a member who is an exemplary representative for her constituents, someone who fights for the best interests and priorities of not only her constituents but all Ontarians each and every day in this House. I have to say that it's a real privilege to be a colleague of hers. So thank you very much for your speech on what is truly a legislative step in the right direction when it comes to what our government has not only campaigned on but is committed to implementing, since being sworn in as a government.

Since we all took our seats and our oaths of office here in this Legislature, one of the things we talked about so often was being open for business and open for jobs.

What we've seen today in Bill 66, and the discussions that we've heard around it, is that although the NDP might claim that they support businesses, they ultimately don't support workers. Frankly, we need to ensure that we have good jobs for those workers to fill. I think they're speaking out of both sides when they say that they want to support workers but they don't want to support jobs. You can't have it both ways. You need jobs in order to support workers.

I want to say that we have taken sincere and much-needed steps toward reducing the red tape that has choked the province of Ontario for some years now. It has become an escalating crisis.

In fact, I was reading a report fairly recently about what Dalton McGuinty's and Kathleen Wynne's legacy is. One of those is just the sheer amount of burdensome red tape. In fact, I would rather characterize it as an increasing soft despotism. Alexis de Tocqueville wrote about soft despotism, this growth of small regulations and minute changes that break down democracy. I don't want to see that, and Bill 66 is a step in the right direction towards promoting freedom and jobs in this province.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Percy Hatfield): Questions and comments? I recognize the member from London North Centre.

Mr. Terence Kernaghan: Thank you, Speaker. I don't think it escaped anyone's notice that during the member from Carleton's speech, you never had to stop the opposition side and ask us to come to order. I just wanted to point that out.

I'd like to thank the member from Carleton for her story about driving. It made me think about all the parents who have to drive their children to child care spaces every single morning. We know that Bill 66 will not create any new child care spaces.

But further, when we take a look at schedule 9 of Bill 66 and how it overrides collective bargaining rights for workers in this province—we are proud to stand on the side of workers, over here on the official opposition side. Nullifying freely bargained collective bargaining rights is something that really strikes a chord with me, because I remember, under the previous Liberal government, Bill 115 and how that government, in their own arrogance,

tried to disregard collective bargaining rights and ended up eventually losing a charter challenge.

Interjections.

Mr. Terence Kernaghan: It's pretty sad when the government really can't behave themselves. It's almost like they're a little bit soft.

It would be kind of interesting to see what will happen. Eventually, one day, over here on this side, we'll be able to say "I told you so" to the government, when, eventually, workers are able to take the government to court and win. But unfortunately, it's something worse than that, because they're destroying jobs. They're going to be taking away workers' rights, and that's something that we cannot build back in this province. It is shameful, it is backwards and, quite frankly, it is something that we should not be allowing to happen in this province.

This hodgepodge of different legislation, whether it's stuffing in pawnbrokers and overriding collective bargaining rights—it makes absolutely no sense. I don't think this bill has any place in this House. It is not well considered, it is not well crafted nor is it well consulted. It is something that is going to end up coming back to bite this government.

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

Mr. Paul Calandra: Speaker, it's actually a pleasure to have some comments on the member for Carleton's discourse. She really talked about the things that are important to all Ontarians. She talked about the many small businesses in her riding that are relying on the government to start removing the red tape. She talked about some of the small, medium and large job creators.

But what we're hearing from the NDP—I think this debate really encapsulates everything that we're going to be hearing over the next three years.

The member for Carleton was right when she said that this is a start. We have thousands of regulations that need to be taken out—useless and duplicative regulations. This is a start.

But we've heard the NDP opposition say that this is an omnibus bill. Mr. Speaker, this bill is 28 pages long. If the opposition are having trouble with a 28-page bill, then how the heck are they going to get through anything else that happens in this place?

One of my favourite British Prime Ministers once said that her socialist opposition was okay with the poor being poor, so long as the rich were less rich. That's what we're going to hear constantly from the NDP. They're not about building a nation. Canada is stronger when Ontario is strong. Ontario always takes that leadership role in helping build national standards. So when we withdraw from areas where the federal government already has legislation, that builds a bigger, better, stronger Canada, as well as a bigger, better, stronger Ontario, Mr. Speaker.

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But what we heard earlier is that the NDP are taking a stand, colleagues. They're taking a stand. They will not sit down and take it lying down that stuffed bears will no longer have a tag. Of all the things they're worried about, it's about the tag on the stuffed bears. Well, Mr. Speaker,

we will look after small businesses. We will look after small, medium and large job creators. We actually trust them, and we trust the employers to do the right thing and help us build a better Ontario.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Percy Hatfield): The member for Carleton now has two minutes to give a summary of what she has just heard.

Ms. Goldie Ghamari: Mr. Speaker, the reality is we live in a global economy, and this includes being able to track new economic investments in places like Carleton and all across Ontario. I'd like to thank the members from Hamilton East–Stoney Creek, Niagara West, London North Centre and Markham–Stouffville for some insightful comments, and some not so insightful.

But the reality is we are working to cut red tape and duplication of federal and municipal requirements so that things can be done faster but without compromising the integrity of the system. That's one of the things we've noticed. As the member from Markham–Stouffville was saying, there is so much duplication between different levels of government, and that's part of the reason why we're cutting red tape. It just doesn't make sense.

We're going to make Ontario the economic engine it once used to be so that it can thrive, and communities like Carleton can thrive, and communities all across Ontario can thrive, and we can grow and expand as a province, and we can prosper and strive for a better quality of life, because that is what Ontarians expect and what they deserve.

Let me be clear, Mr. Speaker. Our government would never sacrifice the integrity of our environment for economic prosperity and our commitment in ensuring Ontario has the highest health and safety environmental protection standards. I believe that we can find the right balance between a healthy economy and a healthy government. Our government will do it well.

In fact, Mr. Speaker, I was proud to host the Minister of the Environment, Conservation and Parks in Carleton a few weeks ago. He spoke about how Ontario is going to be meeting the requirements set forth in the Paris agreement, and that we are doing so without a job-killing carbon tax. Our government remains committed to reducing red tape in ways that will protect workers and protect the environment, and we will make sure that the legislation does exactly that.

Third reading debate deemed adjourned.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Percy Hatfield): Pursuant to standing order 38, the question that this House do now adjourn is deemed to have been made. However, we do have two late shows this evening.

ADJOURNMENT DEBATE

WOMEN'S SERVICES

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Percy Hatfield): The member for Toronto Centre has given notice of dissatisfaction with the answer to her question given by the

Minister of Children, Community and Social Services. The member from Toronto Centre will have five minutes to debate the issue and the minister's parliamentary assistant, from Cambridge, will have five minutes to respond.

I turn now to the member for Toronto Centre.

Ms. Suze Morrison: Thank you, Speaker. More than 20 women's organizations are still waiting to hear from the minister about the status of their funding for the next fiscal year. Their funding is set to run out in only six days. These organizations are being forced to cut services, staff, staff hours, and in some cases will be forced to shut their doors completely.

The Times Change Women's Employment Service, in my own riding of Toronto Centre, provides career and educational counselling to unemployed and under-employed women. They will be forced to lay off a staff member. This will severely limit the quality and quantity of services that they are able to provide to help women in my riding gain financial independence.

The Rexdale Women's Centre will be forced to reduce service hours and will have to lay off up to three staff. This will directly impact the immigrant and refugee communities who access those services.

The Working Women Community Centre, also in Toronto, will have to cut each one of their eight staff members' hours by five hours. That's a total of 40 hours per week, the equivalent of a full-time staff person for immigrant women and their families to seek help and access support.

Northwestern Ontario Women's Centre, which services the Thunder Bay area, will have no dedicated funding to cover their core salaries or operational costs, including rent. They will lose their executive director, their managers and their legal education coordinator. Losing this funding will mean that they lose all of their administrative capacity.

Oasis Centre des Femmes serves francophone women. They only have one worker in their program. Not only will they lose that employee position; they will also lose the administrative funding they receive to pay their rent and will also likely have to close their doors.

The Sudbury Women's Centre will have to reduce their hours and, after that, will have to let go one full-time staff person, leaving the remaining staff at only part-time hours. The 2,000 women they serve will be affected by the reduction and elimination of programs.

The Scarborough Women's Centre will have to let one counsellor go. Without that funding, 300 women dealing with abuse, poverty, living in isolation, and suffering from workplace harassment and emotional health challenges won't be able to receive the help they desperately need.

The YWCA Muskoka will have to cut programs, coordinators and facilitators, and 108 women will no longer have access to the programs that they relied on in their recovery from gender-based violence.

The Women's Own Resource Centre will be forced to close their doors and leave their clients in limbo. They serve 150 women directly through their programs, and

nearly 4,000 community members access the centre for information, support and referrals. The services and programs are not offered anywhere else in that region, Speaker.

Niagara Women's Enterprise Centre only has one staff member and two contractors to deliver their programs. Without this funding, they will lose their positions and no longer be able to serve the 100-plus women in that area who rely on programs for women-centred employment support.

Thousands of women across this province rely on these organizations for support and services—thousands. These organizations change lives. These organizations help rebuild lives. They aid women in recovery from sexual violence, in breaking out of cycles of abuse and becoming financially and socially independent enough to leave abusive homes, in securing employment, in responding to workplace harassment and so much more. These women's organizations and the women they serve deserve so much better. In their most vulnerable moments, they deserve access to supports in their own communities that they can turn to. The front-line workers are there in those communities, qualified and ready to do the work, but they need funding to do it.

I again call on the minister to commit to the Investing in Women's Futures Program funding for women's organizations for the next fiscal year and the three years after that.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Percy Hatfield): I turn now to the member from Cambridge. She has up to five minutes to respond.

Mrs. Belinda Karahalios: Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and thank you to the member opposite for raising her concern with the ministry.

I'm proud to rise in the House today on behalf of the minister to talk about how our government is taking action to prevent violence against women. This issue is near and dear to my heart as the parliamentary assistant to the Minister of Children, Community and Social Services with responsibility for this file.

As the members of the House know, earlier this year we made it clear that women's centres from across the province were invited to submit applications for the Investing in Women's Futures—or IWF—Program. Through investments in the IWF Program, our government supports initiatives in women's centres across Ontario.

Members are aware that the Minister of Finance will be delivering his budget on this upcoming April 11, which is the official budget day. Following the confirmation of this year's budget, allocation of this funding will be determined based on a review and approval process of all individual applications which is fair and transparent. We have encouraged those who want funding from the Ministry of Children, Community and Social Services to submit their applications.

We know that our women's centres across Ontario provide local communities with a range of services. These supports include employment and entrepreneurial training and support, safety planning for women experiencing

abuse, and public education to prevent violence against women. Tackling an issue as large as violence against women requires consideration of how it impacts the various parts in a woman's life: her work life, her home environment and her broader community. But regardless of the specific focus of each women's centre, we know that these initiatives are preventing violence against women and promoting women's economic independence. This is what our government is doing with innovative programs like the IWF.

1810

Mr. Speaker, this is only the beginning of our commitment towards ending violence against women. Our government is already investing \$1.5 million in funding for rural supports, which builds on the government's historic investment of \$174.5 million—

Applause.

Mrs. Belinda Karahalios:—thank you—\$174.5 million, which is a historic investment in funding for violence-against-women services across our province.

We know that communities outside of urban centres also need our help to build their capacity, and we have proven that we're committed to this work by providing a significant contribution towards rural supports.

I'm proud to be part of a ministry that is committed to this work. Not only are we interested in learning from experts and community groups in our backyard, but we're connecting with leaders globally. Our minister had the exciting opportunity to speak at the United Nations recently, not only about the issue of violence against women but also about the vital issues of women's economic empowerment and sex trafficking.

I'm proud to be part of a government that is committed to the safety of abused women and their children. All members of our government condemn violence against women in all forms and in all places. We are so fortunate to live in a great province like Ontario and a country like Canada, where we believe that it is unacceptable that any woman or child in our province face any situation of violence.

Mr. Speaker, I want to close by stating that we're working to increase women's economic security and to end violence against women. We are collaborating with women's organizations and across government to advance women's equality by improving their economic security and personal safety net.

Changes in violence-against-women outcomes requires an ongoing conversation between our front-line organizations and the community. Each of our women's centres is encouraged to connect with their established contact at the Office of Women's Issues, and we look forward to continuing to work with our incredible women's centres in Ontario.

CURRICULUM

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Percy Hatfield): The member from Davenport has given notice of dissatisfaction with an answer to the question given by the Minister

of Education. The member from Davenport will have up to five minutes to debate this matter and the minister's parliamentary assistant, the member for Niagara West, will have five minutes to respond.

I turn now to the member from Davenport.

Ms. Marit Stiles: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I appreciate this opportunity to raise these questions again here in the House. Yesterday, I asked the Minister of Education a pretty straightforward question. I asked her whether she will listen to students and stop her cuts to education.

Mr. Speaker, students are going to be the ones who bear the brunt of this government's cuts to education, make no mistake. It is simple: 10,000 teachers cut from our classrooms? That is massive. It's about a 20% reduction. That's a billion dollars cut right out of classrooms.

I actually raised with the Minister of Education yesterday a statement that I received from the Ontario Student Trustees' Association that they put out publicly. I referred to it because I really think it was important that the government, which purports to represent everyone, should be listening to the people who are going to be the most affected by these cuts. In this statement from the Ontario Student Trustees' Association, they had actually consulted with their membership, with students, through the student survey. One of the things they concluded: They urged the government to reverse the rule mandating that all secondary students take four e-learning courses prior to graduation. The reason they give is that "different learning styles can't be accommodated by an all-encompassing change in graduation requirements."

I want to thank the Ontario Student Trustees' Association again for this. I'd point out that the role of student trustees is really quite important in our school system. It's really important that they're at the table and on our school boards, that they have a say. They maybe should have a vote, too, but they definitely have a say.

This is not a statement that's partisan in any way. These student trustees—I know the members opposite will know this—come from all kinds of different backgrounds and political beliefs. They are there to represent the students in their classrooms. What they are saying to the government is very clear: Hit the brakes. It is not too late. Listen to the students.

The minister didn't answer the question. Instead, she went on to talk about online "opportunities" and the "embracing of technology." Mr. Speaker, you have to ask: What technology is she talking about? I urge anyone at home watching to check out on Twitter #ClosetFullofTech to find out what masses of technology our secondary schools are amassing in their closets—it's pretty much floppy disks. Anyway, she talked a lot about making sure that students have every opportunity to put their best foot forward, which I think we can all agree on, Mr. Speaker.

But I want to speak about that point for a moment, because it's a very odd thing to say when you consider the nature of the cuts that the minister is making. Also, this move to online learning, which ultimately is, let's be clear, about cutting educators from our classrooms because the minister is proposing that students take four mandatory

courses—about 440 hours of courses. The minister said, "You don't obviously realize that e-learning courses are already available in schools." Actually, yes, in fact, I do. Any parent who has children in the high school system would be aware of this. The thing is, they're not mandatory. They don't have to take them; they can choose to take them. For some northern and rural schools where you may not have enough teachers and enough options in your classrooms and you want to do something different, this can be an important route for them.

The point is, once again, there is nothing here in the minister's announcement that points to any kind of actual improvement in learning. So I just wanted to take a moment, because I have done some research—and I will say, there's not a lot of data out there, Mr. Speaker, but I've got a report here. It's pretty big. In fact, there's a researcher named Beyhan Farhadi who is actually looking very much exactly at what the impact of e-learning has been on graduation rates and such in Ontario. I would urge the minister to speak to Beyhan Farhadi, but I will tell you this very quickly. Here's what they found: challenges. And there are only challenges: lack of up-to-date equipment and Internet access; teenagers—guess what—in many cases, lack the independent learning skills—we're talking about 14-year-olds here, Mr. Speaker—and time management to really make this work for them.

Without a teacher in the classroom and an educator sitting with them, it's really going to be a disaster. What we are hearing increasingly from teachers and students is that they are worried whether they will even be able to graduate.

I urge, again, this government to listen to the students, listen to the research and please back off on this scheme.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Percy Hatfield): The parliamentary assistant to the Minister of Education, the member for Niagara West, has up to five minutes to reply.

Mr. Sam Oosterhoff: Thank you, Speaker. I have to begin by saying that I've had the great privilege now over the past eight months of working with Minister Thompson, the Minister of Education, on this file. She has shown an incredible ability to connect with teachers, with students and with parents. It has been a real pleasure to work alongside her as she unveiled our vision for education in this great province a couple of weeks ago, on March 15.

Education that Works for You truly is a groundbreaking plan to modernize our education system, empower our educators and further prepare our students for the modern world. It demonstrates that our government for the people is committed to improving our education system and putting each and every student on the path to future success.

When our students succeed and our schools succeed, Ontario succeeds.

One way that we're going to do this, Speaker, is by bringing our education system in line with the realities faced by children today and by students today. We all know that today's students use technology in ways that we could not have dreamed of before. We're going to take the technology that students are already using, channel that

and help engage students even more in the learning process. This is going to help modernize classrooms across the province.

This will also include e-learning, as the member has noted. That's why, beginning in 2020-21, we're going to centralize the delivery of e-learning courses in Ontario to provide students with greater access and educational opportunities no matter where they live. That's because our government is truly committed to modernizing education and supporting students in innovative ways. Speaker, this means using technology in ways that will support and enhance learning, in ways that give students more options. E-learning will make a great difference for students all across our province. As a member representing a rural riding, I understand that the member opposite has a very Toronto-centric point of view, but it's very important that this will open up more opportunities for rural Ontario and give them access to a whole host of programming.

Speaker, let me provide a little bit more detail about how it's going to work. Secondary students will take a minimum of four e-learning credits out of the 30 credits required to achieve an Ontario secondary school diploma over four years of high school. That's equivalent to one credit per year—also, with exemptions for some students on an individualized basis.

In fact, something that's very interesting that the member opposite may not know is that students, since 2004, have used e-learning to earn high school credits towards their diploma. This includes students who access special education programs and services through their school board. Students can now access e-learning using technology available at their school, community, or through their personal devices.

We know that school boards have their own set of unique challenges and needs, and we're going to work with them to discuss planning and access to e-learning.

We also know, unfortunately, that there's a great deal of inconsistency and duplication in delivering e-learning across the province. By introducing a standardized, centralized model, we can better meet the needs of students, and also better support teachers who will continue to facilitate online learning.

That's not all. There are remarkable benefits to this approach. With their virtual nature, e-learning courses can be offered to anyone, even if a student isn't in a physical classroom to learn. For example, a desired course may not be available at a student's specific school, or they may not be able to enrol in a course because of a scheduling conflict. Thus, e-learning will allow secondary school students to select from a broad range of subjects; extend their learning beyond just the school day; access courses that support multiple pathways beyond high school, such as apprenticeship, college, university, and the workplace; interact with, and learn from, students from across the province; and grow their comfort level and skill using digital tools, while learning in virtual environments.

So, Speaker, as you can see, there are many benefits to e-learning. These e-learning changes will be phased in beginning in 2020-21, and they will help our classrooms and schools embrace the modern age and support students in new and creative ways.

Together with the Minister of Education, I'm very proud to promote and support education that works for you. Together, we will build on a system that creates and attracts the best talent in the world. We will build on a system that builds careers, that promotes mental health and well-being, and that leaves every student prepared for an amazing future.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Percy Hatfield): There being no further matter to debate, I deem the motion to adjourn to be carried.

This House stands adjourned until 9 a.m. tomorrow.

The House adjourned at 1823.

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Harden, Joel (NDP)	Ottawa Centre / Ottawa-Centre	
Harris, Mike (PC)	Kitchener—Conestoga	
Hassan, Faisal (NDP)	York South—Weston / York-Sud— Weston	
Hatfield, Percy (NDP)	Windsor—Tecumseh	Second Deputy Chair of the Committee of the Whole House / Deuxième vice-président du comité plénier de l'Assemblée législative
Hillier, Randy (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, Gurratan (NDP)	Brampton East / Brampton-Est	
Singh, Sara (NDP)	Brampton Centre / Brampton-Centre	Deputy Leader, Official Opposition / Chef adjointe de l'opposition officielle
Skelly, Donna (PC)	Flamborough—Glanbrook	
Smith, Dave (PC)	Peterborough—Kawartha	
Smith, Hon. / L'hon. Todd (PC)	Bay of Quinte / Baie de Quinte	Minister of Economic Development, Job Creation and Trade / Ministre du Développement économique, de la Création d'emplois et du Commerce Government House Leader / Leader parlementaire du gouvernement
Stevens, Jennifer (Jennie) (NDP)	St. Catharines	
Stiles, Marit (NDP)	Davenport	
Surma, Kinga (PC)	Etobicoke Centre / Etobicoke-Centre	
Tabuns, Peter (NDP)	Toronto—Danforth	
Tangri, Nina (PC)	Mississauga—Streetsville	
Taylor, Monique (NDP)	Hamilton Mountain	
Thanigasalam, Vijay (PC)	Scarborough—Rouge Park	
Thompson, Hon. / L'hon. Lisa M. (PC)	Huron—Bruce	Minister of Education / Ministre de l'Éducation
Tibollo, Hon. / L'hon. Michael A. (PC)	Vaughan—Woodbridge	Minister of Tourism, Culture and Sport / Ministre du Tourisme, de la Culture et du Sport
Triantafilopoulos, Effie J. (PC)	Oakville North—Burlington / Oakville-Nord—Burlington	
Vanthof, John (NDP)	Timiskaming—Cochrane	Deputy Leader, Official Opposition / Chef adjoint de l'opposition officielle
Wai, Daisy (PC)	Richmond Hill	
Walker, Hon. / L'hon. Bill (PC)	Bruce—Grey—Owen Sound	Minister of Government and Consumer Services / Ministre des Services gouvernementaux et des Services aux consommateurs
West, Jamie (NDP)	Sudbury	
Wilson, Jim (IND)	Simcoe—Grey	
Wynne, Kathleen O. (LIB)	Don Valley West / Don Valley-Ouest	
Yakubski, Hon. / L'hon. John (PC)	Renfrew—Nipissing—Pembroke	Minister of Natural Resources and Forestry / Ministre des Richesses naturelles et des Forêts
Yarde, Kevin (NDP)	Brampton North / Brampton-Nord	
Yurek, Hon. / L'hon. Jeff (PC)	Elgin—Middlesex—London	Minister of Transportation / Ministre des Transports

**STANDING COMMITTEES OF THE LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY
COMITÉS PERMANENTS 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