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Mardi  
7 mai 2019

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Speaker: Honourable Ted Arnott  
Clerk: Todd Decker

Président : L'honorable Ted Arnott  
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LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY  
OF ONTARIO

Tuesday 7 May 2019

ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE  
DE L'ONTARIO

Mardi 7 mai 2019

*The House met at 0900.*

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

NOTICE OF REASONED AMENDMENT

**The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott):** Before I call orders of the day, I beg to inform the House that pursuant to standing order 71(c), the member for Guelph has filed with the Clerk a reasoned amendment to the motion for second reading of Bill 108, An Act to amend various statutes with respect to housing, other development and various other matters. The order for second reading of Bill 108 may therefore not be called today.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

FIXING THE HYDRO MESS ACT, 2019  
LOI DE 2019 POUR RÉPARER LE GÂCHIS  
DANS LE SECTEUR DE L'ÉLECTRICITÉ

Resuming the debate adjourned on May 2, 2019, on the motion for third reading of the following bill:

Bill 87, An Act to amend various statutes related to energy / Projet de loi 87, Loi modifiant diverses lois en ce qui concerne l'énergie.

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

**Mr. Will Bouma:** It's a great honour to be able to rise today and speak about Bill 87, fixing the hydro mess, and to speak on behalf of the people of my riding of Brantford-Brant about this very important initiative.

First off, I would like to thank the Minister of Energy, Northern Development and Mines for this bill. It will undo the mess created by the previous government. I also want to thank the parliamentary assistants for working on this bill. Thank you very much for all of your hard work.

Speaker, Bill 87 focuses on a few areas of concern. It focuses on energy conservation, it focuses on modernizing the Ontario Energy Board, and it talks about changes to the rate structure and how we finance some of the horrendous policies that were brought in by the previous government.

The first thing that we see in this bill is how we deal with energy conservation. Without a doubt, there is a real role for conservation in the energy sector. This is crucial and it is something that consumers and all of us focus on daily. Part of the reason we focus on it so much is because of the horrific cost of electricity that was burdened on us by the previous government and that forced Ontarians into looking at different alternatives. There are some programs

that work and there are many others that do not work, and that is what we, as a government, have looked at.

We looked at how the financing of this was handled. Under this bill, we're eliminating those energy conservation programs that don't make sense, the ones that are too costly, that cost the ratepayers more than the benefit they get back.

These changes will have no impact on the environment. Over 95% of Ontario's electricity is already produced greenhouse-gas-free thanks to its reliance on nuclear and hydro generation. Of course, a couple of decades ago, Ontario began a process of phasing out coal. We think back to Progressive Conservative governments of old who started that process, and, in fairness to the now independent members who ran under the Liberal banner, a continuation of that policy was probably the only thing that they did right in the energy sector over those 15 years. It has put Ontario in a really good position. We can now boast that our electricity system is 95% GHG-free, and I think that's pretty impressive.

Our government has decided that we need to centralize many of these energy conservation programs. We've decided we have to eliminate the ones that don't make sense and focus on where the demand is the greatest, where the need is the greatest with respect to programs that actually work. We've also lifted the program up to the IESO. The reason we've done that is so that we can centralize and have a more focused program, a program that allows our local distribution companies access and we can work through the IESO so that demand and conservation work together and not against each other. The outcome of this is going to be saving somewhere in the neighbourhood of \$442 million.

Some will say that that seems to be a very practical approach and that conservation should work closely with generation so that trying to do the right thing does not add additional cost to the ratepayer. Mr. Speaker, this is our approach. This government is working closely with our small, medium, and large job creators. Despite the fact that we've had tremendous job gains since this government took office, removing red tape is equally as important. But the high cost of energy in Ontario is something that we all, on all sides of this House, continue to hear about over and over again.

Now, let us look at some of the benefits of transitioning this program. It has been estimated that by doing this, some of our small, medium, and our medium-large job creators could save somewhere between \$15,000 and \$30,000 a month in electricity costs. Let that sink in: \$15,000 to \$30,000 a month in savings. Think of what this

can do for businesses like Patriot Forge in Brantford, who heavily rely on electricity for production.

Speaker, I want to move now to the OEB, the Ontario Energy Board. We are making some changes to the Ontario Energy Board. If there is one board that requires change, it is the Ontario Energy Board. Our proposal would establish a new governance structure, including a board of directors and a CEO to better separate the board's management, administration and adjudicative responsibilities.

It seems that every time a request for a rate increase has been submitted to the Ontario Energy Board, the OEB grants that request. We must change this. We want to restore the independence of the Ontario Energy Board, and that's what this bill does. We separate the adjudication functions from the administrative functions, and that's crucially important, but it's important because not only does there need to be oversight, but there needs to be a clear distinction between the two.

Now, we've heard time and time again about the outrageous amounts of paperwork that are required for OEB decisions. This government has had local distribution companies come to us and tell us that for even the smallest of applications thousands of pages of documentation have to be put together; thousands of hours of staff time have to be utilized in order to get even the simplest of decisions. This is completely inefficient and completely not acceptable.

When we ask a local distribution company to come before the OEB and the company has to provide thousands of pages of documents, it's us, it's we, the ratepayers, who are paying for it. The ratepayers are the ones who end up paying for it. This is why we are making changes to the Ontario Energy Board. We will be streamlining the processes and separating the administrative and adjudicative functions within the Ontario Energy Board. We have listened and we are making the proper efficiencies.

Now, Speaker, let's talk about the previous Liberal government's disastrous Green Energy Act. I'm happy to say that we cancelled this failure of a plan. Some people may say that it was short-sighted of us to cancel it, that it was wrong of us to cancel 700 power contracts, but, Speaker, it was 700 power projects that we did not need in Ontario, and it was almost \$1 billion worth of contracts that we could not afford.

I can recall reading a column by my colleague the MPP from Haldimand-Norfolk in the Simcoe Reformer back in 2014. He met with a couple who lived in a modest 790-square-foot house. They were heating with one electric space heater, had been wearing heavy sweaters all winter and were doing absolutely everything they could to keep their electricity costs down. But you know what, Mr. Speaker? Their hydro bill for January 2014 was \$641.67, of which \$233.89 was just the delivery charge. During the meeting, the MPP was told by the constituent, "All of my pension goes to pay my electricity."

**0910**

This is not just a one-off case. Many of us have heard and met with people over the past few years who have

struggled to pay their electricity bills. I remember when I was canvassing and I talked to people who had to move out of their home and look for a cheap apartment because they could no longer afford the cost of the hydro in their home.

It was in 2009 when the McGuinty government bulldozed regulatory regimes and plowed ahead, without cost-benefit analysis, allowing the green lobby to restructure Ontario's energy sector. Then-opposition leader Tim Hudak informed the Premier during question period, "You created a gold rush that made your friends very rich," leaving the rest of us out in the cold, paying exorbitant rates and without the ability to have a say in the matter.

When the Green Energy and Green Economy Act was passed in 2009, Premier McGuinty promised modest increases in electricity of about 1% annually, but according to the Auditor General, "Electricity prices for the average Ontario consumer ... are projected to rise 46% in the next five years." Speaker, many were in shell shock after that revelation. The Green Energy Act feed-in tariff program, providing renewable energy generators with attractive contract prices, ended up costing us billions. In fact, we would be paying \$4.4 billion more in costs for wind and solar.

The cost becomes even more concerning when you consider the Auditor General's finding that many of these costly projects were approved without proper oversight, including regulatory and planning procedures. The report also indicates guaranteed FIT contracts for wind mean we're paying other jurisdictions big bucks to take our power. The Auditor General says that between 2005 and 2011, Ontario received \$1.8 billion less for its electricity exports than what it cost the electricity ratepayers of Ontario. We have subsidized Quebec and New York \$1.8 billion to take our power. This is unacceptable.

In 2017, the Auditor General said that it was known that the planned financing structure undertaken by the former Liberal government could result in significant, unnecessary costs for Ontarians. She continued, "The substance of the issue is straightforward. Ratepayers' hydro bills will be lower than the cost of the electricity used as a result of the electricity rate reduction. However, power generators will still be owed the full cost of the electricity they supply, so the government needs to borrow cash to cover the shortfall to pay them."

Both the Financial Accountability Officer and the Auditor General raised concerns and red flags about this program, and that it wasn't in the best interest of Ontarians. Due to the Green Energy Act, we saw electricity prices skyrocket. We saw over 300,000 manufacturing jobs leave Ontario, and it sent a message to potential investors that Ontario did not want to be competitive.

Speaker, let me say again, those days are now behind us. Ontario is open for business and open for jobs. By following the advice of the Auditor General and the Financial Accountability Officer, there's close to \$4 billion in savings for Ontario taxpayers—\$4 billion in savings—and that is a lot of money to put back into the pockets of my constituents in Brantford-Brant.



Moving on, this bill will also end the so-called Fair Hydro Plan. Our government is reforming the electricity system to reduce costs, drive efficiencies and lower electricity rates. We were elected on a promise to fix this mess, and fix it we shall by building an electricity system that's modernized and efficient, using a consistent approach to conservation and avoiding unnecessary duplication and administrative costs, improving transparency, stabilizing residential electricity bills, providing opportunity to stakeholders for giving their input on streamlining the process, and expanding the Ontario rebate for electricity consumers. Through Bill 87, people will see a rebate, effective November 1, 2019, which would replace the Fair Hydro Plan that hid the true cost of electricity from consumers. Starting this fall, the people will know the true cost of power. The new rebate will be clear, and it will be fair. It will display every single item line by line.

During the election, when knocking on doors and canvassing, a lot of constituents were saying, "Well, sometimes we don't know if we will have enough money to heat our homes and to put food on the table." It had become difficult for the people of this great province, under the previous Liberal government, to make ends meet. Many people struggled, and there was uncertainty. This legislation will stabilize Ontario's electricity rates. The government is also introducing regulatory amendments to keep ratepayers' bills stable. Increases to the average residential electricity bill would be held to the rate of inflation. This just started at the beginning of the month. Clearly, these actions are part of the government's plan to increase transparency and accountability in the electricity system while working to make life more affordable for all Ontarians.

Reliable and affordable energy, free from political interference, is fundamental to a thriving economy, and it starts by treating energy as an economic policy, not a social program. It's not the role of government to micromanage the day-to-day technical decisions of any sector in the economy. Government's responsibility is to promote transparency, set the rules of the game and then get out of the way.

While renewable energy can be desirable as part of a balanced supply mix, the problem is that the previous Liberal government was awash with wind and solar at a time when demand was declining. This created a substantial and expensive surplus, which we sold at a loss to Quebec and to US states. Countries around the world where this type of energy policy began decades ago have backed away. Premier Kathleen Wynne said, in November of 2016, "Our government made a mistake. It was my mistake. And I'm going to do my best to fix it."

"But 4,000 pages of internal emails and documents, which Global News obtained from the now defunct Ontario Power Authority," or OPA, "suggest billions of dollars in unnecessary spending could have been avoided had the government followed the early advice of the OPA, which was tasked with designing many of Ontario's energy policies."

Speaker, I want to talk briefly also about what the New Democratic Party wanted to do with the hydro mess. The

NDP didn't really have a plan. Their plan during the election was to basically reduce the cost by 30%. But how were they going to do that? They were going to adopt the plan from the Liberals, and then they were going to ask Prime Minister Trudeau to somehow waive 5% off the HST. That's not much of a plan, if you ask me. While they were going to do that, the NDP proposed to shut down the Pickering nuclear station, which would have wiped out 4,500 jobs in Durham region. So much for protecting jobs. Let me remind you, Speaker, and those at home watching: The NDP are partly responsible for the hydro mess that we are in. They backed the Liberals 97% of the time in this House. They allowed the Liberals to do much of the damage with their support.

As I wrap up my time here today, again, I want to mention that Bill 87 is focused on three main fronts: (1) keeping electricity affordable and improving transparency, (2) reducing costs by centralizing and refocusing conservation programs, and (3) building a modern, efficient and effective energy regulator for all Ontarians. Through Bill 87, the plan will see savings of up to \$442 million and will make regulatory changes to the Ontario Energy Board to make it more efficient and accountable. This legislation will bring electricity bills to the rate of inflation and save billions in borrowing costs that were tied to the Fair Hydro Plan. This will clean up the mess and replace failure with a new transparent rebate on consumers' bills. After 15 long years of mismanagement, relief has finally come to the people of Ontario.

#### 0920

We know how critically important fixing the hydro mess is for hard-working families and the bottom lines of businesses that create jobs and contribute to Ontario's economic growth and development. I am proud of the work of our government, our minister, and the work that the parliamentary assistants are doing to bring relief for the people of Ontario. I can assure all the people of Ontario and my constituents in Brantford–Brant that the work our government is doing to bring electricity relief is something that we can all be proud of.

Mr. Speaker, I'd just like to wrap up and, again, say that it's time that we took this matter in hand. It's a very difficult problem, and this is just the first phase of what we're hoping to do for the province of Ontario to bring relief to people, to bring affordability to people, to allow businesses to grow, to allow Ontario to flourish. To do that, we need to take care of this hydro mess.

I trust that every member of this House will vote in support of the Fair Hydro Plan.

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

**M<sup>me</sup> France Gélinas:** It was rather disconcerting to listen to some of the information that the member just shared. We do have a serious problem with the cost of electricity in our province. For many of my constituents, their hydro bills have gone through the roof. Why is this, Speaker? The answer is clear: It is because of privatization.

When Mike Harris was elected—you remember that was the last Conservative government that we had here in

Ontario—he decided that the private sector was going to do things better, cheaper, faster, whatever. The only thing that the private sector did is jack up our hydro rates.

So we have three parts to our electricity system: the generation of electricity, the transmission—those are the big transmission lines—and then we have the distribution; those are the people who bring the lines to your house. We have no choice; we have to have electricity to live and we all have to pay an electrical bill. What Mike Harris did is that he took the generation part and privatized it, he took the distribution part and privatized it, and we stopped him in time to keep the transmission still in public hands.

Come the Liberals: The Liberals continued right down the same path and continued to privatize parts of our hydro system that we had been able to keep in public hands. What did it do? The exact same thing as when Mike Harris was there: Our hydro bills shot up again. Then they tried some borrowing scheme to try to borrow money that we don't have to pay down some of our electrical bills. None of this worked.

How do you bring the electrical bills down? You bring it back into public hands where nothing goes to profit and everything goes to bringing our hydro bills down.

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

**Mr. Paul Calandra:** I appreciate the member from Brantford–Branch's speech, but I can't not comment on what we just heard from the NDP member, because it's actually 100% completely false. Every aspect of it is wrong. The reason we have such high hydro prices right now—full stop; 100%—is because the previous Liberal government, in co-operation with the NDP, in co-operation with organizations such as the Suzuki foundation, put in place a program for green energy that was unlike any program anywhere else in the world. They signed contracts that we should all be embarrassed about. They signed contracts 10, 20, 30, 40, 50 times higher than other jurisdictions would pay, and the result is that taxpayers are having to foot the bill.

The member is correct: The Liberals then brought in a scheme to try to offset those costs, to try to hide the costs. It's a scheme that the Auditor General rightfully pointed out was wrong. It needed to be replaced. The Auditor General rightfully pointed out that it cost Ontario taxpayers billions of dollars more than it should have because of the way the plan was brought forward.

But what is most troubling—you might not agree with this bill, and the NDP have said they don't agree with the bill, but what they did also is they voted against every single one of those sections that would disentangle, that would shine the light on the Liberals' Fair Hydro Plan. You might not agree with the OEB reforms; if you want to vote against that, fine. But in committee, they voted against every single one of those sections meant to save Ontario taxpayers billions of dollars, meant to shine the light and follow what the FAO and the Auditor General did. They voted against it. They voted to keep the Liberal fair hydro scheme in place, and I think they have to answer for that.

I thank the member for a great speech and for outlining all the things we're doing to change it.

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

**Mr. Michael Mantha:** I listened very closely to the member from Brantford–Brant in regard to the comments he brought forward. What he just finished off on, I think he might have made an error in words. He said, "I hope everybody supports the Fair Hydro Plan." Wasn't that a Liberal tagline? Isn't that something the Liberals had introduced? I'm sure he meant "fixing the hydro mess" or the act to amend various statutes related to energy.

Again, it goes to what I was saying: Liberals, Tories, same old story. That's what this bill is doing. It's actually doing the same thing. It's just rebranding things we're doing.

The member who just spoke talked about how—and I agree with the member and a lot of the points he brought forward in regard to how badly the previous government brought in the green energy rollout. They did a horrible job. I agree with a lot of the comments that are coming from both sides on this one. We're not disputing that. But it attributes to 3% of generation. How can 3% of generation equal a 100% increase? The math just doesn't work.

This was an opportunity, under the Green Energy Act, for municipalities to look at generating revenues. And I agree with the member: It took away the democratic right of municipalities to determine where they wanted, if they wanted, how they wanted. Well, wouldn't it be nice to have those extra revenues now with the downloading this government is doing on these municipalities to pay for these services? I'm just thinking.

Again, I like facts. The member talked about certain percentages in regard to how the NDP supported the then Liberal government. Well, last time I checked, this is a majority government and the previous government was a majority, right? When you look at the facts—here are the facts. You don't like these numbers: 56% of the time the Conservative government supported the Liberals.

*Interjections.*

**Mr. Michael Mantha:** Oh, sorry. Let me correct my record: 48% of the time—

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Percy Hatfield):** Thank you.

*Interjections.*

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Percy Hatfield):** We are getting a little rowdy, and it's—

**Mr. Michael Mantha:** Do I get a second to finish?

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Percy Hatfield):** No, you're not getting any more time.

Now is a good time to come back and relive civilized debate once again. I'm sure we all want to listen to the member from Mississauga—Streetsville.

**Mrs. Nina Tangri:** It is extremely important for our hard-working families and businesses to fix this hydro mess. Our province lost many companies, and others who chose not to open or grow here in Ontario due to the significant increases and uncertainty of hydro rates. With that, Mr. Speaker, jobs were lost, and others not created.

Our government has taken real action to fix this mess. Rates will be affordable and predictable. We will build a modern, efficient and effective energy regulator with changes to the Ontario Energy Board. We heard time and time again how many families had to choose between heating and eating. We heard how people were worried about losing their jobs, as costs to the companies they worked for increased. We heard from businesses how Ontario was not somewhere that welcomed them. We also heard about how other jurisdictions offered many incentives, including low and predictable hydro rates, to have them go there and create jobs. As mentioned by my esteemed colleague from Brantford–Brant, the previous Liberal government, supported by the NDP, turned our hydro into a complete mess. They mortgaged our children's future.

I encourage all members of this Legislature to support Bill 87 and, together, let's fix this hydro mess.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Percy Hatfield):** We'll return to the member from Brantford–Brant for his two-minute summation.

0930

**Mr. Will Bouma:** I'd like to thank everyone for participating in the debate today.

I wanted to start with the member from Nickel Belt to say, first of all, that we all agree here that we are in big trouble with hydro, and that hydro is too expensive for the people of Ontario. She talked about privatization as a solution to this. To comment back to that, the NDP plan to just buy Hydro back—I think it would be much too expensive to borrow the money to do that for the people of Ontario. How much would it cost? I think they estimated \$6 billion, but we don't know what that would cost.

Thank you to the member from Markham–Stouffville. I completely agree that we paid too much for the contracts, especially when you see that there are so many jurisdictions in the world where they're signing contracts now for reasonable rates for hydro. We just pushed this too early, too fast, and it was much too expensive.

To the member from Algoma–Manitoulin, I have to say thank you for allowing me to correct my record. I meant to say "fixing the hydro mess." I appreciate that you agree with so much of what we have to say in this bill, and I look forward to your support.

To the member from Mississauga–Streetsville, thanks for pointing out the devastating effect that Liberal energy policy had on the businesses and the hard-working families of the province of Ontario.

Mr. Speaker, we have a long way to go. I would say that this bill is just the first step as we move forward. I look forward to seeing what the hard-working minister and the parliamentary assistants bring forward in the future, as we bring affordability and an open-for-business-and-jobs attitude back to hydro in the province of Ontario.

I look forward to the rest of this debate, and I look forward to passing this bill.

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

**Mr. Mike Schreiner:** I rise to contribute to the debate on Bill 87. I wish this bill fixed the hydro mess, as the title

suggests, but it actually doubles down on the Liberal's unfair hydro plan, though I will admit that it does fix the worst of the accounting tricks that the previous government did use. But I don't see how this government can cut funding for flood prevention, children's services, education and a whole bunch of other public services while continuing to borrow over \$3 billion every year to subsidize electricity bills in a way that benefits the wealthiest consumers the most.

The total cost of the previous government's unfair hydro plan will be between \$40 billion and \$90 billion, according to the Financial Accountability Officer, over the next two years. I find this especially infuriating when the government voted down every amendment that the opposition put forward at committee to require a cost-benefit analysis when making regulatory decisions. Requiring a cost-benefit analysis just makes sense. That's the same mistake that the previous government made, so why did this government vote that down?

That said, I'm going to do something that opposition parties don't often do: I'm going to compliment the government. I think they made a good move, separating the governing process and the adjudicating process at the OEB. But then why did they create an energy czar by concentrating so much power in the hands of the CEO? George Vegh, the former general counsel to the Ontario Energy Board, has warned that Bill 87 gives the CEO "unconstrained" and "incredible" powers to "unilaterally set rules that are binding on the entire sector." He warned that this could undermine the OEB's independence.

The Toronto Region Board of Trade warned that the CEO has "no explicit criteria or process to be followed when exercising rule-making powers."

I tried, and my NDP colleagues tried, at committee to fix this by putting forward reasonable amendments supported by a diverse group of stakeholders, from the Toronto board of trade to the vulnerable energy consumers association and the association of major power producers, to fix this, and they were voted down every time by the government.

It makes no sense to give one person so much power over Ontario's energy system. That's why I'll be voting against Bill 87.

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

**Mr. Sam Oosterhoff:** It's an honour to be able to stand and respond to the debate from the member from Guelph. I have to begin by congratulating his party, or the party that he is a member of, on their by-election win last night in Nanaimo–Ladysmith. I know it's a difficult loss for the New Democrats, but it's an exciting time for the Green Party. I do want to congratulate him and his party on that win, which is quite historic, being only the second member to enter the House of Commons for the Greens.

But I want to say, Speaker, that we heard the member opposite reference some of the things that he agreed with. I have to say, I've had the opportunity now to hear different debates in the House where people get very fired up. They get very upset either with us or when the Liberals

were in power. But a lot of the things that they're getting upset about—and they're agreeing with most of what we're doing—are things that the Liberals did. I agree that the Fair Hydro Plan cost tens of billions of dollars more than it should have. I agree that there was a mess at Hydro One that we needed to clean up. I agree that there is a significant amount of problems in the way the distribution system is set up and the need to improve efficiencies along that sector.

But, Speaker, what I hear from members of the opposition in their responses to the speech from the member for Brantford—Brant, as well as in the speech this morning from the member for Guelph—I don't hear a lot of concern with what we're bringing forward. In fact, I hear more concerns around what the Liberals, backed by the NDP, actually brought forward in the last Parliament.

I want to thank the member for his willingness to stand on principle so often in this House and to be able to speak from a unique perspective as a member of the Green Party. But I do want to encourage him also to realize that many of the changes that we're making are ones that are needed, that are necessary to ensure the viability and affordability of hydro in the province of Ontario. That's why we're going to be supporting Bill 87 when it comes forward later this week.

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

**Mr. Joel Harden:** I want to congratulate the member from Guelph for his comments.

Following on my friend from Niagara West, I want to say something off the top, because my friend from Algoma—Manitoulin wanted me to make sure it was clear to all of us. Our friends opposite often like to say, when we consider energy and other subjects in this place, that we voted with the previous government 97% of the time. The actual fact is that that might have happened 53% of the time, if you look at that silly thing called Hansard which has within it facts. I also know that in that same document, it finds that the current government voted with the previous government 48% of the time. You're big on math; you're big on math scores. I invite you to embrace your own ideology.

It's a funny thing, Speaker. I'm married to a psychiatrist back home. What I've learned a lot through people in mental health is that often what folks will say unconsciously is profound. When the member for Brantford—Brant named the government's plan as the Fair Hydro Plan, that was very instructive for me, because what this government is doing with this bill is agreeing to—granted, on the books—borrow billions of dollars going forward to subsidize energy prices to deal with the heating-or-eating issue.

The people of Ontario, and the people of this country, are looking to governments to do more to encourage sustainable energy. What has this government done on that front? Nothing. They have had advice before them from people in Ottawa, like the Ottawa Renewable Energy Co-operative, that have been encouraging this government to embrace virtual net metering and other sustainable low-

cost practices. What audience have they had with this government? Zilch.

We are having students walk out of their class every Friday to bring awareness to legislators like us that we need urgent action on climate change. Two thirds of our emissions in this country are linked to energy costs, so either we embrace a transformative approach to energy or we don't. This government doesn't, and that's why I'll be voting against this bill.

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

**Ms. Goldie Ghamari:** Mr. Speaker, before I comment on the member's speech, I just wanted to point out that I think what the member from Ottawa Centre said was a little bit offside and inappropriate. Just because someone's spouse is an expert in a particular field doesn't necessarily make them an expert. My husband is a statistician. He teaches statistics at Carleton University. I do not purport to be an expert on statistics at all, and so I think that's really important to just point out there.

**0940**

With respect to the member's speech, I just wanted to thank him for the kind words he said about some of the positive things. I look forward to, through an engaging and rowdy debate, convincing him on all the other points and bringing him over onside on all those points. Because I think, at the end of the day, what's really important is that we're here for Ontarians and we're here for people, and we're here to protect what matters most. That means maintaining an electricity system and a hydro system that is maintainable, that's affordable and is something that can serve Ontarians well into the future. At the end of the day, we're here to protect what matters most.

With that said, Mr. Speaker, some of the things that our bill is doing we campaigned on. Our government campaigned on lowering hydro bills. It campaigned on fixing the hydro mess. We campaigned on getting rid of the six-million-dollar man. Mr. Speaker, it hasn't even been a year yet and we've done all of that and, in fact, we're going to be doing even more. I can't believe it's already been almost a year that we've been in government. Time seems to fly when you're having fun. But we have three more years ahead of us, and I'm so excited to see what we can do to promote our mandate and to act on all the promises that we made, because we are here for the people and we're here to serve the people and we are here to protect what matters most.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Percy Hatfield):** And we'll return to the member from Guelph—oh, I'm sorry. The member for London West hasn't spoken yet. I recognize the member for London West.

**Ms. Peggy Sattler:** I'd like to congratulate the member for Guelph on his remarks. I think he highlighted the fact that this government had multiple opportunities to try to actually fix the hydro mess, but decided not to do that. Instead, they have a bill that simply relabels the disastrous Liberal plan with a new name.

We know that that Liberal plan involved borrowing \$40 billion against this illusory scheme that was supposed to

lower hydro rates, and cost Ontarians \$4 billion more than it should have, as the Auditor General points out. This bill that we have before us is basically the same kind of approach: It subsidizes hydro bills by borrowing billions of dollars in debt.

The unfortunate thing, Speaker, is that hydro bills are not actually going to go down. So we have this taxpayer subsidy for hydro bills that are going to keep going up.

If we really—

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Percy Hatfield):** I'm sorry to interrupt, but are you in your proper seat?

**Ms. Peggy Sattler:** No.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Percy Hatfield):** Now you are. Please continue.

**Ms. Peggy Sattler:** Thank you, Speaker. Apologies for that.

If we really wanted to lower hydro bills, we would do some of the things that the NDP had proposed in the last election, including ending mandatory time of use. Now there is an initiative that would have really helped lower hydro bills.

Most of all, Speaker, we need to bring hydro back into public hands. That is the fundamental issue that has caused hydro bills to skyrocket, and that is what needs to happen if we are truly going to fix the hydro mess.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Percy Hatfield):** And now we'll return to the member from Guelph for his summation.

**Mr. Mike Schreiner:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I appreciate that, and I appreciate all my colleagues for participating in the debate. I would like to thank the member from Niagara West for his congratulations and I'd like to extend my congratulations to Paul Manly, who won the by-election in Nanaimo-Ladysmith and will be the second elected Green MP in Canadian history.

My colleague from Ottawa Centre talked about the importance of renewable energy and the fact that young people, in particular, all across the world, but especially here in Ontario, are marching for urgent action on climate. One of the mistakes the Liberals made, quite frankly, is they bought a bit of renewable energy when it was really expensive, and now that the price has dropped dramatically this government is getting out of the game. Nobody who knows anything about investing would say, "Buy high and sell low," but that's exactly what is happening right now. So thank you for reminding us of the importance to be looking at all sources of energy, and so—

**Mr. Paul Calandra:** That's 100% inaccurate.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Percy Hatfield):** Order, please. The member from Markham-Stouffville, come to order please.

*Interjection.*

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Percy Hatfield):** I'm sorry to interrupt. Stop the clock, if you would, please. The member from Markham-Stouffville will come to order. Next time you will be warned, and the time after that you'll be gone for the day.

I return to the member from Guelph.

**Mr. Mike Schreiner:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Both the member from Carleton and from London West talked

about the importance of lowering electricity bills. I couldn't agree more, but the problem is, all the independent experts who came to committee on Bill 87 said that this bill will do nothing to lower electricity prices.

What I would ask the government to do is to act on something that the Green Party has been calling for for years; the previous government refused to do it and I'm hoping this government will: To conduct an independent public review of the cost, present and future, of all sources of electricity generation in Ontario so we can make an informed decision that's not based on ideology, but based on the evidence.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Percy Hatfield):** Further debate? I recognize the member from St. Catharines.

**Mrs. Jennifer (Jennie) Stevens:** Good morning, Speaker. It is a pleasure to be able to rise and discuss fixing the hydro mess. I don't believe we're doing so this morning; however, it is something each and every one of us can relate to. We all pay hydro bills, we're all affected when prices rise, and it's something that definitely needs to be reformed.

Paying hydro services is not like buying a car, however. You can't shop around and choose the best deal or get it on sale; it is what it is. When Ontarians are forced to use Hydro One or its distributors, we need to ensure we are doing our best to control the prices Ontarians pay.

This province, the people of Ontario, are trying to move into a greener society. They are pushing for electric vehicles and greener energy overall. Well, that means energy needs are to be affordable. This government needs to implement rebates to entice Ontarians to want to switch over. With this bill, this government is simply adopting the Liberal ideologies and their previous hydro plan—absolutely zero consultation with Ontarians, once again.

This government is far gone. It's so out in left field when it comes to connecting with the people, knowing what they want and analyzing the issues they face day to day when it comes to hydro. How does their new plan even differ from the Liberals'? How is it going to work to make changes, or make even a slight difference in the people's lives in Ontario? I do not believe that this government has any intention to please people; it's about pleasing their own agenda and getting this bill approved as soon as possible to avoid any backlash.

This government is known for quickly moving—very quickly moving—getting bills through this Legislature just to completely avoid public consultation. All concerns and critiques of this bill by the people, the Ontario Energy Board, specialists and many more, were and have been ignored. This government blatantly ignores experts in this field, showing all of the Ontarians that it is more of a power move than genuine desire to untangle the Liberals' mess and reduce costs for Ontarians.

This government says they're aiming for transparency, saying the NDP is voting against being transparent, but we were all about transparency. We, the NDP, are voting against doing the same thing over and over again. The definition of insanity is making the same mistake over and over, expecting a different outcome each time.

It's hard to understand what this government means when they talk about transparency. Constituents are confused about what really is going on with this hydro mess. Key questions need to be asked like, "How will you make sure transparency remains a priority?" Or, "What aspect of this hydro bill will make more transparency?" I'm sure we all know Ontarians appreciate the idea of open, honest communication with this government.

Let's be clear: That isn't the biggest issue here. The Liberals' mess was built upon privatization, forcing people into less than ideal solutions. What is this government doing to combat privatization? Phasing this out is the only way to truly reduce hydro costs for Ontarians. The monopoly that is currently the hydro sector allows rates to skyrocket with no real accountability.

**0950**

Issues of reform are not covered in this bill either. It's clear that this government only wants to slap their name on something already established by the previous government and repeated by this one, and to forget about the root issues with the hydro sector. All that Conservatives have actually done is they have changed a few words, dotted a few more i's, crossed a few more t's, and now they are trying to sell it to the people of Ontario.

Attacking the monster that is hydro is no small feat; we all understand that. All we're asking for is for this government to focus funds and manpower into reforming the structure of the system. There should be an ongoing effort to access the least expensive form of energy production—something that is sustainable long term, something that would not cost taxpayers even more money down the line.

Speaker, we all can find humour in the words of the Minister of Energy when he said, "We're continuing to find hundreds of millions of dollars in savings. These savings will help lower rates for large employers, allowing them to invest in their company to create more ... jobs." Once again, it's the large corporations that are getting the breaks. Let's not kid ourselves here: Large employers will not invest savings to employ more people, or give back to their current employees, for that matter. More often than not, they'll pocket the difference and conduct business as usual.

It's a nice sentiment to believe that jobs will be created with millions in savings, but Ontarians are smarter than that—much smarter than that. Just like with cuts to education, didn't the Premier time and time again reassure our Ontarians that jobs would not be lost? But hundreds of teachers across the province, if not a few thousand at this point, have received surplus notices and have no jobs moving forward into September, so it's clear that whatever this government claims should be taken with a complete grain of salt.

Their claim of lowering hydro costs by 12% is, again, relative to larger businesses. This government, the PC government, always says just enough so that the average person reads their claims, looks at the numbers and goes, "Wow, what a great job the Premier is doing." This is the problem. Numbers are thrown around by the members across so much that they mean nothing anymore, and that

is as deep as the thought goes for many. Reading this bill, the Fixing the Hydro Mess Act, taxpayers are getting lost in the rhetoric trying to understand what the Conservatives are really doing. We are here at Queen's Park every day listening to this rhetoric first-hand, and we're lost in the rhetoric. Imagine what Ontarians, the people of Ontario, are going through.

Through this bill, there's a shift from the LDCs, local distribution companies, to a central IESO-led approach: once again, number one, cutting jobs. I've heard from constituents who work in conservation departments at an LDC, and there's talk of inevitable job cuts—what? Job cuts?—since winding-down documents have been made available to the LDCs. Everything is up in the air. Conservation and demand management—or CDM—programs run through LDCs are now mainly the responsibility of the IESO. These conservation programs are targeted to commercial, institutional and industrial consumers, low-income residential consumers and on-reserve First Nations communities. There is no doubt that low-income residents and First Nations communities absolutely need these programs in place. But Ontarians in general look to incentive programs and rebates as well. Energy-efficient replacements can make all the difference on someone's hydro bill.

These policies need to be inclusive of the majority, not with a large focus on corporations. You see, Speaker, this government loves to talk about the numbers, yet hides them all at the same time. If we're to transition to an IESO-led approach, then the people should be privy to cost structures, estimates, annual payments and how much money will be used to subsidize the system. Yet this motion was rejected by this government at committee.

Every time I speak on a bill brought forth by the government, I speak about the lack of transparency. I speak about being transparent. Transparent means being open, even when it's not convenient for your government or for you. As my colleague the member from Toronto–Danforth has spoken on recently, the government has no intention of releasing cost information to the people of Ontario.

Let's be honest, people do not necessarily care about how the system is run. They don't care about super-specific details of the IESO, the LDCs and the CDMs; to many, those are just random acronyms. But people do care about the changes, or the lack thereof, that will impact their monthly electrical bill. Show us the estimated monthly charges for households, whether that's an increase or a decrease from the current rates. People are wondering if they need to tinker around their monthly budgets to live. They just don't know what to expect on their bill in the future. It is so unclear.

The Conservatives shut down anything that could make them put their words in writing, or their promises down on paper. They do not want to be held accountable. Whether that's cost estimates or cost-benefit analysis, they dodge every request from the opposition to put it up on the Ontario Energy Board—OEB—website. I thought that would be standard practice in proving their goal to be transparent, but I guess it's not.

In St. Catharines, Mr. Speaker, I met a constituent in my office. She was a single mom who lived in the same

townhome unit for over 15 years. Over the years, tenants beside her have come and gone, ranging from families of three for a few years, and then most recently a family of five—two parents and three teenagers—so you can imagine the amount of energy they probably were consuming. Anyone with teenagers in their household can attest to that. The constituent told me how over the years she noticed her bill was always high, higher than usual, higher than she anticipated, and she couldn't figure out why. One day, she called the hydro company, a distributor in St. Catharines; they assured her that the meter reader was always correct.

She always paid the bill like she should, and life went on as normal—so she thought. However, within the last year, the bills were significantly higher. Even after she made an effort to conserve electricity in her home, it just kept increasing month to month. Well, get this, Mr. Speaker: In February 2019, she discovers that her meter and the neighbour's meter were mislabelled. All this time she was paying for the neighbour's usage with those teenagers. She was paying for the neighbour's usage, and they were paying for hers. What's unfortunate is that when she called the LDC for the Niagara region, they gave her a \$30 credit towards her account. Now, if that's not a slap in the face, I don't know what is. Clearly it was a mistake, human error, but where was the accountability? Where is the legislation that forces hydro companies to do the right thing? Through no fault of her own, this poor mother was overpaying for years to a tune of at least a few thousand dollars. I'm almost certain that with proper legal counsel, she would have a case against them. But why does it have to come to that?

Why can't—why won't—this government implement policies that protect Ontarians from situations vastly out of their control? There's a clear lack of regulation, and even when tenants or owners feel that they've been wronged, this government is making it hard for anyone to act upon it. There's more to it than just controlling high hydro rates.

#### 1000

This new hydro sector, set up to favour certain classes of consumers, needs to collaborate with the people. Again, reiterating what the member from Toronto—Danforth brought up on May 2, amendments were brought forth—amendments that seemed pretty obvious, in my opinion. I mean, if I were trying to show constituents that I mean business, I would use this opportunity to create open dialogue. We asked that, annually, the minister publish information online pertaining to how much money is going to each class of consumer, how long each consumer type will continue to receive financial assistance from distribution programs, and updated long-term analysis showing how providing assistance to consumers will impact the province as a whole. I fully agree with my colleague's statement. These amendments are/were completely reasonable. Ontarians deserve full disclosure. That's why they elected this government, no?

It's time to live up to your promises. The government is too busy worrying about updating ministry logos,

changing vehicle licence plates, 9 a.m. tailgating, drivers' licences and now plastering partisan messages all over utility bills. You would think that the Premier and his minister were starting up a graphic design business together. Let's worry a little less about colour schemes and more on why the heck utility bills need Conservative messages all over them.

We get it: You're kind of open for business. But are you really? Are you open to actually amending this bill rationally?

Time and time again, we get back to talking about privatization. When it comes to health care, the impact of private services is well known, discussed and largely opposed by the people of Ontario. That's because when people understand the issue, it's easy to point out the flaws in the system. But with this hydro sector, it is what it is, as I mentioned earlier on. The government doesn't want to actually change how energy is consumed and they don't want to go green. Actually, they've made it clear that going green drove up hydro costs. While that may be true, green energy—electric energy—is the future, and maybe the environmental impact very much outweighs the increased costs.

At the same time, we're trying to lower the costs for Ontarians, but I feel as though the minister is not exploring the most effective and cost-efficient forms of providing electricity to the people.

My CO staff have been dealing with a few constituents within the last few months who have had heating systems installed with the promise of a rebate program. That's a huge reason why people even get new and improved heat and cooling systems installed in their homes. We all know it's not a cheap venture either. I've had seniors come to my office with high stress and anxiety because they had furnaces installed, never got the rebates or expected lower bills, and yet the price per month for the rental equipment is higher than what was promised to them by shady companies—a lot of shady companies.

Is there any regulation around here? It seems like a free-for-all to me, Mr. Speaker.

This whole system is a mess. This bill should be called "Making the Hydro Mess Messier, 2019."

Not everything in this province needs to be privatized. There is zero need to collapse local distribution and give full responsibility to the IESO to manage and distribute power to Ontarians.

You know what? The public wants the 12% lower hydro rates the Conservatives have been advertising so proudly. Nothing is being changed in this bill, nothing that the Liberals brought forward. The Conservative government is simply moving this bill along to get it over with, like every other bill in this House, and to dodge responsibility—no regulations, no transparency, no accountability, no effort, no anything—I could go on and on all day.

Essentially fluffing up the numbers and forcing the information down Ontarians' throats is not going to work this time. The people are smarter than that. You would think you would realize that.

Once and for all, stop pushing your own agenda. You yourselves pay hydro, but I guess it's less concerning

when you have disposable income. It's the middle-low, working-class people that are hit the hardest, and someone like our party, the leading opposition, needs to be there for them. We need to listen to their voices—

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

**Mr. Daryl Kramp:** It was interesting. I heard the member from St. Catharines there today, and she made the one comment I found a little bit interesting. She said she thought our government was out in left field. I can assure you we would be out in right field.

It's maybe fortunate, maybe unfortunate, maybe not long enough, maybe too long, but I've been around the political scene for a while—municipal, provincial and federal—and I can tell you, I've seen hundreds and hundreds and hundreds of bills and motions put forward by various governments in opposition. But I can honestly say I had never in my life seen anything as disastrous as the Green Energy Act.

The impact of the Green Energy Act literally turned this province right on its heels facing backwards, and put an unbelievable yoke of debt on every citizen in this province, quite honestly affecting the entire country.

How can you produce energy for five, six, seven or eight cents a kilowatt hour through your traditional sources of energy, and then go ahead and pay corporations or companies in private 50, 60, 70 or 80 cents a kilowatt hour. It's unconscionable, absolutely not real, not acceptable, not doable. Yet the sad reality is, the members opposite here supported the government of the day doing just that, and now have the audacity to stand in the House to say, "We don't like how you're trying to fix that."

Quite frankly, I'm a strong, strong supporter of renewable energy, but not at a cost that absolutely handcuffs not only a party, a country, a province, but every individual citizen in this country. It has to stop. The Green Energy Act has to go, and we will fix this hydro mess.

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

**Mr. Kevin Yarde:** I want to thank my colleagues from St. Catharines, London West and Nickel Belt as well as Algoma-Manitoulin.

The plan from the government will require the province to take on billions in debt to lower our hydro rates. This effectively is the Liberal Fair Hydro Plan. It has got a new name, but it's still subsidizing hydro bills in a way that people are not going to be able to afford in the long run.

Let's give you a look at some of the numbers here. They're going to borrow over \$4 billion to subsidize electricity. What's going to happen here is, disproportionately, our bills are going to go up, and it's going to benefit the wealthy. We should be saving this \$4 billion and investing it to support low-income, rural, and remote communities, and use the rest to balance the budget.

The government will also discontinue programs that include rebates for energy-efficient heating and cooling equipment, and discounts for buying energy-efficient products such as LED bulbs, if you can believe that. It will also eliminate incentives for builders to improve energy performance in new residences.

My colleague from St. Catharines talked about some of the concerns with regard to landlords. This bill is basically going to affect the most vulnerable in our society, scrapping the rate protection for more than 325,000 Ontario hydro customers, and this has sparked fears among many people. Removing price protections is wrong. There will no longer be controls on what sub-meterers can charge. That means that sub-metering companies will be able to allow landlords to shift the cost of electricity to tenants and condo owners by installing suite meters in each unit—

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

1010

**Mr. Paul Calandra:** Mr. Speaker, I listened to the speech, but I'm not sure that the member was actually talking about the Fair Hydro Plan and fixing the Liberal hydro mess. I think the member was talking about something completely different, because this bill does not talk about privatization at all. There's nothing about privatization in it.

What the NDP now are saying, and we just heard it again from the member for Brampton South, which I think is his riding, is that they want to increase hydro rates immediately. They want to see a 25% increase to everybody's hydro rate. That's what they just said. That is absolutely incredible. They want to have an absolute increase immediately.

When they talk about this bill—in committee, they voted against every single measure that would untangle the Liberal fair hydro mess. They voted against every single measure.

They may disagree with the OEB changes. We're making changes to make the OEB more accountable. They voted against that; that's fine. But how can you possibly vote to keep what the Liberals put in place—something that the Auditor General politely said was a scam, something that no other jurisdiction in the world could do. They voted to keep that in place, and now they're talking about increasing hydro rates by 25%.

Make no mistake about it: This isn't about privatization. This isn't about policies. This is about one thing. The reason rates skyrocketed is because you helped the Liberal Party bring in a green energy program that has cost taxpayers billions of dollars. That's why we're faced with hydro rates where we're at right now, and that's what we're trying to disentangle.

We want to bring in green energy, but we want to have green energy that is affordable. We don't want to continue the mistakes that were brought on by the Liberal and NDP coalition of the last 15 years.

So vote against the OEB changes. But how can you rise in this place today and vote against the changes that would untangle the Liberal fair hydro mess? It's unconscionable, and it's a continuation of bad policy. I hope you'll think twice about that.

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

**Mr. Joel Harden:** I want to thank my colleague the member for St. Catharines. If the government was actually



listening to what the member said, they'd know that what she asked is for this government to be honest about who it stands for when it comes to energy.

This government expended a lot of rhetoric about a six-million-dollar man. But you know what, Speaker? When they fired that person, Mayo Schmidt, because of the terms of that person's contract and the rules this government observes, that person, according to sources from the Globe and Mail, is going to have a compensation package of \$11 million this year. Thanks very much for that.

Where is your outrage around Jeffrey Lyash, the current CEO of Ontario Power Generation, raking in over a million dollars?

You know what the problem with this government is, Speaker? I've identified it in the member for Markham–Stouffville's response to this debate: selective outrage. They get really upset at the notion that we won't support everything they do. But when regular, working-class Ontarians want a government that will be on their side, what do they preside over? A privatized energy system.

This bill does nothing to change the disaster that the Mike Harris government started when they started parcelling the system off, and the Liberals kept that going. That is the driving force behind energy prices, and they will not fix it. Why? Because of their ties to industry, because of their ties to Bay Street.

They don't mind that Jeffrey Lyash is dining at the trough of the Ontario taxpayer. They have selective outrage on certain people they want a bumper-sticker campaign against. But when the people of Ontario want to bring hydro back into public hands—which was a Conservative legacy decision—they're nowhere, because they're much more interested not in truth, but in truthiness, Speaker—the Donald Rumsfeld kind of conservative.

I'm starting to think that this Conservative government is rather an insult to conservatives everywhere. They're not about conserving anything. They're about lavishing their friends with insider deals and not standing up for the average worker. But my friend from St. Catharines will.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Percy Hatfield):** Now we'll return to the member from St. Catharines for her two-minute summation.

**Mrs. Jennifer (Jennie) Stevens:** I'd like to thank the member from Hastings–Lennox and Addington. I'd like to thank the members from Brampton North, Markham–Stouffville and, of course, Ottawa Centre for their remarks on this bill.

Mr. Speaker, this government says they're aiming for transparency, saying the NDP is voting against transparency. That's what they've been saying. I will argue that this side of the House is only about transparency. I'd also argue that we, the NDP, believe in green energy. We haven't tried to push any bills through, like the Conservatives have. We would like to have open conversation, if we could have the chance, but we have not been able to have the chance on all of the bills that have come across this term.

Anyway, Speaker, I find it funny, again, when the Minister of Energy says, "We are continuing to find hundreds

of millions of dollars in savings." I'd like to find out when the people of Ontario will see the hundreds of millions of dollars in savings that the government is claiming they're going to see.

I'd also like to say good morning to my grandson—my grandson who is going to be growing up in Ontario; my grandson who will only benefit from green energy, not like the Conservative government that's not going to give that opportunity to my grandson. He's going to be paying for that, and he's going to be paying it through bumper slogans and bumper stickers and any chance that the Conservative government can get free advertisement, especially on his hydro bill when he gets older. Good morning, Greyson.

*Third reading debate deemed adjourned.*

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Percy Hatfield):** The time being such, we will now stand in recess until 10:30 and question period this morning.

*The House recessed from 1016 to 1030.*

#### NOTICES OF REASONED AMENDMENT

**The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott):** Before I invite members to introduce their guests, I beg to inform the House that, pursuant to standing order 71(c), the member for Timmins has filed with the Clerk a reasoned amendment to the motion for second reading of Bill 107, An Act to amend the Highway Traffic Act and various other statutes in respect of transportation-related matters. The order for second reading of Bill 107 may therefore not be called today.

I also need to inform the House that, pursuant to standing order 71(c), the member for Timmins has filed with the Clerk a reasoned amendment to the motion for second reading of Bill 108, An Act to amend various statutes with respect to housing, other development and various other matters. The order for second reading of Bill 108 may therefore not be called today.

*Interjection.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott):** Minister of Natural Resources and Forestry will come to order.

Introduction of visitors.

#### INTRODUCTION OF VISITORS

**Mr. Chris Glover:** It's my pleasure to welcome to the House Jenna Reynolds, Orville Burke, Oksana Chetveryk and Michael Duchesne from Asthma Canada.

As well, I'd like to welcome Christina Gilligan from my riding of Spadina–Fort York and Kalinda Jessett and baby Luke. Welcome to Queen's Park.

Finally, I'd like to welcome John Gilinsky for world autism day.

**Mr. Randy Pettapiece:** I'd like to welcome a grade 8 class from the Living Hope Christian School in my riding of Perth–Wellington.

**Mr. Faisal Hassan:** I would like to welcome Darren Parberry, who is a member of the Royal Canadian Air Cadets, former flight surgeon, current member of the Royal Canadian Legion, Branch 31, Mount Dennis, and

member of the Ontario Métis Aboriginal Association; and Kowthar Dore. Welcome to Queen's Park.

**Mr. Sam Oosterhoff:** I have the privilege of welcoming to the Legislature today my former boss the member of Parliament for the riding of Calgary Shepard, and the deputy shadow cabinet minister for finance. Welcome to Queen's Park.

**Ms. Rima Berns-McGown:** I'd like to welcome parents and early child care educators from Little Prints Daycare, which operates child care centres in Don Valley West, Don Valley North, Willowdale and Etobicoke Centre: Irene Udo, Kala Rajaratnam, Shamara Taylor, Maria Alberoni, Margaret Udo, Pamela Taskinen, Pinar Tugay and Valter Paco.

I'd also like to welcome the former city councillor from my riding of Beaches–East York and a fierce advocate for high-quality, affordable child care, Janet Davis.

Welcome, all of you, to Queen's Park.

**Hon. Michael A. Tibollo:** I'd like to welcome a couple of special guests to the House this morning. I would like to introduce my son, Michael Tibollo Jr., and his classmate from law school visiting from the beautiful city of Calgary, Alberta. Michael and Neil, welcome to Queen's Park.

**Ms. Jessica Bell:** I would like to welcome to Queen's Park some people from Orde Day Care, which is in my riding of University–Rosedale: Anna Gionet, Chauleyne Bell, Liz Dias, Indrani Sabessar, Valerie Jeremiah, Francesca Del Duca and Kyle Fabroa. Welcome to Queen's Park.

**Mrs. Gila Martow:** I'm expecting some visitors from Stephen Lewis Secondary School in Vaughan. I don't know if they're here yet. Wave to me if you're here. I looked for you on the staircase. Take a picture. Maybe I'll catch you after. Welcome to Queen's Park.

**Mr. Tom Rakocevic:** I'm proud to welcome Milan Petković, Glendon College and York University student, a colleague in political science. He's also son of Vasilije Petković, consul general of the Republic of Serbia.

I'd also like to recognize my friend Janet Davis and my good buddy Michau over there.

**Hon. Laurie Scott:** I'd like to introduce, from the riding of Haliburton–Kawartha Lakes–Brock, Greg and Nancy Ward, who are here to see question period today and maybe have a few words with the Premier. Thanks so much for coming.

**M<sup>me</sup> France Gélinas:** I would like to welcome volunteers from Asthma Canada who are here today: Jenna Reynolds and Gillian Kennedy from High Park. Welcome to Queen's Park.

**Mr. Doug Downey:** I'd like to welcome my constituents from Springwater, also here with Asthma Canada, Michael and Tracey Beaudry and their son, Matthew Beaudry. Thank you.

**Miss Monique Taylor:** It gives me great pleasure to welcome back again Michau van Speyk, Amy Moledzki, Kowthar Dore and Faith Munoz. Welcome back to Queen's Park.

**Mr. Parm Gill:** I would like to introduce a very promising young man from my good riding of Milton, Jedd

Peralta, who is the page captain today. I would also like to acknowledge his family: his parents, Mr. and Mrs. Peralta, and their younger son, Ram Peralta, also present in the members' gallery. Mrs. Peralta is a great community leader, working at the Halton Multicultural Council, which supports newcomers to Canada in the Halton region. Please help me welcome the family.

**Mr. Peter Tabuns:** Speaker, I'd like to welcome Henry Roberts and Sarah Burke Dimitrova, constituents of mine who are here today with Asthma Canada. Welcome to the Legislature.

**Mr. Daryl Kramp:** On behalf of the member from Bay of Quinte and myself today I'd like to welcome here Rory Facette-Grondin, Cara Facette-Grondin and Carolyn Grondin. Welcome, on behalf of both of us.

**Ms. Suze Morrison:** I'd like to welcome Maya Roy, the CEO of YWCA Canada, as well as Anjum Sultana, Jennifer Lockerby, Jasmine Ramze Rezaee and Colette Prevost from the YWCA Canada team.

I also have some constituents here today: Erin Filby, who is here representing the Association of Early Childhood Educators, and lastly Zhen Liu and Kate Foran, who are also two Toronto Centre constituents here for World Asthma Day. Welcome.

**Mr. Stephen Crawford:** I'm pleased to introduce to the Legislature two constituents from Oakville from Asthma Canada who are here to raise awareness for World Asthma Day: Leigh Fuston and Mehnaz Rahman. Welcome to Queen's Park.

**Ms. Doly Begum:** Today we are joined by some wonderful parents and ECEs from Compass Early Learning and Care, which operates centres in Peterborough, Kawartha Lakes and the Durham region.

I would like to welcome Lorrie Baird, Samantha Monteith, Emily Warren, Loretta Shaughnessey, Jill Wickins, Hannah McFarlane, Amanda Camacho—I'm sorry if I didn't pronounce that right—Jenny Duley, Bethany Carter and Sheila Olan-MacLean, who is the CEO of Compass and also the president of the Ontario Coalition for Better Child Care. Welcome to Queen's Park.

**Hon. Christine Elliott:** I would like to welcome representatives from Asthma Canada who are here today, and I believe we have unanimous consent to wear these pins, Speaker, in recognition of World Asthma Day.

**The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott):** I think you'll have to ask for the unanimous consent of the House to wear the pin.

**Hon. Christine Elliott:** Thank you, Speaker. May we have the unanimous consent of the House to wear these pins?

**The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott):** Agreed? Agreed.

**Ms. Christine Hogarth:** Speaker, good morning. I have two constituents visiting this morning to talk about World Asthma Day: Felicia Flowitt and Michael Duchesne. I had the opportunity to meet with them this morning. Thank you very much for being here.

**Hon. Monte McNaughton:** I'm proud to welcome my constituency assistant from our Wallaceburg office, Judy Listhaeghe, who is here today, as well as two other

constituents who are going joining us later, Richard VandeWetering and Barry McKeon. Welcome to Queen's Park.

**Ms. Natalia Kusendova:** I'm thrilled to welcome three very special guests this morning. We have Mr. Tom Kmiec, member of Parliament for Calgary Shepard. Welcome to the House.

As well, we have Kiran and Keerthi Jarajapu, mom and sister of the Mississauga Centre page Rishi Jarajapu. Welcome.

**Mr. Robert Bailey:** It's my pleasure today to introduce the mother of our page Kate Rabideau, Renata Rabideau—who is here actually with her mother, Judy Listhaeghe.

1040

**The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott):** I believe that will conclude our introduction of guests this morning. It is now time for oral questions.

## ORAL QUESTIONS

### HEALTH CARE FUNDING

**Ms. Andrea Horwath:** Speaker, before I begin, I just want to relay, on behalf of all the MPPs in the Legislature, our sincere concern and worry about the fire that's happening at York Memorial Collegiate Institute, and all of the staff and faculty and students who attend there and who work there. It's devastating to see that institution go up in flames on its 90th anniversary. I think it's just important to acknowledge that.

Speaker, my first question is to the Premier: Does the Premier think getting beer into corner stores is more important than vaccinating children or providing school breakfast programs?

**Hon. Doug Ford:** Through—

*Interruption.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott):** You can't make those kinds of interjections in the House. We're going to ask you to leave.

*Interruption.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott):** Order. The people interjecting have to leave.

*Interruption.*

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

I am going to remind everyone who is here as a guest that we're pleased to have you here to view and listen to the proceedings of Parliament, but you can't interject and you can't yell at the members on the floor. To do so disrupts the proceedings of Parliament, and we have no choice but to ask you to leave if you do that. All of you know, and you're informed when you come in, that you can't do that. Please respect Parliament, those of you who are left.

Restart the clock. The Premier had the floor.

**Hon. Doug Ford:** Through you, Mr. Speaker: We're putting \$433 million into Toronto Public Health. We're putting \$2 billion right across the province. Why are we doing this? We're doing this to make sure that we support

the things that matter to people, things that matter to families, matter to their children. It's not sustainable if we continue spending. We have a \$347-billion debt. We have a \$15-billion deficit.

Mr. Speaker, the students in the stands up there are worried about their parents making sure they keep a job. We're creating jobs. We created 123,000 jobs. We lowered their taxes. When they go home, their parents will see a lower heating cost instead of a higher heating cost. We're putting money back into their pockets. It's unsustainable. You can't keep spending. All the opposition wants to do is spend the taxpayers' money—

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

**Ms. Andrea Horwath:** It seems to me the Premier wants to spend the people's money on campaign stickers on gas pumps, Speaker. That's not a priority for Ontarians.

The mayor of Toronto yesterday challenged the Premier's misplaced priorities and his reckless cuts to public health, but he is not alone. Mayors across Ontario say the Premier is engaged in downloading by stealth. Just yesterday, the city of London announced that the Ford government cuts have created a \$4-million hole in their budget. Meanwhile, doctors and front-line health workers say cuts to public health will put families at risk and make hallway medicine even worse. Does the Premier really believe all these people are, to use his own words, irresponsibly wading into issues that they don't understand?

**Hon. Doug Ford:** Through you, Mr. Speaker: The only thing irresponsible is the rhetoric coming from the other side. All they want to do is continue to spend the taxpayers' money. As they run their households, as they run their small businesses, people around this province—you can't spend more than what you take in. It's very simple. They don't understand math. We understand math. The only way we're going to protect health care, the only way we're going to protect education—by the way, we've put \$700 million more into education. Every teacher is keeping their job because we've put in a safety net of \$1.6 billion.

The only way you can do that is to take care of your balance sheet. They don't understand that. They would spend, spend, spend. They've bankrupted this province. We inherited a bankrupt province through the Liberals that the NDP supported 98% of the time.

It's irresponsible. They would not know how to run a fiscal balance sheet if their life depended on it.

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

**Ms. Andrea Horwath:** These would be the same small businesses that don't want the Premier's campaign stickers on their gas tanks.

At some point, the Premier has to realize that funding cuts and insults are no way to build a health care system. Yesterday, the chair of the Kingston, Frontenac and Lennox and Addington Board of Health laid out the dangers of public health cuts: "We simply cannot afford to have any infectious outbreak, like SARS, or water contamination event, like Walkerton...."

“History tells us the next threat is just around the corner.”

These cuts to our health care system put all of us at risk, Speaker. Do we have to wait until the next disaster before the Premier understands what happens when you roll the dice with health care cuts?

**Hon. Doug Ford:** Deputy Premier and Minister of Health.

**Hon. Christine Elliott:** The reality is that we are investing more money in health care, over \$1 billion more in health care. But I think it’s important to note that we are focusing on what matters the most, what counts the most. We were elected by the people last June to do that. People know that we were spending over \$40 million a day more than we were taking in. That is not sustainable.

We are asking our public health units to do the same: to focus on the key priorities; to focus on the things that count the most; to make sure that children get vaccinated; to make sure that the school breakfast programs continue; to make sure that children with special needs continue to get the help they get. If they continue to focus on those priorities, there will be enough money to make sure those basics are covered.

But what happened with the city of Toronto? What have they done? They’ve had a surplus in their public health budget over the last 10 years to a total of \$52 million. In other parts of their budget, they’ve spent money with tree maintenance programs—

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

#### CHILD CARE

**Ms. Andrea Horwath:** My next question is to the Premier. But I have to say, it’s pretty disgusting that this government promised no cuts to health care and no cuts to education in that campaign, and yet that’s exactly what they’re doing. If public health is not the most important issue, I don’t know what is.

Parents across Ontario are worried about the Premier’s reckless cuts to child care across Ontario. Yesterday, the Premier dismissed concerns from his former ally, the deputy mayor of Toronto, but virtually every municipality across Ontario is facing direct cuts to child care funding.

Today, mothers from across Ontario have come to Queen’s Park to express their concern. Will the Premier listen, or will he tell them not to meddle in issues that they don’t understand?

**Hon. Doug Ford:** Minister of Education.

**Hon. Lisa M. Thompson:** First of all, I would like to share a quote from a press release titled “Licensed Day Care Operators See Opportunities for Municipal Savings.” I’d like to quote specifically what I shared with you yesterday: “‘The reaction by some municipal officials has been totally over the top,’ says Andrea Hannen, executive director of the Association of Day Care Operators of Ontario. ‘It’s like they want families to start panicking. The fact of the matter is there has been a lot of waste in the system for a very, very long time.’”

The fact is, we recognize that there’s opportunity to realize efficiencies, but most importantly, we recognize that we must make sure that parents are the centre of every decision around child care for their families, as opposed to governments telling them where they need to go and what they need to do.

More importantly, making sure that parents are part of the decision-making is central, but we also want to make sure that we’re leaving money in parents’ pockets. Our child care plan is going to enable 300,000 families—

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

**Ms. Andrea Horwath:** Apparently, parents in this minister’s own riding wrote an open letter today, begging her to fund child care. Not-for-profit, high-quality, affordable child care is what parents want.

The Premier is creating a crisis here, and it won’t disappear just because he denies that it’s happening or insults people who raise concerns.

**1050**

One parent joining us today is from the riding of Huron–Bruce. She warns that the government cuts to child care will “make child care harder to access, more expensive and will put young children and families at risk.”

Does the Premier deny that his cuts will impact families who rely on programs that are losing funding?

**Hon. Lisa M. Thompson:** Again, just like any MPP in our government, we encourage all our constituents to come to us directly and work with us. The fact of the matter is that we look forward to meeting with our constituents, because we are absolutely listening to our grassroots. Our grassroots have told us that they are tired of government taking money out of their pockets left and right, and so the fact of the matter is that we’re making sure that families feel supported like no other time before over the last 15 years.

We’re investing over \$2 billion, as I said. Any family that has children or has a child between the ages of zero and seven actually gets support of \$6,000 a year per child in the family. Over and above that, from ages seven to 16, they get a supportive tax credit of \$7,750, and families with special-needs children can get a \$8,250 tax credit.

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

**Ms. Andrea Horwath:** Speaker, the fact is that this government kept these cuts hidden from families, because they know how shameful and heartless they really are, and they know they are targeting families who are in the most need in our province.

The Premier did not receive a mandate to slash not-for-profit child care funding for families across Ontario. That was not what he promised on the campaign trail. Nobody voted to see fewer options for affordable child care. Why is the government targeting children and low-income families with these cuts?

*Interjections.*

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

**Hon. Lisa M. Thompson:** Again, this is about getting things right, and we know that across the province there are opportunities not only for the likes of the city of Toronto but municipalities across Ontario to take a look at their administration and realize some efficiencies, to make sure that the focus of child care supports coming from my ministry is focused on families.

Again, we are making sure that there is flexibility, affordability and accessibility to all families in every corner of this province. We are actually making sure that for the first time, people have a right to choose between in-centre care, home care or summer camps. The fact of the matter is that all of those expenses will be covered off: 75% of child care expenses will be covered off by our CARE tax credit.

The fact of the matter is that we are getting it right. We've listened to parents, and shame on this govern—this opposition for—

*Interjections.*

**Hon. Lisa M. Thompson:** —the official opposition of government—

*Interjections.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott):** I'm going to ask the opposition to come to order.

**Mr. Taras Natyshak:** That was a Freudian slip.

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

#### EDUCATION FUNDING

**Ms. Andrea Horwath:** My next question is for the Premier, but I have to say it is not right; it is wrong to cut on the backs of the most vulnerable families and children in our province. It is wrong, not right. It's wrong.

The Premier's cuts are being felt across Ontario in schools from one end of the province to the other. Just this week we've seen reports of nearly 40 classes being removed from a secondary school in Stouffville, with subjects like media studies, music, history and French all being scrapped because the Premier fired the people who teach those courses.

Does the Premier really think it's appropriate to target cuts at our students?

**Hon. Doug Ford:** Mr. Speaker, it's very difficult to sit here and listen to the inaccurate statements—just totally inaccurate. I'll tell you what we did promise: We promised to get a bankrupt province out of bankruptcy, to make sure we protect the real people in this province, the people who are working in the factories, people working in offices, struggling to pay their mortgage. We're lowering their taxes.

We created 123,000 jobs. There are 123,000 people who weren't working before, because before, businesses didn't have any confidence in the Liberal government or the NDP government. They're as happy as punch right now that we're being fiscally responsible. We're driving the economy. We're making sure we're creating good-paying jobs. Companies are flooding in all over the place.

So the students up there—their parents are going to have a sustainable job. They're going to have lower taxes,

they're going to have lower bills because of our government, not because of the spendthrift NDP and Liberal policies.

*Interjections.*

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

Restart the clock. Supplementary question.

**Ms. Andrea Horwath:** Well, Speaker, struggling families are struggling even more under this government, and you know what? They're struggling because they didn't get their \$15 minimum wage, which is what they should have got to help actually pay the bills.

But look, the question was about students, and so I'm going to get back to that. For many students, these classes laid out a clear path toward fulfilling post-secondary education and a career. Now they are being left to try to piece together a schedule that doesn't reflect their interests or their potential.

Ontario students are watching as the Premier tears up their plans for their education, leaving them to pick up the pieces. Why is the Premier so determined—

*Interjections.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott):** Stop the clock. There is a standing order that says that interjections are out of order. That means you can't yell across the floor at the person who has the floor.

I apologize to the Leader of the Opposition for interrupting. Restart the clock. She has the floor.

**Ms. Andrea Horwath:** The question is, why is the Premier so determined to leave Ontario students with less options in our schools and fewer prospects after they graduate?

**Hon. Doug Ford:** Minister of Education.

**Hon. Lisa M. Thompson:** Speaker, the Leader of the Opposition is doing nothing but filling people with absolute rhetoric. That is nonsense. It's not true.

She and the opposition party behind her are actually doing a disservice, because the fact of the matter is, we're going to be working with school boards. We have an attrition protection program, for goodness' sake—\$1.6 billion. Not one teacher is going to involuntarily lose their job. If there is a teacher who is going to be retiring who perhaps teaches math, perhaps teaches a technology program or perhaps teaches arts, we are going to make sure that—

**The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott):** The Minister of Education will take her seat.

*Interjections.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott):** I had to interrupt. I'm going to call the member for Davenport to order and the member for Waterloo to order.

Next question.

**Hon. Lisa M. Thompson:** Shame on you guys.

**The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott):** The Minister of Education will come to order.

**Hon. Lisa M. Thompson:** Fearmongers.

**The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott):** The Minister of Education will come to order.

Next question.

## NURSES

**Ms. Natalia Kusendova:** My question is for the Premier of Ontario. Nurses are an incredibly important and valued part of Ontario's health care system. In fact, they are its backbone. They deliver high-quality, compassionate, patient-centred care that Ontario's patients and families can rely on.

That is why I am so proud to stand in this Legislature to celebrate National Nursing Week. I am also proud to be a part of a government that values the hard work of Ontario's nurses.

Mr. Speaker, could the Premier please explain to the members of this Legislature why it is so important to celebrate National Nursing Week in our province?

**Hon. Doug Ford:** Through you, Mr. Speaker: I'd like to thank the great member from Mississauga Centre for the question. You do an incredible—

*Interjections.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott):** Premier, I'm going to have to interrupt. Stop the clock. I'm going to have to interrupt.

*Interjection.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott):** I have to interrupt. Please take your seat. The clock is stopped.

The member for Waterloo and the Minister of Education have to come to order.

Start the clock. Premier?

1100

**Hon. Doug Ford:** Thank you, Speaker. We have to recognize National Nursing Week, because they're incredible people. I said throughout the campaign, and the opposition wants to make fun of me saying, I love the nurses. I truly do love the nurses, because I've had many experiences—like all of us have. When you take a loved one into the hospital, of course, the doctors are there overseeing everything, but the backbone of every single hospital is the nurses. The nurses are there around the clock. The nurses are taking care of the patients and making sure they're feeling better. There is no one that appreciates nurses more than our team, our caucus, our PC government. We're going to make sure we take care of the nurses because, again, they are the backbone of every hospital throughout—

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

**Ms. Natalia Kusendova:** I thank the Premier for his response. There is no doubt that our nurses right here in Ontario are the best. I know that it means a lot to everyone in the health care sector that we have steadfast leadership in our Premier and our Minister of Health and Long-Term Care, who care so deeply about what matters the most. That is why I am proud to be part of a government that supports the hard work and sacrifices of our nurses across Ontario. Our government is committed to supporting front-line nurses by ensuring that they have the tools they need to provide the highest quality patient-centred care for Ontarians.

Could the Premier please inform this House what our government is doing to support nurses across Ontario?

**Hon. Doug Ford:** Through you, Mr. Speaker, I forgot to mention that the MPP from Mississauga is actually a nurse. She's actually a nurse. No one understands it better. My Minister of Labour was a nurse. We have lots of nurses, so we hear first-hand their needs—first-hand. When it's in the middle of the night and they have two nurses on duty on a whole floor, that's what concerns our government. We need to support our nurses and we will support our nurses because, again, when the patients need help and they need to be taken care of, who takes care of them? The nurses. So we need to take care of the nurses. I can assure the nurses out there they will be well taken care of. We'll listen to their concerns because no one understands the health care sector better than the front-line people, the nurses that are there day in and day out. They see the struggles. They see the struggles with the patients; they see the struggles with the doctors and the nurses. Nurses are absolute champions.

## GOVERNMENT SPENDING

**Mr. Taras Natyshak:** My question is to the Premier. Yesterday, John Tory, the distinguished mayor of Toronto and former leader of the Premier's party, said that, since the Premier had so many budgeting suggestions for the city of Toronto, maybe the city of Toronto would reciprocate by helping the Ford government find waste in their own budget.

New Democrats would like to help the mayor identify the most wasteful spending in the Ford government's budget, but we're struggling to decide between them, which ones. There's the House leader's secret junket to India, the finance minister's visit to the Big Apple, the current billion-dollar Beer Store boondoggle, and, of course, who could forget the Premier's off-the-books personal pleasure wagon?

Can the Premier help us help Mayor Tory?

**Hon. Doug Ford:** I'd be more than happy to help the city of Toronto find savings. I was down there for four years. We saved over \$1 billion. Where's the savings now? All you've seen in the city of Toronto is the budget go up by billions of dollars over the last number of years. The services have gone down and the spending's gone up. Who goes out and buys a \$10-million fleet and has it sitting in the basement and does nothing? Who goes around paying people to water stumps of trees?

The auditor from the city of Toronto has given them a lengthy list of savings, and guess what, Mr. Speaker. The city of Toronto has ignored them. Name one efficiency, anyone in this room, one efficiency Toronto has found in the last five or six years. I can tell you, not one—not one single efficiency. All they do is waste money. They're part of the NDP-Liberal little gang over there that loves to spend—

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

**Mr. Taras Natyshak:** Speaker, we know that we've barely scratched the surface when it comes to this government's indefensible spending, but we understand the

Premier has asked Mayor Tory not to meddle in provincial affairs. The Premier has criticized the mayor for “irresponsibly wading into provincial issues” that he is either not involved in or doesn’t understand. We get it, Speaker. It’s annoying when another level of government irresponsibly wades into issues that they aren’t involved in and they really don’t understand. Speaker, can the Premier explain why he does it so often?

*Interjections.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott):** Members of the opposition, please take your seats.

Premier.

**Hon. Doug Ford:** Through you, Mr. Speaker: The city of Toronto has over a \$13-billion budget. We just took over \$20 billion off their books on backlog repairs.

*Interjection.*

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

**Hon. Doug Ford:** We’re delivering a \$28.5-billion transit system. We’re giving Toronto health \$433 million. We’re supporting the city of Toronto like no other government.

I remember one thing, Mr. Speaker: When I was at the city of Toronto, we never came hat in hand to the government, not once, because as they were spending, we were saving; as they were raising taxes, we were lowering taxes. As a matter of fact, the first year, we delivered a 0% tax increase. They don’t understand that.

Just imagine if they took care of all their constituents who voted for them and ran their government, and we ran ours. They’d be bankrupt in a month, absolutely bankrupt.

*Interjections.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott):** The member for Essex has to come to order. The member for Ottawa Centre has to come to order.

Next question.

#### MENTAL HEALTH AND ADDICTION SERVICES

**Mr. Vijay Thanigasalam:** My question is for the Deputy Premier and Minister of Health and Long-Term Care.

This week is Mental Health Week. It is an important time to raise awareness to help end the stigma around mental health. That’s why I’m very proud to be part of a government that is committed to developing and implementing a comprehensive and connected mental health and addiction strategy, not just this week but every week.

I hear time and time again from my constituents of the riding of Scarborough–Rouge Park that people cannot access the mental health and addiction services when and where they need it. We need to do better.

Mr. Speaker, would the minister please inform the members of this Legislature what is being done to support Ontarians living with mental health and addictions challenges?

**Hon. Christine Elliott:** Thank you very much to the member from Scarborough–Rouge Park for this question. I know this is a really important issue for you as well.

Ontario’s mental health system is disconnected, making it difficult for patients and families to get the care they need when they need it. This fragmented approach to treating Ontario’s families is simply not good enough. That’s why our government has added desperately needed mental health and addiction services on the ground, in schools, communities and health centres across the province.

I was proud to announce yesterday that our government is investing \$174 million in new funding to address the critical gaps in Ontario’s system and to support patients and families living with mental health and addictions challenges.

**The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott):** Supplementary.

**Mr. Vijay Thanigasalam:** I thank the minister for her response. There is no doubt that our mental health and addictions system needs immediate action. We need better wraparound services so that the people of Ontario are supported in their mental health and addiction challenges. My constituents and everyone in Ontario will certainly benefit from these community services. I’m proud to be part of a government that takes mental health very seriously.

Mr. Speaker, could the minister please inform the members of this Legislature what this investment of \$174 million will be used for?

**Hon. Christine Elliott:** Thank you very much again to the member. Our government is keeping our promise to the people of Ontario to make mental health and addiction services a priority. That is why we are taking a multi-ministerial approach to Ontario’s mental health and addictions challenges.

This funding will go directly toward services for patients and families, and help reduce wait times, enhance opioid and addictions services, create additional housing, build capacity in child and youth mental health, support our men and women in uniform, and add services for seniors, Francophones and Ontario’s Indigenous peoples.

These investments are part of our government’s commitment to spend \$3.8 billion over 10 years in mental health and addiction services. Together, we will create a connected system of care that will make sure that services are available for individuals and families throughout their journey to mental wellness.

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#### AUTISM TREATMENT

**Miss Monique Taylor:** My question is for the Premier. The new Ontario Autism Program was supposed to start April 1. Thousands of families across the province have waited anxiously for the new programs. Yet, to date, not one family in Ontario has received their childhood budget.

This government’s reckless rollout of their autism program has actually left parents waiting longer. Families feel like they have been shifted from a bad Liberal wait-

list to a Conservative one, with absolutely no end in sight. Premier, how much longer will families have to wait to get the funding for services for their children?

**Hon. Doug Ford:** Minister of Transportation.

**Hon. Jeff Yurek:** Thanks very much to the member opposite for that question.

Last year, we came out with a new program for autism in Ontario. Not only did we double the funding, but we went to work at a system that clearly wasn't working for Ontarians. Only one out of four children received treatment from their government. We worked to end that wait-list so that four out of four children are going to receive treatment—to support the children with autism throughout this province. We're doing just that, not only with our ways to clear the wait-list, but also we're going to support it with clear funding. We're upping the funding to \$600 million. We've just started a consultation process to see how we can best move forward towards a needs-based program. This is what parents have been asking for, and we're going to deliver that.

I hope the opposite member will join us in that consultation to develop a program together to ensure that children with autism are truly supported.

**The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott):** Supplementary question.

**Miss Monique Taylor:** Just so the minister knows, I've been talking to families for eight years. You can't put out programs before you talk to parents. It's backwards.

Families have no idea when they will receive funding for their children with autism. Families who were next on the list under the old OAP are still waiting. It's not clear if this government is withholding funds deliberately or if they're delayed just because they design programs on the fly.

Families shouldn't have to wait for the Conservatives to get their house in order. Premier, when can families expect to receive not just application packages but actual funding to purchase the services that their children need?

**Hon. Jeff Yurek:** Thanks very much for that question. Previously, prior to our changes, three out of four children in this province were not receiving any funding and were indefinitely placed on a wait-list. It seems like the member opposite and the opposition want to return to that type of system, where three out of four children in this province do not receive any funding and have zero hope to get off of that wait-list.

We're making the change in this province. We're putting more money, and the minister has put more money, into the system. We're working to make sure that four out of four children with autism receive the support and care that they need in this province.

Not only have we started consultations for a needs-based system, but we're working with the Ministry of Health and the Ministry of Education to create wraparound services. It's something the opposition has been asking for: wraparound services for children with autism. We're going to continue to deliver on that program. We're consulting right now. We're listening to parents. I would hope the members opposite would work with us to help parents

with children with autism get the supports and services they need.

## FUNDRAISING

**Mr. John Fraser:** My question is for the Premier. Speaker, through you to the Premier: Premier, I hope you slept well, to dreams of your double-dip dodge.

I want to follow up on that question that I asked you yesterday. Now that you've had time to think about it, I'd like to present to you some new facts: On April 29, \$85,000 was deposited to your leadership campaign, on the way to Conservative Party coffers. Forty-six people donated the maximum. That's just in the last two weeks.

Speaker, the Premier knows this is wrong. It's an unfair advantage. He knows that not any other member in this Legislature can do this. It's wrong, and he knows it—I know that.

Through you to the Premier, Speaker: Does the Premier believe there's one rule for him and another rule for the people?

**Hon. Doug Ford:** Through you, Mr. Speaker: I think our MPP the leader of the Liberal independent party or Liberal Party—whatever you want to call them—forgets the \$20,000-a-plate dinners that he would go to with the Premier, with the minister, running around. They actually had to change the rules because of what was going on for the pay-to-play. It was called pay-to-play under the previous Liberal government. You go spend \$20,000 and you get to have a one-on-one with the minister. You might even be able to get a one-on-one with the Premier.

We're raising money around the province with \$25 spaghetti dinners. The majority of our—we'll put out a statement, Mr. Speaker, and between \$5, \$10 and \$25, we'll raise \$100,000 because people believe in our message. They believe in what we're doing. They believe we're turning the province around and putting more money in their pockets.

**The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott):** Supplementary question.

**Mr. John Fraser:** The Premier might want to check his own website, because the LCBO chair is raising money for his finance minister, and it's not a \$25 spaghetti dinner.

Premier, on April 29, 34 people exceeded their annual contribution limits. You asked them. You said, "Give me money for my leadership and then give me some more money for the Conservative Party." And you know that this is wrong—

**The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott):** You have to make your comments through the Chair, and the question has to be relevant.

**Mr. John Fraser:** Thank you, Speaker. The Premier knows that this is wrong. Okay?

You're closing in on three quarters of a million dollars to a leadership campaign that was paid off a year ago. The millionaire Premier and the millionaire finance minister may believe that this is okay; for regular folks, this is a lot of money.



So I want to ask the Premier one more time: Does he believe there's a rule just for him—

**The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott):** Thank you. The Premier to reply.

**Hon. Doug Ford:** Through you, Mr. Speaker: We had to change the rules because of all the nonsense going on with the Liberal Party. They were filled with scandals, deceit, backroom deals—

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

**Hon. Doug Ford:** Withdraw.

Mr. Speaker, they were attending \$20,000-a-plate dinners. We're raising money from people, again, with \$5, \$25, \$30 donations.

They actually changed the greenbelt boundaries to suit their developer buddies. They switched them. As a matter of fact, they switched the greenbelt 19 times to suit their development buddies—19 times. We would even mention it, and people go wild. They changed it 19 times, because it's called pay-to-play under the Liberal Party.

#### DENTAL CARE

**Mr. Daryl Kramp:** My question today is to the minister everyone loves, the caring Minister for Seniors and Accessibility.

Recently, the Minister for Seniors and Accessibility and our Minister of Health and Long-Term Care announced publicly funded dental care for low-income seniors. No senior in Ontario should ever, ever have to go without quality dental care. Yet, we know many seniors live on a fixed income, and two thirds of our low-income seniors do not have any access to dental insurance.

Mr. Speaker, could the Minister for Seniors and Accessibility please inform this House of what our government is doing for low-income seniors with their dental care?

**Hon. Raymond Sung Joon Cho:** Mr. Speaker, through you, I'd like to thank the very hard-working member for raising a very important question.

Our government is protecting what matters most: our seniors. We recognize that living on a fixed income can create gaps in care, something that many seniors in Ontario face. That's why we introduced our dental care program for low-income seniors, which will help reduce unnecessary trips to the hospital, prevent chronic disease and increase quality of life for our seniors.

During the campaign, we promised dental care for our low-income seniors, and this government introduced the program in our—

**The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott):** Thank you. I'm going to ask the minister to take his seat.

Supplementary question.

**Mr. Daryl Kramp:** I certainly thank the minister for his response. I know seniors in my constituency, and literally in every constituency of every member here, certainly need a program such as this. This is a program that takes the health needs of our seniors seriously. Not only,

though, is it beneficial for our seniors, but it's also beneficial for our larger public health care system here in the province of Ontario.

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So, can the minister as well please explain how this program contributes to our government's larger plan that's going to modernize the Ontario health care system, end hallway health care, and finally bring proper care back to our seniors in this province?

**Hon. Raymond Sung Joon Cho:** Thank you for the supplementary question. I would like to refer that question to the hard-working and my favourite Minister of Health and Long-Term Care.

**Hon. Christine Elliott:** Thank you very much. Thank you to the member from Hastings-Lennox and Addington as well for the original question.

Preventable dental issues lead to more than 60,000 emergency room visits per year, a significant portion of which are seniors. This puts a strain on our hospitals and is a failure to our seniors.

No senior in Ontario should go without quality dental care. That's why we are investing nearly \$90 million per year in dental care for low-income seniors. Public health units, community health centres, Aboriginal health access centres and mobile dental buses will assist Ontario seniors with their dental needs. Ontario seniors can be confident that their public health care system will be there for them when and where they need it.

#### LEGAL AID

**Ms. Sara Singh:** My question is to the Acting Premier. Speaker, legal aid clinics are looking at an approximate \$16-million cut to their overall budgets.

The South Asian Legal Clinic is but one of 73 legal aid clinics in this province. They, like others across our province right now, provide counsel and legal representation to some of the most vulnerable people here in our province, like a woman they refer to as Miriam, a new immigrant and a tenant in Mississauga. Her landlord kept turning up at her unit without a notice. On one occasion, she complained that her landlord even assaulted her. After that came a threat of eviction. The legal aid clinic worked with Miriam to ensure that she was not evicted, and to get the compensation that she deserved for her injuries.

Speaker, where does the Premier suggest thousands of people like Miriam go to get the help they need?

*Interruption.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott):** Stop the clock. You have to leave. Those of you who are protesting have to leave.

*Interjections.*

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

*Interjections.*

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

*Interjections.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott):** The member for Northumberland–Peterborough South is warned.

The member for Sarnia–Lambton will come to order. The member for Niagara Centre will come to order.

**Mr. Taras Natyshak:** Do you want to kick the media out?

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

**Hon. John Yakabuski:** The media is right there.

**The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott):** The Minister of Natural Resources and Forestry will come to order.

Where were we? Start the clock. The Deputy Premier has the floor.

**Hon. Christine Elliott:** To the Attorney General, Speaker.

**Hon. Caroline Mulroney:** I will be very happy to answer the question from the member opposite and speak to the vital services that legal aid provides, including to people such as Miriam, but I do want to point out that the photographer from the opposition party has been in the gallery today and it looks as though the opposition has been coordinating an effort to disrupt this House—

*Interjections.*

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

Start the clock. The Attorney General, please conclude your response.

**Hon. Caroline Mulroney:** Mr. Speaker, legal aid provides vital services, and that is why it is essential that we do everything we can to ensure that it has accountability and transparency and that it is sending the hundreds of millions of taxpayer dollars to the front-line services that are so desperately needed. Over the last few years, we have seen legal aid spending almost \$100 million more. Legal aid clients and taxpayers have not been seeing the results that they should expect from that kind of investment, Mr. Speaker, and therefore—

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

**Ms. Sara Singh:** A worker we will refer to as Imran worked for an employer who paid him only \$7 an hour, even though our minimum wage here in this province is \$14. The legal aid clinic helped Imran make an employment standards claim for his wages, overtime and termination pay. Imran says that without that help, he would not have been able to get what was owed to him, and he is grateful for the clinic's support.

This government's cut put these clinics at risk of closure, and the Attorney General knows that this is the case. Is it the Premier's intention to close legal aid clinics so that people like Imran can't get the wages that they are actually owed?

**Hon. Caroline Mulroney:** Mr. Speaker, legal aid has said itself that front-line services will continue to remain strong, so the services that people such as Imran have received will continue to be offered. Legal aid has a budget of over \$400 million this year and will have even more if the federal government commits to pay the funding that it is responsible for. While some lawyers may not welcome

this renewed accountability at legal aid, it is essential for legal aid clients and for the taxpayer of Ontario that is spending so much money to ensure that those people in Ontario who cannot afford legal representation are able to get that.

## ADDICTION SERVICES

**Mrs. Marie-France Lalonde:** Ma question est pour la vice-première ministre. For 20 years, Gambling Research Exchange Ontario has been studying problem gambling and finding ways to help reduce the harm of gambling, providing resources to front-line agencies to prevent gambling addictions. Last week, the government announced that it is cutting their entire budget, shutting down the organization.

Speaker, as this government continues its crusade to expand alcohol and gaming access across Ontario, including free alcohol in casinos, why is this government not concerned about those most vulnerable people affected by gambling addictions?

**Hon. Christine Elliott:** I thank the member very much for the question. Of course, we are concerned about people with gambling addictions, but we are also concerned about making sure that we put resources on the front line where people really need the assistance. We have made the decision to redirect all available resources to the front lines. We have to wind down some of the research programs. We are committed to supporting an effective and respectful wind-down period for the gambling research exchange organization.

However, we are continuing to invest in programs to prevent gambling addiction and to ensure treatment programs such as, with respect to prevention, funding of the Responsible Gambling Council, YMCA, and the Ontario Aboriginal responsible gambling program made up of seven Indigenous organizations to implement community-based gambling prevention initiatives targeted at populations at risk, including children and youth and ethno-cultural and Indigenous communities.

I will have more to say in the supplementary.

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**The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott):** Supplementary question.

**Mrs. Marie-France Lalonde:** I appreciate the Deputy Premier's answer, but compared to the net profits of gambling of over \$2.4 billion, the \$2.5-million annual budget to fund research into problem gaming, I would say, is fair and reasonable, especially since we know all too well in this House the effect that problem gambling can have on individuals and families.

Speaker, this cut follows the trend of this government's retreat from its responsibilities to Ontarians' public well-being, from public health, autism, child care, legal aid, children with disabilities—the list goes on, Mr. Speaker. On top of that, we can now add problem gambling.

This government has talked about paying down the deficit. It is willing to pay the cost to have beer in corner stores, but it is unwilling to deal with gambling addiction.

Can the Deputy Premier explain the rationale of not looking—

**The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott):** Thank you. The minister to reply.

**Hon. Christine Elliott:** Thank you. Our government is committed to protecting what matters most. We are committed to protecting our education system, with an additional \$700 million going into that, and with protecting our health care system, with an additional \$1.3 billion going into our health care system.

But we also are committed to respecting adult choices by allowing people to make responsible choices that work for them. This includes ensuring that the people of Ontario have access to safe and legal gambling options. We've already spoken about prevention, but in terms of treatment, it's also important to note that we fund 94 agencies across the province who offer problem-gambling services, including treatment for co-occurring substance use programs.

So we are addressing the problem, but we want to make sure that the services go directly to the front lines. That's what we're committed to doing, and that's what we are going to make sure happens across the province.

#### RED TAPE REDUCTION

**Ms. Christine Hogarth:** My question is for the Minister of Transportation. Last week, the Minister of Transportation introduced legislation called the Getting Ontario Moving Act. It includes a number of proposed measures that, if passed, will cut red tape, reduce regulatory burdens and keep Ontario open for business.

Our government for the people was elected last June with a mandate to grow our economy and make life easier for Ontarians. We have been acting fast to attract new investment, to create and protect jobs, and to reduce regulatory burdens by cutting red tape for businesses.

The majority of us in this Legislature can all agree that a successful business cannot run when they are burdened with debt and red tape. I know that last week's proposed legislation contained a number of measures that, if passed, would cut red tape and reduce burdens for businesses and Ontarians. Can the Minister of Transportation share some of the proposed measures in the Getting Ontario Moving Act and regulatory postings?

**Hon. Jeff Yurek:** I'd like to thank the member for Etobicoke–Lakeshore for that question. Last week, I was proud to introduce the Getting Ontario Moving Act. This comprehensive piece of legislation, if passed, will cut red tape, save businesses and taxpayers time and money, and help keep Ontario's roads amongst the safest in North America. In addition to the legislation, we'll also be changing many regulations to meet these goals.

We are doing this because it's fundamental to our efforts to put people first, getting Ontario moving and ensuring businesses are not bogged down by red tape.

Some of the measures we are proposing to cut and reduce are: making life easier for people with personal-use pickup trucks and trailers by changing regulations to

exempt them from burdensome annual inspections; and reducing the burden on the short-line railway industry by addressing concerns from the industry for the ministry to develop a risk-based short-line rail oversight burden reduction strategy.

Mr. Speaker, I look forward to sharing more in my supplemental.

**The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott):** Supplementary question.

**Ms. Christine Hogarth:** Thank you to the Minister of Transportation for that great answer. I know the community of Etobicoke–Lakeshore will be pleased with the proposed measures.

Across this province, individuals who own a pickup truck or a personal trailer have to go through the time and expense of getting them inspected as if they were commercial vehicles. This proposed change, if passed, will change that and give people exemptions for personal-use vehicles.

Additionally, I know that six freight and four tourist short-line rail operations that are licensed by the province will be thrilled about the burden reduction for this industry if this industry's proposed changes are passed.

Can the Minister of Transportation tell us more about the burden-reduction measures introduced last week?

**Hon. Jeff Yurek:** Thanks again to the member from Etobicoke–Lakeshore for that question.

The Getting Ontario Moving Act, if passed, will make life easier for tourism operators and recreational off-road vehicle drivers by simplifying the rules around off-road vehicles to allow them to operate on municipal roads, unless specifically prohibited. Additionally, a proposed regulatory change will amend the vehicle weights and dimensions regulation to allow for the use of advanced technologies, such as wide-base single tires. This will harmonize our rules with other jurisdictions to improve industry productivity, reduce fuel consumption and improve road safety, demonstrating to everyone in the world that Ontario is open for business.

Mr. Speaker, these are but just a few great examples of the proposed measures in the Getting Ontario Moving Act and proposed regulation changes. "For the People" is not just a slogan; it's our guiding principle that drives us each and every day in government. Our government wants to keep goods and people moving by improving its transportation network. It's what we were elected to do and it's what we're going to deliver to this province.

#### TREE PLANTING

**Ms. Judith Monteith-Farrell:** My question is for the Acting Premier. Yesterday I asked about the demise of the 50 Million Tree Program and its devastating impact on both the environment and businesses like Ferguson Tree Nursery in Kemptville and Millson Forestry in Timmins. According to Ed Patchell from Kemptville, his business will have to destroy three million trees that were intended to be planted in 2020 and 2021.

The minister said, "Mr. Patchell, I'm sure, when he examines what's really happening, will want to change his statement." Mr. Patchell stands by his statement. How can

this government justify cuts that force businesses to literally throw trees in the trash?

**Hon. Doug Ford:** To the great Minister of Natural Resources.

**Hon. John Yakabuski:** I thank the member for the question. As I said yesterday, the planting of the trees that is scheduled and contracted for this year will go ahead. Forests Ontario has already indicated that they are looking for other sources to fund the further planting of trees on private property—which also makes it eligible for a MFTIP reduction in taxes.

Speaker, we are going to ensure that the trees that were contracted for this year will be planted. For further years, Forests Ontario and the nurseries have ample time to look for private funding to plant trees on private property. We want to see that continue, but the taxpayer of Ontario, who was left a \$15-billion deficit by the previous Liberal government, which was supported every step of the way by the NDP, must make choices. Our choice is that we're going to have those trees planted this year, but in the future—

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

**Ms. Judith Monteith-Farrell:** Again to the Premier: Yesterday the Minister of Natural Resources and Forestry stated that every tree contracted under the 50 Million Tree Program this year will be planted, but according to Forests Ontario, planting this year's trees was never in question.

The problem the government has not addressed, however, is the tree seedlings that are already being cultivated to be planted for future years. Tree seedlings take approximately three years to grow, as I know the minister knows, because for southern Ontario, they need to be a certain size in order to be viable. This is the unsolved problem for these businesses.

Will the Premier do the right thing and reverse his decision to cut the 50 Million Tree Program?

**Hon. John Yakabuski:** As I have said, the trees that are contracted for this year will be planted. Forests Ontario and all their partners have ample time before next year's planting season and the season after that to do as they have indicated they are going to do, which is to go to the private sector to find that funding to fill that funding gap.

Speaker, we've made it clear: We campaigned on a promise to fix the fiscal mess we were left by the Liberal government, which, as the member knows, was supported by her party every step of the way. We are doing that and we are making sure that it's done in a responsible way, so that the trees that have been contracted for this year will be planted. In further years, Forests Ontario and its partners have to make alternative arrangements, because we have said to the taxpayers of Ontario that we're going to fix the mess that was left to us, and this is part of the decision that we've had to make.

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#### ASTHMA

**Mr. Will Bouma:** My question is for the Deputy Premier and the Minister of Health and Long-Term Care.

Approximately two million people in Ontario currently live with asthma. Living with asthma can be challenging—never knowing when it's going to flare up or how severe it's going to be, making it hard to breathe. I know the fear of watching helplessly as one of my boys has struggled to breathe after just normal activities. That's why it's so important for my constituents and for the people of Ontario to have proper asthma supports.

Mr. Speaker, could the minister please explain to the members of this Legislature how our government is supporting people in Ontario who are living with asthma?

**Hon. Christine Elliott:** Thank you very much to the member from Brantford—Brant for your question. I know it's personally very important to you, as it is for many people.

I'm very grateful that the people from Asthma Canada are here today.

Mr. Speaker, did you know that one in three people will develop asthma in his or her lifetime and one in four children will be affected by asthma? Uncontrolled asthma can lead to school and work absenteeism and increases in urgent and acute health care needs.

That's why our government is investing up to \$4 million in the asthma program. Our government recognizes the need for a coordinated, integrated approach to asthma care in order to improve health outcomes. We will continue to work and listen to partners in front-line care to find innovative solutions and build a health care system that will truly work for the people of Ontario living with asthma.

**The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott):** Supplementary question?

**Mr. Will Bouma:** I'd like to thank the minister for her response and for her excellent work on this file in this incredible ministry.

There is no doubt that asthma is a serious health issue that needs to be properly addressed. That's why I am so proud to be a part of a government that supports people living with asthma in the province of Ontario. Together, we will create a connected, sustainable, public health care system that truly works for everyone in Ontario.

Mr. Speaker, could the minister please inform the members of this Legislature how our government's plan to modernize the health care system will benefit people across Ontario living with asthma?

**Hon. Christine Elliott:** Thank you again to the member.

Mr. Speaker, we have committed to the people of Ontario to build a modern, sustainable and integrated health system and to end hallway health care. Every step of the way, we have put people at the centre of our decisions. We are empowering our nurses and doctors to provide better, faster, integrated care.

I know the people living with asthma will appreciate a better-connected health care system, one that ensures that they will get connected to the right specialist care, where they don't have to repeat their health care situation over and over again, because all of their care providers will have access to the same health records. These are the kinds

of changes that are needed to deliver care that is truly focused on the patients, on their families and on their caregivers.

### RESEARCH AND INNOVATION

**Ms. Laura Mae Lindo:** My question is to the Acting Premier.

Last year, the President of the Treasury Board warned that funding for innovation hubs was on the chopping block. For Communitech in Waterloo region, this warning became a reality last week, when they were forced to lay off 15 of their innovators due to the Conservative funding cuts. The government has no research and innovation plan for the province, but innovation hubs like Communitech actually do. Communitech does way more than simply support the tech industry in Kitchener-Waterloo. From arts to finance, they have spurred innovation in every facet of Waterloo region's economic development. These cuts will have a chilling effect on innovation in the region.

Why is the government cutting investment to our province's most successful economic drivers?

**Hon. Doug Ford:** President of the Treasury Board.

*Interjections.*

**Hon. Peter Bethlenfalvy:** I'm glad that my colleagues remember who I am here in the front row.

Mr. Speaker, through you to the member opposite: Thank you for that question.

I was just in Cambridge a few weeks ago. I've been there many times. I visited the Communitech facilities there. They do a great job.

Our government is continuing to focus on innovation. We have helped create 123,000 new jobs in this province, with which Communitech has played a role. I'm very pleased to say that we continue to be one of the largest funders for Communitech. But there has to be a bridge to somewhere, and the private sector has gotten involved. In fact, there were a number of companies at my speech in Cambridge that supported Communitech and will continue to support the good work that they're doing.

This government is focused on protecting good jobs in this province, and we're proud to work with Communitech to continue that path forward.

**The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott):** Supplementary question? The member for Waterloo.

**Ms. Catherine Fife:** Communitech in Kitchener-Waterloo has a proven track record of success. For every public dollar that is invested through Communitech, \$22 is returned to the economy. Mr. Speaker, if it was a stock, I would have invested years ago. Despite this, the government went ahead and cut Communitech's funding by one third, and they were forced to lay off staff. That's 15 more jobs lost in Waterloo region due to this government's and your actions.

If the government wanted to make Ontario a place to attract investors, they would be doing more, not less, to support organizations like Communitech. Why is the government cutting funding for Ontario-based start-ups like Communitech when they strengthen the economy, draw

investment into Ontario and create jobs? It is absolutely taking this province backwards.

**Hon. Peter Bethlenfalvy:** Again, thank you to the other member opposite for that question.

The number 15 was mentioned, and it just gave me a flashback. Breaking news to the member opposite: We inherited a \$15-billion deficit. It's important that we take action, because after 15 years—15 is the number here—of inaction and spending by the previous government, we inherited so much debt.

Do you know, Mr. Speaker, that the previous government spent \$40 million more a day than they took in and, in addition, \$30 million of interest expense every single day? That's \$70 million that went out every single day that didn't go to one new hospital, didn't go to one new school, didn't go to one new social program. We got elected on a commitment to take action, and that's exactly what we're doing. We won't tire until the job is done.

**The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott):** That concludes our question period for today.

### NOTICE OF DISSATISFACTION

**The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott):** Pursuant to standing order 38(a), the member for Ottawa South has given notice of his dissatisfaction with the answer to his question given by the Premier concerning election finances. This matter will be debated tomorrow at 6 p.m.

### REPORT, INTEGRITY COMMISSIONER

**The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott):** I beg to inform the House that the following document has been tabled: a report concerning the Honourable Doug Ford, Premier of Ontario, from the Office of the Integrity Commissioner of Ontario.

The member for Timmins has informed me that he has a point of order.

**Mr. Gilles Bisson:** Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Earlier today, two of our members, the member from Davenport and the member from London-Fanshawe, overheard the government member from Flamborough-Glanbrook say to a protester in the public galleries, "Please jump." I would like to give the member from Flamborough a chance to apologize or withdraw those comments.

**The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott):** I have to assume that all the members are honourable. I didn't hear the comment.

### YORK MEMORIAL COLLEGIATE INSTITUTE

**The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott):** Point of order: the member for York South-Weston.

**Mr. Faisal Hassan:** I rise with a heavy heart today on behalf of York South-Weston. I would like to offer my sincere gratitude to the teachers and staff who acted swiftly to ensure there were no tragedies or casualties and

to the brave firefighters of Toronto Fire Services and first responders who put their lives on the line every day to keep us safe.

Also, I would like to thank my leader, the official opposition leader, on behalf of York South–Weston.

**Hon. Caroline Mulroney:** Point of order.

**The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott):** The Attorney General on a point of order.

**Hon. Caroline Mulroney:** Mr. Speaker, it appears that the official opposition coordinated an effort to disrupt question period today by bringing in their official photographer to photograph protestors. There's a level of decorum here that's required in this House, and that coordinated effort disrespected this House, as well as yourself, Mr. Speaker. So I ask the members of the opposition—

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

I will say once again that the Speaker has to presume that all members are honourable. There is a procedure for caucuses to seek application to have their photographers in the gallery, and I think both sides of the House understand that. I'm not going to draw any conclusions beyond that.

This House stands in recess until 3 o'clock this afternoon.

*The House recessed from 1150 to 1500.*

## MEMBERS' STATEMENTS

### NORONT FERROCHROME FACILITY

**Mr. Gilles Bisson:** I rise today in order to tell the House that Noront, a mining company in Ontario, has made a decision in regard to where, more than likely, they're going to put their ferrochrome facility. They chose the community of Sault Ste. Marie.

Just so people know, originally they started with four communities: Thunder Bay, Sudbury, Timmins and Sault Ste. Marie. It went down to two: Timmins and Sault Ste. Marie. Now they've made that particular decision.

I don't think this particular file is over. I just want to read comments that were made by our mayor of the city of Timmins, Mr. Pirie: "We're still in the game...."

"They'll need a partner with far deeper pockets and Glencore would be an example of a partner like that, although there's others," he told reporters. "So it gives us time to continue to affect the decision."

We all know that building this first chromite mine is probably the better part of eight to 10 years away, so a lot of things are going to happen between now and the actual construction of the mine. First we need to get a road, which means to say we need an agreement with First Nations, because they have to be able to benefit from any agreement that comes from development on their lands.

Then they've got to build a nickel mine, and once a nickel mine is built, then they're going to go to the chromite facility, the chromite pit. So it's going to take some time before we're there. It's going to take somebody

with a lot of money to build a ferrochrome facility, because you're talking about pretty close to upwards of a billion dollars.

The city of Timmins will continue what it does. We will work hard in order to try to do what's right for Noront or whoever builds that particular facility, and what's good for Ontario and Timmins.

We'll continue to push, along with our mayor, our federal member, myself, our economic development people and our chamber, to try to get that decision so that eventually it does come to the city of Timmins.

### ASIAN HERITAGE MONTH

**Mrs. Daisy Wai:** May is Asian Heritage Month in Canada. I attended the first Asian heritage celebration gala in Richmond Hill last Sunday. It was organized by the Canadian Multicultural Council. CMC represents over 20 Asian multicultural associations, with the objective of preserving and promotion Asian culture and heritage.

The gala recognized several Asian cultures through cultural performances from Thailand, Taiwan, Korea, Cambodia, Japan and many others. They also honoured six women in leadership, showcasing how they have contributed to the vibrant multicultural society of Canada.

The highlight of the evening was the presentation of 10 awards to recipients who are role models in society. They have paved the way for the younger generation and inspire them through their own examples.

CMC and World Vision also presented a special award this year. The 2019 World Vision Canada Diversity in Philanthropy Award was presented to Mr. Stephen Woo, thanking him for bringing love from Canada to places that need more blessings. He helped find sponsors for 42 children and fundraised over \$160,000 for World Vision in 2018.

We all had a great evening. What a great way to kick off Asian Heritage Month.

### SCHOOL NUTRITION PROGRAMS

**Mr. Tom Rakocevic:** It's Nursing Week, and I'd like to deeply thank nurses everywhere for their work in improving and saving lives.

This Conservative government's move to slash funding from public health will impact public health nurses and their important work. As well, this funding can put breakfast programs at risk in Toronto. There are over 50 breakfast programs, serving 17,000 daily nutritious meals, in my riding of Humber River–Black Creek.

I would like to recognize and thank those who make meal programs available throughout my community, including public schools such as Blacksmith, Chalkfarm, Daystrom, Derrydown, Firgrove, Gosford, Gracedale, Gulfstream, Lamberton, Shoreham, Stanley, Topcliff and Yorkwoods; Catholic elementary schools such as St. André, St. Augustine of Canterbury, St. Charles Garnier, St. Francis de Sales, St. Jane Frances, St. John the Evangelist, St. Jude, St. Roch, St. Simon, St. Wilfrid;

middle schools such as Brookview Middle School, Elia Middle School, Humber Summit Middle School, Oakdale Park Middle School; public high schools such as the alternative caring and safe school, C.W. Jefferys, Emery, Emery EdVance and Westview; Catholic high schools such as James Cardinal McGuigan, Monsignor Fraser, St. Basil-the-Great College School; and community organizations such as the San Romanoway Revitalization Association.

And if I've missed you, thank you. I thank each and every one of you who make these programs a reality.

I'm calling on this government to reverse the disastrous cuts to public health. Our children are counting on you.

#### GO TRANSIT MAINTENANCE FACILITY

**Mr. Lorne Coe:** This past weekend, I participated in Doors Open Whitby. One of the facilities that I did visit was the Whitby rail maintenance facility for GO Transit locomotives and passenger coaches. I was joined by my colleague the member for Etobicoke Centre and the parliamentary assistant to the Minister of Transportation.

The tour was eye-opening, to say the least. There's over 500,000 square feet of maintenance buildings and over 21 kilometres of track at the site, with 68 switches. This particular facility is just amazing, because it has created 350 jobs in the town of Whitby. It's contributing to the local economy and is a testament of best practice in terms of maintenance facilities.

Speaker, I can assure you that it's a far more pleasant experience to ride on the GO Transit coach, which I do every morning, than to examine it from the underside, which I did from one of the maintenance pits.

I'd like to confirm for you that my visit assured me that as hard as the Minister of Transportation, the Honourable Jeff Yurek, is working to get Ontario transit moving, this incredible maintenance facility in Whitby will certainly keep the GO Transit system moving for the residents in Oshawa, Whitby, Pickering and Ajax.

#### CLIMATE CHANGE

**Ms. Peggy Sattler:** On Friday, May 3, thousands of Canadian youth from 85 cities participated in a national climate strike. Emma Lim, a student at Sir Frederick Banting Secondary School in London West, was one of the coordinators of the national strike, and she has been holding Friday climate strikes locally for weeks.

Around the world, young people like Emma are demanding that governments fulfill their commitments to the Paris agreement. Their message is simple: Climate change is a result of human activity and urgent action now is needed to fix it.

With Canada's climate warming at twice the rate of the rest of the world, I applaud the efforts of these students. I am also encouraged by municipal and community initiatives to reduce carbon emissions.

Last month, the city of London joined a growing number of municipalities that have declared a climate emergency.

And on Monday, May 13, Green Economy London will launch, the newest of seven Ontario hubs to support businesses to achieve sustainability targets. Hosted by the London Environmental Network, the goal of Green Economy London is to demonstrate that a more sustainable economy is not only possible, but will improve the bottom line.

Speaker, in the face of a provincial government that is dangerously out of touch on the need for climate action, I'm proud of the leadership of London city council, Green Economy London and students like Emma Lim to create a more livable future for all of us.

#### CONTAMINATED SOIL

**Ms. Donna Skelly:** I'm very proud to rise today to applaud our government for taking action to properly manage excess and contaminated soil while holding polluters accountable. Our government is introducing legislation that will toughen rules around the excavation, hauling and dumping of excess soil.

Developers, haulers and sites receiving soil will be required to register every load being moved for quantity and quality. The soil will be tested on-site for contaminants. Potential fines for violators have been raised to \$200,000, and trucks not in compliance will lose their licence plates.

#### 1510

This proposed legislation is a direct result of contaminated soil concerns raised by residents in my riding of Flamborough-Glanbrook. It's alleged that more than 24,000 loads of soil have been dumped at Waterdown Garden Supplies since last summer.

Since my election, I have been working with residents and ministry staff to address concerns about the illegal dumping of soil in Flamborough-Glanbrook. Excess and tainted soil can negatively impact groundwater, farmland and other sensitive areas. These new rules will penalize polluters and make it easier for soil to be reused.

Jim Whelan, a farmer who lives near the site, praises these changes. He is glad to see a government that is listening to residents and finally taking action.

#### NAMES

**Mr. Gurratan Singh:** I rise today to talk about names. My name is Gurratan Singh. It means "the jewel of the bringer of light into darkness." It connects me to my Sikh spirituality and my culture. It's my north star, and it reminds me of who I am.

I think of all the beautiful names that exist in this world—names like Mun Sum, which means "the literature of the heart"; names like Abdullah, which means "a servant of God"; and Indigenous and First Nations names like Tehoriwathe.

A name is more than just a name. When we are born, it's one of the first things that we recognize, one of the first words that we learn to say, and it's how the world identifies us. It's powerful. It's why we must say our names properly and have them said properly.

But many people with diverse names often live their lives with their names mispronounced. They often respond by changing their names and anglicizing them out of shame.

I once met a young student whose name was Japmann. It means “the mind which is lovely and imbued towards the divine; a mind that meditates.” He pronounced it as “Jap man.” When I corrected him, he laughed embarrassedly. He laughed like this because, after years of having his name mispronounced, he was ashamed of hearing his name said the correct way.

Often this issue arises in the classroom, where we’ve made a lot of progress, but the reality is that the staff in our school still don’t fully reflect the diversity of the classroom. The result is that students often have their names mispronounced, which often renders them invisible. This has real consequences for students. It hurts them academically and it impacts their confidence—problems that can often follow them throughout their life.

I rise to say: Let’s celebrate our names. Let’s celebrate the unique differences that make us who we are. Let’s work to create a society where our names are signs of pride, signs to really hold within us and something that we can all celebrate collectively.

#### NORDION

**Ms. Goldie Ghamari:** Earlier this year, I had the pleasure of touring the Nordion facility. While this facility is located in the riding of Kanata–Carleton, many of its top executives, as well as numerous front-line workers, are proud residents of my riding of Carleton.

Nordion has been a leading provider of cobalt-60 to global customers for more than 70 years. Cobalt-60 is an essential radioisotope to the global medical community, benefiting the lives of millions of people in countries around the world. Whether it is used in the sterilization of single-use medical equipment or in the radiation-based treatment of cancers and other diseases, the importance of cobalt-60 to the global health care sector cannot be overstated.

Cobalt-60 is produced right here in Ontario, thanks to Ontario’s nuclear fleet and companies such as Bruce Power. In fact, cobalt-60, produced by Bruce Power—a close partner of Nordion—will fulfill 50% of the world’s supply needs and will help to deliver affordable cancer therapies to more than 10 million people each year worldwide.

Thank you again to Nordion for inviting me to tour your facility. Our government will continue to work hard in order to make Ontario open for business.

#### CHINESE COMMUNITY

**Mr. Sheref Sabawy:** Last Sunday, I had the pleasure of welcoming the Honourable Minister Raymond Cho, Minister for Seniors and Accessibility, in my riding of Mississauga–Erin Mills, at the UTM campus, where we jointly attended the Chinese Advisory Council of the United Way and the department of sociology.

It was incredible to see hundreds of seniors from the Chinese community in a room packed with so many academics, practitioners and policy-makers, all of whom were focused on the topic of the aging process and the lived experience of Chinese seniors in Canada.

The symposium had three aims: firstly, understanding how Canadian context shapes the experience of aging; secondly, developing a deeper understanding of how the Chinese community works together to cope with aging; and thirdly, it serves as a consultation opportunity with officials like Minister Cho and I. I was excited for the opportunity to hear from the Chinese community.

Thanks to Minister Cho and my colleague MPPs from Mississauga Centre, Mississauga–Malton and Mississauga East–Cooksville who joined us to listen first-hand to the community.

Our government has been steadfast in our approach, an approach which places Ontarians at the centre of our decisions. Minister Cho and I would like to thank the United Way’s Chinese Advisory Council and UTM’s department of sociology for the opportunity to hear from them and to engage in a productive dialogue about important issues such as seniors’ health.

**The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott):** Thank you very much. That concludes our members’ statements.

#### ADJOURNMENT DEBATE

**The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott):** I was advised that the Minister of Labour might have a point of order—

**Hon. Laurie Scott:** I was going to do motions, but I can.

**The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott):**—seeking unanimous consent?

**Hon. Laurie Scott:** I will seek unanimous consent—thank you, Mr. Speaker—to put forward a motion without notice regarding the parliamentary assistant responding to the late show scheduled for Tuesday, May 7, 2019.

**The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott):** Ms. Scott is seeking unanimous consent of the House to put forward a motion without notice regarding the parliamentary assistant responding to the late show scheduled for Tuesday, May 7, 2019. Agreed? Agreed.

Again, I recognize the Minister of Labour.

**Hon. Laurie Scott:** I move that, notwithstanding standing order 38(b), the parliamentary assistant for the Minister of Natural Resources and Forestry may respond to the late show scheduled for Tuesday, May 7, 2019, in place of the parliamentary assistant to the Premier.

**The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott):** Ms. Scott has moved that, notwithstanding standing order 38(b), the parliamentary assistant for the Minister of Natural Resources and Forestry may respond to the late show scheduled for Tuesday, May 7, 2019, in place of the parliamentary assistant to the Premier. Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? Carried.

*Motion agreed to.*



## REPORTS BY COMMITTEES

### STANDING COMMITTEE ON GOVERNMENT AGENCIES

**The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott):** I beg to inform the House that today the Clerk received the report on intended appointments dated May 7, 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.*

## INTRODUCTION OF BILLS

### OIL, GAS AND SALT RESOURCES AMENDMENT ACT (ANTI-FRACKING), 2019

### LOI DE 2019 MODIFIANT LA LOI SUR LES RESSOURCES EN PÉTROLE, EN GAZ ET EN SEL (ANTI-FRACTURATION)

Mr. Tabuns moved first reading of the following bill:

Bill 110, An Act to amend the Oil, Gas and Salt Resources Act to prohibit hydraulic fracturing and related activities / Projet de loi 110, Loi modifiant la Loi sur les ressources en pétrole, en gaz et en sel en vue d'interdire la fracturation hydraulique et les activités connexes.

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

*First reading agreed to.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott):** I'm going to ask the member for Toronto–Danforth if he would like to briefly explain his bill.

**Mr. Peter Tabuns:** Thank you, Speaker. As the title says, the bill amends the act to prohibit hydraulic fracturing and activities related to hydraulic fracturing for the purpose of the exploration for or production of oil or gas trapped in shale. It's meant as a measure to mitigate climate change and reduce the concentration of greenhouse gases in the atmosphere.

### SPEAKING OUT ABOUT WORKPLACE VIOLENCE AND WORKPLACE HARASSMENT ACT, 2019

### LOI DE 2019 SUR LA DÉNONCIATION DE LA VIOLENCE AU TRAVAIL ET DU HARCÈLEMENT AU TRAVAIL

Madame Gélinas moved first reading of the following bill:

Bill 111, An Act to amend the Occupational Health and Safety Act to protect workers who speak out about workplace violence and workplace harassment / Projet de loi 111, Loi modifiant la Loi sur la santé et la sécurité au

travail pour protéger les travailleurs qui dénoncent la violence au travail et le harcèlement au travail.

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

*First reading agreed to.*

1520

**The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott):** Would the member for Nickel Belt care to explain her bill?

**M<sup>me</sup> France Gélinas:** In honour of Nursing Week this week, I'm pleased to introduce the Speaking Out About Workplace Violence and Workplace Harassment Act, 2019.

The bill amends the Occupational Health and Safety Act. The provisions of the act protecting workers against reprisals are amended to include protections against reprisals against workers who speak out about workplace violence and workplace harassment. The amendments provide that a reprisal is any measure taken against a worker that adversely affects the worker's employment, and many examples of reprisals are provided in the bill.

## STATEMENTS BY THE MINISTRY AND RESPONSES

### MENTAL HEALTH AND ADDICTION SERVICES

**Hon. Christine Elliott:** For too long, our society has stigmatized those dealing with addictions or mental health challenges. Thankfully, we have come a long way, but there's still much work to do. Slowly we're addressing the stigma attached to mental health issues, and we are seeing people coming forward to talk about their own struggles or to raise their voices in support of friends, families or neighbours. I am pleased to once again add my voice to the chorus, Speaker.

This week is Mental Health Week, an important occasion to raise awareness of mental health and addictions in Canada. It also happens to be Children's Mental Health Week here in Ontario.

Mental health and addiction issues have emerged as one of the most serious health and social challenges facing families, children and youth. The statistics surrounding mental health are as astounding as they are troubling. We know that an estimated 30% of Ontarians will experience a mental health issue at some point in their lives. What's more, two million people per year go to their doctors for mental health and addiction-related reasons.

We also know that we have many dedicated professionals out there working on the front lines to provide the best possible mental health and addictions care that they can. I do want to take a moment to thank them for their dedication and commitment to caring for the Ontarians who need their help.

I also want all Ontarians to know that our government is committed to doing our part to support mental health, because mental health is health. That's why we made a

commitment to make mental health a priority—because we believe no one should have to wait for long periods of time to get the mental health and addiction services they need where and when they need them. But we know it continues to be a challenge here in Ontario, and when Ontarians finally get to the front of the line, they often experience disconnected care. It's a complicated issue, one that we cannot solve overnight, but it is one that affects our entire health care system. We must do better, and we will do better, because we know there are low-barrier solutions for early intervention in cases of mild to moderate depression or anxiety. We know we can set up a system that makes it clear where people can get help when and where they need it.

We can better serve our youth population. We know the system is failing parents when they hear it will be a year before their child gets treatment for an eating disorder, a serious and life-threatening mental health challenge. And we know that we need to act now.

Yesterday, I was pleased to announce that our government is taking another step towards fixing our fractured system today: We're investing an additional \$174 million this year for mental health and addiction services here in Ontario. To ensure mental health and addiction service providers have stable, long-term funding, our government is making this additional funding available every year. These investments are going directly into supporting front-line services for patients and families in need of help. With this funding, children and youth are going to receive earlier, faster and more appropriate mental health and addictions help at schools and in the community.

Far too often, people struggling with mental health and addictions find themselves homeless, so we are going to also help more people get housing.

Our government will also be investing in new mobile crisis teams that will help police officers and other first responders manage sensitive situations when assisting people with severe mental illness.

And we are going to provide faster access to addictions treatment for youth and adults.

Our government is committed to investing \$3.8 billion over the next 10 years to develop and implement a comprehensive and connected mental health and addictions strategy. Within that strategy, we will create integrated, wraparound services so people don't have to be in crisis to find timely access to care.

Our government has been listening, and will continue to listen, as we take action to transform our mental health system. Together, we will make our health care system and mental health and addictions services system more inclusive and accessible for everyone.

**The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott):** Responses?

**M<sup>me</sup> France Gélinas:** I, too, would like to join with all of my colleagues in this House to wish everyone a happy Mental Health Week as well as a happy Children's Mental Health Week.

I would like to put a few facts on the record. The first has to do with children's mental health. Did you know, Speaker, that right now one in five children and youth

experience a mental health issue that significantly impacts their lives?

Some 70% of mental health and addictions issues start in childhood.

Did you know that, sadly, suicide is one of the top causes of death of youth in Ontario?

Right now, as we speak, there are 12,000 children and youth who are on a wait-list for mental health and addictions. In my neck of the woods, the wait-list is 18 months long, and it doesn't get much better anywhere else in Ontario.

In the past eight years, children and youth seeking treatment for mental health and addictions have seen a 63% increase in emergency department visits and a 67% increase in hospitalizations.

From 2013 to 2016, anxiety in Ontario students has increased by 50%, depression by 47% and substance abuse by 86%.

I wanted to put those facts on the record because those are real children and youth in need of care who are not able to access care. My colleague the member from Parkdale–High Park has put forward a bill that would change this, a bill that will mandate that the wait-list for children and youth seeking mental health and addictions services be capped at 30 days. This bill has the support of everyone in this House—everybody talked in favour of it, everybody voted in favour of it—but right now it sits in committee and it goes nowhere. It would change things drastically for those 12,000 people if we were to put that in place, to manage the wait-list, to put caps, to basically work on the bill that has been put forward by my colleague from Parkdale–High Park.

The other part of it that I wanted to talk about is supportive housing. I can tell you that in Sudbury, 82% of the homeless population have a diagnosis of severe mental illness. Unfortunately, it is impossible to help them, because it starts with housing first. You have to have stable housing in order to be able to receive care and be successful in dealing with your mental health or addiction issue. But the Ontario Mental Health and Addictions Leadership Advisory Council will tell us that we are in need of 30,000 supportive housing units just to meet the need. The auditor did tell us that if Ontario's psychiatric hospitals had been able to find supportive housing for their patients, the cost of caring for them would have been \$45 million less, and they would have been able to care for 1,400 more people. For every one person who gets into supportive housing—mental health supportive housing—six more people are added to the list. We have to do better.

**1530**

I also want to talk about giving mental health and addictions a home. The minister was successful when she was in opposition to do something that very few people do: She got a Select Committee on Mental Health and Addictions together. The number one recommendation from that committee was to give mental health and addictions a home, to make it a priority, so that you can identify best practices and make sure that everybody has access to it. This recommendation is still very needed today, and I hope we see action on that.

The last part that I wanted to talk about was Gambling Research Exchange Ontario. They have lost all of their funding as of mid-summer. This agency was not a big agency, but they did have 14 staff who will lose their job. What they did is gathered the evidence so that good treatments were put forward—whether it be prevention, whether it be treatment. They were the people, a bit like Cancer Care Ontario, who looked at the literature, who looked at the best practice and made sure that it became available. This resource is gone, and it's a real shame. We need to do better, Speaker—way better.

**Mr. Mike Schreiner:** I want to thank the minister and the member from Nickel Belt for their statements.

Mental Health Week and Children's Mental Health Week encourage a more open dialogue about mental illness and addiction in our country. It's good that we are starting to break down the stigma associated with mental illness.

For far too long, mental health issues have been ignored, misunderstood and even criminalized. As former Guelph police chief Jeff DeRuyter is often quoted as saying, we cannot arrest our way out of the mental health and addictions crisis. He's right. Mental health is health. Mental health is not a criminal issue.

The Centre for Addiction and Mental Health says that mental health is health. One in five Canadians experiences a mental illness or problem every year, but all five of five Canadians experience mental health, just like we experience physical health.

According to CMHA, there are six common features of good mental health: a sense of self, a sense of purpose, of belonging, contribution, enjoyment and resilience. As Helen Fishburn, the executive director of CMHA, says, "So, what is mental health? Simply put, it is a state of well-being, and we all have it. We might have a mental illness, and we might not. Either way, we can all feel well. We can all feel good about ourselves, whatever life's ups and downs."

This year's slogan is "Get Loud," and I want to talk about one of my constituents who has gotten loud in the last few years. Guelph high school student Noah Irvine has written hundreds of letters to politicians all across Canada. As a matter of fact, he has even met with the Prime Minister about mental health issues. Noah has turned his grief from losing both of his parents to a mental health issue—his mother to suicide and his father to a prescription drug overdose—into a campaign for action on mental health and addictions. One of the things Noah is asking—and I would like to ask it today on his behalf in the House—is for MPPs in this House to act on the recommendations from the Select Committee on Mental Health and Addictions, which delivered its final report to this House almost nine years ago.

One of the many recommendations that has not been acted upon is to consolidate mental health and addictions programs under one umbrella. So I encourage the government to act on this now and to establish a ministry of mental health and addictions to deal with the mental health crisis in Ontario.

To simplify his ask, Noah has said that if we just followed up on this one recommendation, he believes the other recommendations will be acted upon and implemented, because there will be a minister and a ministry to be held accountable on mental health issues.

Recently I asked Noah if he would like to be on a round table advising my office on mental health and addiction issues. He came to me and he met with me, and he said, "Mike, I'm retiring. I'm retiring from my advocacy because I'm going to university next year, and I have to focus on my studies. But the one thing I would ask of you and of all MPPs is to carry on my campaign. Carry on my campaign for me and my parents, and all the thousands of people suffering from mental health and addiction issues."

Mr. Speaker, there are 12,000 young people currently on a waiting list right now to access services. Last spring, I ran into one of those young people while I was campaigning in Guelph. I asked him how he was doing, and he said to me, "I'm doing okay today. But I'd be better if, eight months ago, I had received the call from the suicide watch that I needed that day. Finally, eight months later, I received that call."

That's eight months too long, Mr. Speaker. Nobody in our province should have to wait that long to receive accessible and affordable access to mental health services.

So I'm hoping that during this week, we can all agree, across party lines, that we need to act on the mental health and addictions crisis in Ontario.

## PETITIONS

### EDUCATION FUNDING

**Mr. Tom Rakocevic:** The petition is entitled "Stop" the Premier's "Education Cuts.

"To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas" the Premier's "new education scheme seeks to dramatically increase class sizes starting in grade 4;

"Whereas the changes will mean thousands fewer teachers and education workers and less help for every student;

"Whereas secondary students will now be forced to take at least four of their classes online, with as many as 35 students in each course;

"Whereas" the Premier's "changes will rip over \$1 billion out of Ontario's education system by the end of the government's term; and

"Whereas kids in Ontario deserve more opportunities, not fewer;

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

"Demand that the government halt the cuts to classrooms and invest to strengthen public education in Ontario."

I certainly support this petition and will be affixing my signature and giving it to page Zoe.

### LUPUS

**Mr. Billy Pang:** My petition is about lupus awareness.

“To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“Whereas lupus affects 1:1,000 Canadians; of which women between the ages of 15-45 are eight times more likely to contract;

“Whereas lupus is an autoimmune disease where the body attacks its own healthy tissue, as a result of its inability to differentiate from intruder cells; causing inflammation and damage to the body’s vital organs;

“Whereas although the cause of this disease remains largely unknown, the public would benefit from an increased awareness of the symptoms and personal accounts of this disease;

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

“To establish a lupus awareness day.”

I support this petition and I put my signature on it and pass it to page Maria.

#### LONG-TERM CARE

**Ms. Teresa J. Armstrong:** I have thousands of petitions that keep coming in from throughout the whole province of Ontario.

“To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“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 needs 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 recommends 4.1 hours of direct care per day;

**1540**

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

I fully support this petition, sign it and give it to page Kate to deliver to the table.

#### EMERGENCY SERVICES

**M<sup>me</sup> France Gélinas:** I would like to thank Brenda Missen for collecting names on this petition in memory of her mother. It reads as follows:

“911 Emergency Response.

“To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“Whereas, when we face an emergency we all know to dial 911 for help; and

“Whereas access to emergency services through 911 is not available in all regions of Ontario but most Ontarians believe that it is; and

“Whereas many Ontarians have discovered that 911 was not available while they faced an emergency; and

“Whereas all Ontarians expect and deserve access to 911 service throughout our province;”

They “petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

“To provide 911 emergency response everywhere in Ontario by land line or cellphone.”

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

#### SCHOOL FACILITIES

**Mr. Terence Kernaghan:** It’s my pleasure to present this petition entitled “Fund Our Schools.” It reads:

“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 three weeks into the legislative session,” Premier “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, will be affixing it with my signature and giving it to page Wolfgang.

#### TUITION

**Ms. Catherine Fife:** My petition is entitled “Stop the Cuts to OSAP!

“To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“Whereas Ontario has the highest tuition rate in Canada, lowest per-student funding and highest student debt, and the government’s changes, including a \$2-billion cut to OSAP grants, will only make the situation worse;

“Whereas Ontario has the highest debt burden among students in Canada, with students holding an average debt of \$27,000;

“Whereas removing the interest-free six-month grace period means students are pressured to pay their loans as soon as they graduate, before they even start their career;

“Whereas increasing the loans-to-grants ratio to 50% means less access to post-secondary education, which is crucial to gain the skills needed to succeed in tomorrow’s workforce;

“Whereas adding an opt-out to student fees will adversely affect student unions, campus groups and clubs;

“Therefore we, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to direct the Minister of Training, Colleges and Universities to reverse the announced cuts to OSAP, protect existing tuition grants, and reinstate the six-month interest-free grace period on loans after graduation.”

On behalf of students at University of Waterloo and Wilfrid Laurier, it's my pleasure to affix my signature and give this petition to Kate.

#### EDUCATION FUNDING

**Ms. Jessica Bell:** “Stop” the “Education Cuts.

“To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“Whereas” the Premier’s “new education scheme seeks to dramatically increase class sizes starting in grade 4;

“Whereas the changes will mean thousands fewer teachers and education workers and less help for every student;

“Whereas secondary students will now be forced to take at least four of their classes online, with as many as 35 students in each course;

“Whereas” Premier “Ford’s changes will rip over \$1 billion out of Ontario’s education system by the end of the government’s term; and

“Whereas kids in Ontario deserve more opportunities, not fewer;

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

“Demand that the government halt the cuts to classrooms and invest to strengthen public education in Ontario.”

I support this petition. I will be affixing my signature to it and giving it to page Maria.

#### EDUCATION FUNDING

**Mr. Tom Rakocevic:** This 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 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’ll be supporting this petition, signing my name to it and giving it to page Wolfgang.

#### LONG-TERM CARE

**Ms. Teresa J. Armstrong:** I have a petition, “Temperatures in Long-Term-Care Homes.

“To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“Whereas the province of Ontario requires a minimum but no maximum temperature in long-term-care homes;

“Whereas temperatures that are too hot can cause emotional and physical distress that may contribute to a decline in a frail senior’s health;

“Whereas front-line staff in long-term-care homes also suffer when trying to provide care under these conditions with headaches, tiredness, signs of hyperthermia, which directly impacts resident/patient care;

“Whereas Ontario’s bill of rights for residents of Ontario nursing homes states ‘every resident has the right to be properly sheltered ... in a manner consistent with his or her needs’;

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

“Direct the Lieutenant Governor in Council to make regulations amending O. Reg. 79/10 in the Long-Term Care Homes Act to establish a maximum temperature in Ontario’s long-term-care homes.”

I fully support this petition, sign it and give it to page Mary to deliver to the table.

#### AUTISM TREATMENT

**M<sup>me</sup> France Gélinas:** I would like to thank Mr. Dan Haines from Val Caron in my riding for this petition. It reads as follows:

“Support Ontario Families with Autism.

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

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

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

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

They petition the Legislative Assembly as follows:

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

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

#### TUITION

**Mr. Terence Kernaghan:** The petition I’d like to present reads as follows:

“Support our Students: Stop Cuts to OSAP!

“To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

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

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

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

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

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

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

#### SCHOOL FACILITIES

**Ms. Catherine Fife:** This petition is entitled “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 three weeks into the legislative session,” the Premier “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,” and impact the learning environment;

“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.”

It’s my pleasure to affix my signature to this petition and give it to page Kate.

1550

#### INJURED WORKERS

**Mr. Tom Rakocevic:** “Whereas about 200,000 to 300,000 people in Ontario are injured on the job every year;

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

I support it. I will be signing it and giving it to page Wolfgang.

#### CHILD CARE WORKERS

**Ms. Teresa J. Armstrong:** I have a petition from Nozomi Allen of London, Ontario. She is petitioning the government of Ontario.

“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 give it to page Zoe to deliver to the table.

#### ORDERS OF THE DAY

##### FIXING THE HYDRO MESS ACT, 2019 LOI DE 2019 POUR RÉPARER LE GÂCHIS DANS LE SECTEUR DE L’ÉLECTRICITÉ

Resuming the debate adjourned on May 7, 2019, on the motion for third reading of the following bill:

Bill 87, An Act to amend various statutes related to energy / *Projet de loi 87, Loi modifiant diverses lois en ce qui concerne l'énergie.*

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

**Mrs. Daisy Wai:** I rise to support Bill 87. We have to really get rid of the hydro mess.

I put my name forward to run for MPP because I saw all the mess that was created. I do have a friend who came to me and just told me that if this continued, he was going to move outside of Ontario. He was serving in the energy sector. He told me that from the board, from the inside, from everywhere, we had to really clean up this mess.

Before that, I had been talking to a lot of businesses. They were saying that we really have to put in policy to reduce energy costs. The energy costs have cost them—that they have to get rid of all the businesses in Ontario. They have to fold their businesses. That is why we have experienced, in the manufacturing sector, 300,000 jobs lost.

We are looking for creating jobs here with this government. We are looking for re-establishing our economy in this government. That's why I put my name forward.

I'm so happy to see that this government—the first thing we did when we came into power was to get rid of the \$6-million man. We also got rid of the carbon tax. We're now seeing that when we get rid of the carbon tax, we're seeing that the gas price goes low—until recently, when we're being taxed again and everybody is screaming and saying, "How can I afford that?" It is really because of making sure that we can afford it, that, whether it is for the home or the business, we have to look into cutting all of the costs in the hydro bills in our energy sector.

The bill that we are facing, Fixing the Hydro Mess Act, is really for just doing that. First of all, we are going to make sure that our energy costs are affordable again, not only just for business but for general households, especially for those that are in the north. They really see the costs of their energy. The hydro bill is so high that some of them are saying that, actually, it's like their second mortgage. We cannot afford this. We cannot afford to have people screaming as they put the gas pump into the car.

With the Fixing the Hydro Mess Act, we are reducing the price. We are cleaning up. We are getting rid of the conservation act which is getting all of the costs in to us so that our hydro bill is getting higher and higher.

And not only that; we're also modernizing our energy board just to make sure that the Ontario Energy Board, after it has been modernized, will have the right group of people to drive us and direct our management there.

When we were sitting during the clause-by-clause amendments in the committee, we had the opposition party continue to be concerned about the power of the CEO. This is the power that we have to give to the CEO to make sure that he can get his job done, so that he can focus and make sure that the things that we ask him to do, assign him to do, he can get carried out properly.

We do have our board we selected. We got rid of our \$6-million man. We have our new board. We formed a good board. It is the board that will give the proper power

to the CEO. However, they are also setting policies and expectations for the CEO to follow. As soon as he is doing that, he can just concentrate and we'll leave him to doing his job. This is what the board is for, whether it is in the private sector or in the public sector. Once we modernize this, we expect the real change that is to come into play.

The other thing that we are going to do is, we will reduce the billions of borrowing costs. By that, we will save our costs a lot more.

We will also make sure that everything is transparent. In the old ways, everything was hidden under one thing after another, but we are very clear. We have everything very transparent. As each household receives their bill, they will understand why that cost is, and they will understand why we are now having a reduction in the cost.

This morning, we had a member from the opposition saying, why are we so quickly moving to relieve Ontarians from all of the mess that was there? In fact, we have to move quickly because we have been suffering from this for a long, long time. We have people expecting this from us, so we have already been planning on this, knowing what we need to do right from the get-go. We are just putting it on without wasting anything.

We tried to get rid of the carbon tax, except the federal government is trying to put it on for us. However, we are working very hard to fix this mess that was created by the hydro bill. I had a feeling that if we don't do that, it's almost like, as we walk into a house after a typhoon, everything is all broken up—not only that; we have people coming to the house and ransacking the house. This is exactly what we are facing now. Everything is broke and broken. We have to fix all the mess again, and we have to do it.

**1600**

I would like to have our member from Whitby continue and say how we want to make sure we fix this mess.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Percy Hatfield):** Questions and comments? The member for Waterloo.

**Ms. Catherine Fife:** Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. It's interesting listening to the members on the other side describe what has actually occurred with what was the Fair Hydro Plan and what is actually happening in today's Legislature with this particular piece of legislation. I will say that the member opposite describes the current situation in the province of Ontario similar to that of a typhoon, or that someone has come into the house and ransacked it; in fact, everything is broke and broken. What I will say to the member is that it's very clear to me that this Ford government is really dead set on continuing that pattern of breaking things and interrupting cycles where there have been some successes; for instance, the reduction in greenhouse gas emissions in the province of Ontario. It's ironic that this government and this Minister of Finance indicated that they've reduced greenhouse gas, but it was actually the former government that was able to reduce coal-fired plants, which now this government is taking credit for.

What I say to the member on that side of the House is that you can't have it both ways. The house was ransacked,

the debt is real, but your policies, your legislation, including the budget bill that was tabled just three weeks ago, is doubling down on the harm that the Liberals did to this province. You are undermining confidence in the energy sector by interfering in, for instance, the Ontario Energy Board—and why you think it's okay that the Premier puts his own friends in those establishments that should be truly independent organizations.

What I would say to the member opposite is that the typhoon, yes, is real, but you are continuing that pattern, and that undermines the confidence not only in our environmental strategies in the province of Ontario but certainly in the energy sector in Ontario as well.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Percy Hatfield):** The member for Kitchener South–Hespeler.

**Mr. Mike Harris:** Kitchener–Conestoga, but thank you, Speaker. I know: The similarities between myself and Amy Fee are uncanny. It's amazing.

I think the member for Richmond Hill brought up some very valid points when she was talking about what Bill 87 is looking to achieve.

I think one of the biggest things here, Mr. Speaker, is transparency. Time and time again at the doors when we were out campaigning back almost a year ago in June, one of the things that kept coming up was the fact that people didn't understand what was on their hydro bills; people couldn't make heads or tails of what was going on. Just the overall dissatisfaction with the hydro system here in Ontario was very, very evident, whether it be the actual price that people were paying for their electricity, the convoluted bills that they were receiving, or the fact that they'd call up their electricity provider and they'd try and get answers. It was very, very difficult for them.

With this bill, Mr. Speaker, we're taking some very, very positive steps for people to now be able to understand what is actually going on with their electrical system. When we look at what we've already done, whether it be scrapping the Green Energy Act, cancelling those 700-some-odd contracts, making sure that we're putting the electricity system back into a stable position, or whether that be, as the member from Richmond Hill alluded to, getting rid of the \$6-million man—that was a real bone of contention for the average Ontarian. When you looked at what the other CEOs across the country were being paid, the salary of Mayo Schmidt was quite considerable in relation to places like Quebec or BC.

I think we're on the right track with this bill, Mr. Speaker. I'm very happy to support this bill, and I know that the people of Ontario are seeing that we're making some real steps into getting transparency back into our electrical system.

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

**Ms. Jessica Bell:** Thank you to the member for Richmond Hill for her comments.

I had the privilege to sit on the committee that heard many of the deputants speak about the Fixing the Hydro Mess bill, and they raised many concerns about this bill, including organizations like the board of trade. The key

messages that I heard included that this bill does nothing to increase the regulation and oversight of our electricity system, which is absolutely vital to ensure that our energy system is honest, to ensure that we sign value-for-money contracts and to ensure that we make decisions that are the best for ratepayers.

I also heard a lot of concerns about the amount of control the future CEO will have over our electricity system—including the failure of the CEO to publicly account for what kind of regulations they will be introducing and why, and giving a cost-benefit analysis for that.

I have deep concerns about the fact that Hydro One is still in the hands of shareholders, which means that shareholders get to make up to 8% profit on our ratepayers' bills. That's deeply concerning to me.

I'm also deeply concerned about the continuation of the former Liberal government's practice of borrowing money in order to keep rates artificially low now. It's true you've changed it from having ratepayers pay to taxpayers pay, and you've made it more transparent on that front, but at the end of the day, when you reduce rates now, it will mean that rates will go up at a far greater rate after 2021, and I've got some great concerns about that.

Finally, I have some deep concerns about this bill's utter failure to address energy conservation or move towards a green energy electricity system.

**The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott):** Questions and comments?

**Mr. Sam Oosterhoff:** Mr. Speaker, I have to tell you that I've had the great privilege now of getting to know the member for Richmond Hill over the past year. Prior to that, we had met at a number of different party events, and she is just an excellent advocate for her community. She's an excellent voice for the constituents of Richmond Hill and someone I admire and look up to as a source of great wisdom and insight.

Of course, her speech this afternoon, her contributions to the debate around Bill 87, Fixing the Hydro Mess Act, have proven to be no exception. She speaks with a great deal of knowledge as someone who has seen many of the changes that occurred here in the province of Ontario over the past decades.

Frankly, Speaker, as I was listening to the contributions from the member, my mind was drifting to the member for Don Valley West, the former Premier of Ontario, and her comments in November 2017, I believe it was, when she said, "I do accept some of the blame for this." I'm glad the member, at that time the Premier, did accept some of the blame for it, but she should accept a great deal of blame.

Last year during the campaign we ran on a very clear commitment to ending hallway health care, on creating jobs, on putting money back into people's pockets, and we also ran on a clear commitment to fix the hydro mess, which is something that Ontarians across this beautiful province have spoken about. I believe we are taking significant steps in the right direction, and the member spoke about those.

One of the things the former Premier said that I remember during the campaign was that she was "Sorry,



not sorry.” She would have this line where she would get out there and she would say, “I’m sorry, not sorry.” Well, this is one of the things that she should be sorry, sorry, sorry about. She should be sorry, sorry, sorry about the sad state of Ontario’s electrical system, that we have to come and make these changes. I know this isn’t the end of those changes, but it’s a step in the right direction. As the member said, that is good news for Ontarians.

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

**Mrs. Daisy Wai:** Thank you to our member from Niagara West and also thank you to the members who have been responding to this, what we have just talked about. In fact, when we help to stabilize the costs, drive efficiencies and strengthen the trust and transparency in the energy sector, as well as modernizing the board, we are going to clean up the hydro mess.

1610

We have been discussing this for the whole morning. We talked about the Green Energy Act—how that is inefficient, how we just give out money without even being able to afford it, and how we pass on that unaffordability to our consumers. This is the time that we have to stop. It is our job to clean up this hydro mess. This is the first thing, as we came in as the government—we immediately fixed on this.

We know that this is not a small step, and we want to make sure that we bring jobs back into Ontario. We have already lost 300,000 jobs, which is why the Premier, as well as the Minister of Economic Development, Job Creation and Trade, also works very hard and gets people going to New York, to India—to different parts of the world—to tell people, “Ontario is open for business. Our price is affordable for you to bring in your manufacturing jobs again.”

This is why we are so eager to make sure we fix this mess. We are here to make sure that—

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

**Ms. Jessica Bell:** I’m pleased to be rising to speak on Bill 87, the Fixing the Hydro Mess Act. I don’t support the Fixing the Hydro Mess Act. I think it’s going to make our electricity system a whole lot messier.

I had the experience of sitting on the general government committee and hearing deputants come in—leaders in their field—and speak about the pros and cons of this act. Those people included the board of trade, the Electricity Distributors Association, the Canadian Federation of Independent Business, the Vulnerable Energy Consumers Coalition, the Association of Power Producers of Ontario and more.

I also had the pleasure to sit in the same room as the member for Danforth, who has been a leader on electricity reform in this House and who has been working on this issue for many decades. I did get to learn more about why our electricity system is so expensive, and I learned more about some of the sensible ways that this Legislature can proceed to improve our electricity system. Part of that is

to make our electricity rates more affordable for everyone, businesses and consumers.

I want to address four key points that became very clear to me in the committee. First of all, one of the themes that I heard again and again is that our electricity system has less accountability and oversight than other electricity systems in North America. One of the biggest problems is that the Ontario Energy Board has no oversight over large segments of our energy grid. In fact, there’s no oversight for about 65% of our electricity system. That’s deeply concerning. The Liberal government actually made that worse by signing many long-term contracts to produce electricity, and these contracts were also excluded from review and oversight. It’s gotten so bad that the Ontario Energy Board couldn’t even review the sell-off of Hydro One, even though that was a significant policy decision, which I believe had a big impact on the outcome of the 2018 election.

One thing I learned in the general government committee is what having an independent regulator means and what kind of impact that has on the electricity rates. One thing I learned is that an independent regulator means that requests for rate increases and requests for new electricity contracts must be scrutinized by a board and the public before they are approved. That makes a lot of sense, and it’s actually what exists in every jurisdiction across North America. We’re an anomaly here.

That means that if a company wants to come and say, “We want to produce more electricity at this rate,” or a provider wants to come and say, “We want to increase rates at this rate,” it has to go to some kind of independent scrutiny so that evidence is presented, people can ask questions, intervenors can intervene and advocate for their client, and elected officials, like ourselves, can ask genuine questions and do our job as legislators. It means that the various options to have our electricity system run are weighed against each other and compared.

The whole purpose of a regulator is to ensure that our electricity system is well run and that ratepayers are protected. What I find very concerning about this bill is that it doesn’t do anything to change the fact that two thirds of our electricity system isn’t regulated, so it’s not actually improving that.

I had the pleasure of listening to George Vegh, one of Ontario’s leading energy regulator lawyers. He pointed out some very interesting things about the benefit of having a regulator in terms of rates. One thing he said is that the OEB actually does a decent job of regulating distribution. When it comes to distribution, our costs have not gone up.

But the Ontario Energy Board doesn’t regulate most of procurement, and now new transmission. What we have found with procurement is that costs have skyrocketed. Is that a coincidence? I don’t think so. Regulation keeps electricity providers and transmitters honest.

*Interjections.*

**Ms. Jessica Bell:** Thank you.

What I also noticed in this bill is the fact that oversight, in some ways, will be worsened. That is most evident in

the appointment of the new CEO and how much power the new CEO has.

Unfortunately, speaker after speaker came forward and expressed their concern about how much power the CEO will have. Those concerns ranged from people like the Toronto Region Board of Trade—I don't usually pick up the Toronto Region Board of Trade's letters and read them carefully and agree with them every time. But in this case, I do, because they, like consumers, want to see a transparent and fair electricity system that has proper oversight.

This is a written submission to us on the committee. Here, they say that the legislation "provides the CEO with significant powers." However, there is "no explicit criteria or process to be followed" when the CEO is "exercising a rule-making power. This presents a significant concern regarding due process." So that's a concern, and I do hope that you read the board of trade's letter.

We introduced numerous amendments in the clause-by-clause readings to address some of the concerns that we had around regulation and oversight. For instance, we introduced amendment 8, which would require that the appointment of the CEO would be reviewed by the Standing Committee on Government Agencies. It sounds reasonable, right? If this person has so much power, it would make sense that we, as legislators, could find out a little bit more about them. It was rejected.

We also introduced amendments 18 and 19—very reasonable amendments. This is what they were: Before the CEO makes a rule that could affect the entirety of Ontario and all the businesses that operate here, as well as all the ratepayers, the CEO should publish the rule; allow for comment; do a cost-benefit analysis; analyze the risks, costs and benefits of the rule on consumers; and publish a summary of the alternatives that the CEO considered and why they didn't choose them. That seems pretty simple. That seems pretty reasonable, given that it's taxpayers that pay for our electricity and for the CEO's salary. The government rejected it. I have some deep concerns about that decision to not include those amendments in this bill.

Second, I also have some concerns about the fact that this bill does nothing to address the root-cause reasons for why our hydro bills are so expensive in the first place. They are ridiculously expensive. What I found very disturbing is that in North America, Ontario is the only region that subsidizes its electricity. In every other state and province, the amount it costs to generate the electricity is the same as the amount that ratepayers pay. But in Ontario, our electricity costs have gone up so much that we are now subsidizing the cost of our electricity bills. That's a concern. And it's a concern because it's a very short-sighted, head-in-the-sand approach and a very temporary fix to a very, very big problem.

**1620**

What concerns me is the amount of money that this government is continuing to borrow to keep rates artificially low. From the estimates that I've received, it's up to \$2.5 billion a year, to a total of \$40 billion when you include the borrowing and the interest. What is also

concerning is that we can't keep borrowing at that rate. While we might see a reduction in rates now, what we are going to see after 2021 is a big increase in rates, which will hurt businesses and it will hurt consumers because there's not the kind of certainty and stability that we all need to balance our chequebooks and for businesses to thrive in this economy. I have some deep concerns about this, and I do encourage you to look deeper at this problem.

We, the NDP, in clause-by-clause, did ask for amendments to provide more transparency about the borrowing that this government is embarking on. We had amendment 1, which essentially says that taxpayers have a right to know how much money this government is borrowing, and we had amendments 26 and 27, which are for this government to report on what is the impact of this borrowing activity on the health of Ontario and OPG. Both of these were rejected by government, and I have deep concerns about that. I think that, as a government, you can do better than that, especially as a government that is so committed to addressing the deficit and to being transparent and honest. It doesn't align with the values that you speak to.

Number three, quite frankly, this bill takes us backwards on the road to energy efficiency, and I want to speak about energy efficiency in a little bit more detail. This bill cuts energy efficiency programs that Ontario has right now by a third, and those energy efficiency programs are pretty important. I want to read out a few of them here now. Some of those energy efficiency programs include:

"High Performance New Construction: provides design assistance and incentives for building owners and planners who" want to "design and implement energy-efficient equipment within their new space."

It includes the heating and cooling incentive so that we can provide "rebates for purchasing and installing new ... energy-efficient heating and cooling equipment." That seems pretty sensible, especially since we are going into a very scary new climate situation, where we're having skyrocketing temperatures during the summer which are increasing our dependence upon artificial air conditioning and so on, not only for individuals but for businesses as well. It does make sense to invest in energy efficiency.

It also cuts an energy efficiency program on residential new construction, which would provide "incentives to improve energy performance and install energy-efficient products in new builds." That makes a lot of sense to me, too. You didn't think so; you cut it. What a pity.

What I find so distressing about the details of those amendments is that the overall benefit of energy efficiency is significant—and it's significant because it's cheap. When you invest in energy efficiency programs, it costs you about 2.1 cents a kilowatt hour to invest in those energy efficiency programs to reduce the amount of electricity that we use in the first place. That is very, very cheap. It drives down the need to build new transmission lines, the need to build new distribution lines and the need to build new generation in the first place: win, win, win. These reductions, when they're fully rolled out in a sensible way, which this government is choosing not to do,

can lead to significant greenhouse gas emission reductions and significant reductions in the amount of electricity that we use.

When estimates show that our natural gas emissions could be reduced by up to 18% in 11 years if we move forward on sensible conservation programs, these are not small numbers. I do encourage you to go back to this bill and rethink the cuts that you are making to conservation.

Finally, this bill does, quite frankly, nothing to invest in green energy, which I find deeply, deeply disturbing. I want to point out a few things about green energy that this government is ideologically opposed to, to its own detriment, because when you look at the impact of all the costs of green energy now, it has become cost-competitive. When we ignore cost-competitive energy options, we are doing ourselves a disservice and we are doing taxpayers and ratepayers a disservice as well.

For instance, I have a report here from the Ontario Clean Air Alliance, and they look at the cost per kilowatt hour of producing different types of energy. It's a very enlightening report and it's also very well researched. They show here that energy efficiency costs about 2.1 cents per kilowatt hour, as I have already mentioned. It shows that purchasing Quebec water power from the spot market costs about 2.2 cents per kilowatt hour. It shows that purchasing Quebec water power with a firm contract so you know what's coming—you buy it in advance—costs about five cents per kilowatt hour. Wind power from Quebec is 6.3 cents per kilowatt hour. And then we get into the more expensive ones. The price of nuclear power in 2018 is about 8.2 cents a kilowatt hour, and the price of nuclear power in 2025 is about 16.5 cents a kilowatt hour.

**Ms. Catherine Fife:** Double.

**Ms. Jessica Bell:** It's about double.

It is important, as the government, to make very sensible decisions not based on ideology but based on value for money when you're going about choosing how you want to run your electricity system, how you want to generate new electricity and how you want to conserve the electricity that has already been generated. I don't see this government doing that and I have deep concerns about that.

I do want to conclude: I don't believe this bill fixes the many problems that our electricity system has, in any form. I think it is genuinely going to make things messier. You might think you're doing the right thing now, but in a few years from now, these problems are going to come home to roost in a very big way.

I don't see you increasing the regulation and oversight of our electricity system that we desperately need. I don't see this government making the steps that we need to make to keep this electricity system a value-for-money electricity system that makes decisions that help ratepayers. I have deep concerns about this government's decision to essentially provide unfettered control to a hand-picked CEO to make regulation without doing due diligence or providing a sensible cost-benefit analysis. I have deep concerns that you are not returning Hydro One to the hands of the public so we can reduce the profit margin that

needs to be paid to shareholders, so that we can actually reduce the cost of electricity rates. This government is not stopping the utterly absurd practice of borrowing billions to keep electricity rates artificially low, although I'll give you credit: You're making it a little bit more transparent; I'll give you credit on that.

This government is doing absolutely nothing to make our energy grid more environmentally sustainable by moving forward on sensible conservation measures and looking at the benefits of green energy with a sensible eye. You've got your ideological glasses on. This government needs to take them off and have a serious look at that.

**Mr. Gilles Bisson:** Blinders.

**Ms. Jessica Bell:** Blinders—thank you.

There are better ways to fix our electricity system. There are so many better ways. We need to tackle the reasons why we have high hydro rates in the first place, and that means increasing the oversight and the regulatory power of the OEB so they're making decisions that are fair and honest. We need to invest in energy conservation to reduce bills and the need to provide new power in the first place. We need to invest in green energy, because it is cost competitive and it is, quite frankly, the right thing to do. And we need to keep Hydro One public so we can stop big investors and Bay Street from making profits off the backs of ratepayers and businesses that choose to operate here in Ontario. That is the better way.

I urge you to vote against this bill.

1630

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

**Ms. Goldie Ghamari:** I listened with great interest to what the member opposite was saying. It's interesting that she seems to have a lot of concerns about what our government is doing, but what she failed to really talk about is the concerns that the people of Ontario have. Let's not forget, Mr. Speaker, that in these past 15 years, the only reason the Liberals got to where they were was because of the support of the member opposite and her party. What we need to focus on is what the concerns of the people of Ontario are, because we are here to do anything that we can to support the people. We are here for the people, and we are here to protect what matters most.

Mr. Speaker, with that, I'd like to turn to the announcement that was made by our Minister of Energy, Northern Development and Mines back at the end of March. The minister said that the Fixing the Hydro Mess Act and other regulatory initiatives, if passed, would find savings of up to \$442 million by refocusing and uploading the electricity conservation programs to the Independent Electricity System Operator. Bill 87 is also going to overhaul the Ontario Energy Board to ensure that the regulatory system is more efficient and accountable, while continuing to protect consumers.

Bill 87 is also going to hold residential electricity bills to the rate of inflation, and it's going to wind down the Fair Hydro Plan, which, as the Auditor General herself stated, is anything but fair. In fact, it is the unfair hydro

plan—which, by the way, Mr. Speaker, the only reason it got that far was because of the support of the NDP.

With that, Mr. Speaker, I'm pleased to say that I support Bill 87 and look forward to speaking to it later this afternoon.

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

**Mr. Tom Rakocevic:** Thank you to the excellent member from University–Rosedale for her research and advocacy.

Seeing as this bill is called the Fixing the Hydro Mess Act, it's important to understand why we have a hydro mess in the first place—which this bill doesn't do, by the way; it simply continues Liberal mismanagement and just slaps on a misleading title. A more accurate title would be: "Fixing the Conservative-Liberal hydro mess." That's a title we could get behind. It's more honest.

This mess started when Mike Harris's Conservative government broke up Ontario Hydro and when the former Liberal government sold off 60% of Hydro One. Imagine how far Conservatives have fallen philosophically, when, consider it was Sir Adam Beck, a Conservative, who, while serving as mayor of London and as a sitting representative in the Ontario Legislative Assembly at the time, was championing—and imagine coming from a Conservative, because it just blows the mind—the idea of the government selling cheap electricity generated from Niagara Falls back to the people of Ontario at—wait for it—cost, not at—

**Interjection:** Whoa.

**Mr. Tom Rakocevic:** —right?—not at profit, but at cost. And imagine that after the Hydroelectric Power Commission of Ontario was formed, the average price of hydro dropped by—wait for it—more than half. It dropped by more than half. It was public and it dropped by more than half. So I don't think it's really a stretch to understand why we're in this mess, when the former government began privatizing it, and the Liberal government mismanaged it and basically added more privatization. It's a shame.

Electricity is not a luxury good. It should not be priced like one. It is a basic right that the people of Ontario should have access to affordable hydroelectric power. Shame on the Liberals and Conservatives.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Percy Hatfield):** Questions and comments? The member for Stormont–Dundas–South Glengarry.

**Mr. Jim McDonnell:** Thank you, Speaker. It's good to see you've got the name right.

It's interesting to hear the comments today from the members opposite. They talked about fixing the hydro mess—and it was a mess. This government stood in opposition to the former Liberal Party and the NDP, who supported them in lockstep on the Green Energy Act during the minority government, when we tried to stop this. So the mess is really owned by both parties on the other side.

You look at the Green Energy Act—a novel idea, but you've got to bring it back to economics. A good energy

policy is also an economic policy. That's where the government deviated and that's where, with the help of the NDP in the minority government, they allowed that to happen.

I heard the comment about the closing of the coal plants. That was an initiative started by then-Minister Elizabeth Witmer, a PC cabinet minister at the time who started that program. We promised to do it by 2014. The Liberals upstaged us, "We're going to do it by 2007," and then promised to do it in 2011. And when did they finally complete that program? In 2014.

One thing about our PC Party and our government: We want to be transparent. We want to tell the truth. We aren't going to make false promises that can't be kept. That's just another example of it.

When you look at some of the programs—in my riding of Stormont–Dundas–South Glengarry, I've got many upset residents because they were forced to have this latest Nation Rise wind turbine project. We would have had a chance to cancel or to change it, but, with the NDP at their side, the Liberals forced that down, even though they were an unwilling host. So now we're stuck with that. I think it's just a classic example of not doing the right thing.

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

**Mr. Gurratan Singh:** We know that affordability is a huge issue. We know that hydro is one of the pressing issues right now in our province. When you talk to business owners in Brampton, they'll talk to you about the rising cost of electricity and how it has really impacted people on a daily level. We're talking about small businesses; we're talking about the backbone of our community and the backbone of our economy.

When we look at what the Conservatives are putting forward right now, it's actually not fixing the problem that, ultimately, they had a huge role in creating. The Conservatives deregulated hydro in the 1990s. They opened up the doors to all this privatization. The Conservatives have a terrible track record on breaking down good public goods. We'll talk about it. Let's talk about Highway 407: once again, another great example of something which could have been a huge asset to our province that the Conservatives sold off in such a short-sighted fashion in the 1990s, opening up the doors for privatization that the Liberals carried on.

They talk about this Liberal-NDP alliance. I can talk about the Conservative-Liberal alliance—Liberal, Tory, same old story—with what they've done, where the Conservatives opened up the door to privatization and the Liberals continued it by selling off 60% of the shares of Hydro One. This is not how you build a sustainable society. This is not how you build a strong economy.

Hydro One was the backbone of providing affordable electricity to families, to business. The 407 would have been a huge, huge money-maker for our province, but the Conservatives are continually making the wrong decision. They are not investing in projects that would have made, in the long run, a lot of money for our province; projects that in the long run would have made our province

incredibly competitive economically. Instead, we see them continuing the legacy of the Liberals and hurting the economy of our province.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Percy Hatfield):** We'll return to the member from University–Rosedale for her two-minute summation.

**Ms. Jessica Bell:** Thank you for your comments, the members for Carleton, Humber River–Black Creek, Stormont–Dundas–South Glengarry and Brampton East. I have a few comments in response.

I do appreciate the play with the title. I was thinking more of the “deepening the Liberals’ hydro mess act,” myself.

I do want to address the concerns around the IESO taking over conservation programs because, as I understand it, that is in the bill. The problem with the IESO is that it has no track record at running conservation programs, nor does it have the money to run the conservation programs. So when we move conservation to the IESO, it means bye-bye conservation. I do encourage you to look into that.

I also have some concerns about the government’s decision to keep electricity bills at the rate of inflation by borrowing money to artificially keep them at the rate of the inflation. Please make sure to add that sentence into your conversation about how you are keeping electricity rates low. I think it would be preferable for this government to focus on the root causes for why we have such high electricity costs in the first place.

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I do want to mention the member for Stormont–Dundas–South Glengarry’s comments about how energy policy is also economic policy. I, in fact, agree, and so do the board of trade, the Electricity Distributors Association, the Canadian Federation of Independent Business and the Association of Power Producers of Ontario, all of whom came to committee to express their concerns about this bill and what it would mean for Ontario’s energy system. I encourage you, this government, to look at those suggestions, particularly around regulation.

I do want to end with Humber River–Black Creek’s comments that electricity is a right—

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

**Mr. Lorne Coe:** I know the afternoon is getting a bit late. For those who might be watching the Legislative Assembly, it’s always good to remind them that we’re discussing Bill 87, the Fixing the Hydro Mess Act, 2019.

Like many of the members, about a week ago I was in my riding. I’m engaging with many of the people I have the privilege of representing, and they ask what we’re doing. They ask what we are doing to build an electricity system that works for the people. That was seniors and it was business people—a good cross-section of my community. I told them this: We’re taking a comprehensive, pragmatic approach to building the modern, efficient and transparent electricity system that the people of Ontario deserve.

Now, the Fixing the Hydro Mess Act, 2019, and other regulatory initiatives would, if passed, find savings of up

to \$442 million by refocusing and uploading electricity conservation programs to the Independent Electricity System Operator. It would overhaul—this is long overdue—the Ontario Energy Board to make the regulatory system more efficient and accountable while continuing to protect consumers. It would wind down the Fair Hydro Plan and, as a result, save billions of dollars in borrowing costs, and introduce a new transparent, on-bill rebate on consumer bills to replace the Fair Hydro Plan.

You can’t discuss Bill 87 without providing some context as to why the bill is so important and why our government put forward this piece of legislation. For 15 years—15 long, torturous years—the previous government just stood by as electricity prices increased at an unsustainable pace, in some cases doubling or even tripling. In fact, you could say that some of their policies were contributing factors to those increases. What’s worse, Speaker, is that the Liberals thought they could get away with it just before the last election by borrowing billions—that’s billions of dollars—in order to provide rebates for the same people whose rates had skyrocketed under their era of waste and mismanagement. In essence, they were saying, “Sorry for nearly tripling your electricity rates,” and calling it a Fair Hydro Plan. But how is that fair? How is that fair?

For years, the Liberals sat in these seats blaming everyone, absolutely everyone but themselves, for the hydro mess. But Speaker, I ask you this: What exactly did they do about it in the 15 years they were in government? Did they work hard to come up with solutions? Did they work hard to fix what they believed was broken by past governments? I, along with my colleagues and most Ontarians, would say, “No, absolutely not.” They did absolutely nothing.

Let’s go back 10 years. The Liberals launched the Green Energy Act. Remember that? The Green Energy Act. Yes, some of the members opposite are smiling. They launched it 10 years ago with much fanfare, cheered on and supported by the members of the NDP.

**Mr. Gilles Bisson:** The idea was a good one.

**Mr. Lorne Coe:** Oh, you did.

Our province was promised a large economic boost, more jobs, cheaper electricity bills and substantial improvements to the environment.

The Green Energy Act was meant to help the economy recover from the last recession and, Speaker, to lead to a greener environment. Unfortunately, we now know it was all hype with no substance, absolutely no substance. We now know what really happened: skyrocketing hydro prices, with nothing to justify the increases.

I’m honoured to now be part of a government that is willing to do the right thing and take the necessary steps for Ontarians to see concrete improvements to their lives. We are reducing red tape on business. We are ending years of wasteful spending. With Bill 87, we are well under way to cutting hydro bills by fixing the mess.

One of the more substantive ways in which the Fixing the Hydro Mess Act will be living up to its name is the way our government intends to centralize and refocus conservation programs. What’s clear is that the current

conservation funding structure costs the electricity system over \$1 billion, as well as up to \$150 million in bonus payments to local distribution companies for program delivery. By contrast, this legislation would lead to central program delivery by the Independent Electricity System Operator rather than the local distribution companies.

This change would put an end to the millions in bonus payments that actually do nothing—absolutely nothing—to help conservation. All told, this amounts to savings of over \$442 million that will help lower rates for large employers, giving them the opportunity to invest more in their companies and create more good jobs. We all want to have more good jobs.

This transition to centralized conservation will lead to large savings for businesses right across Ontario. For example, an auto-sector-company consumer could see a bill reduction of about \$15,000 per month—not \$15,000 a year, but \$15,000 a month. A mining sector company could see their bills reduced by about \$30,000 a month. These figures, taken together, are real, very significant savings that could be put toward wages for staff or increased benefits.

Another major aspect of the Fixing the Hydro Mess Act is the winding down of the Fair Hydro Plan, resulting in savings of billions of dollars in borrowing costs that you're well familiar with. The Fair Hydro Plan turned out to be anything but fair and very far from a plan.

Let's turn for a moment to the estimates from the Financial Accountability Office of Ontario.

The Fair Hydro Plan cost Ontarians \$4 billion in borrowing costs. Just stay with that figure: \$4 billion. That is a ridiculous amount of money spent on such a flawed plan. As if the past 15 years of Liberal governments aren't proof enough, we should not be surprised that the Liberals wasted as much as they did.

Bill 87, if passed, would replace the Fair Hydro Plan with a new, transparent on-bill rebate that consumers will start seeing. We want consumers to know the true cost of the power that they're using, and the new rebate will be clearly displayed on hydro bills as a single line item.

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I'm slowly running out of time, so I'm just going to wind up a bit here, Speaker.

We want to establish a new governance structure and better separate the Ontario Energy Board's management, administration and adjudication responsibilities. We want to streamline processes by amending the OMB's consumer education objective, and reduce duplicate responsibilities between the OEB and the IESO.

In conclusion, the Fixing the Hydro Mess Act is fundamental to our government's vision to get back on the right track when it comes to the hydro sector. That's why I'm pleased to be supporting Bill 87, and I ask my colleagues in the Legislature to do the same. Promises made, promises kept.

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

**Ms. Rima Berns-McGown:** In December 2018, Moody's cut Ontario's credit rating, citing the deficit, and

the continued prospect of further deficits, as the reason for doing that. It cited increased debt and slow revenue growth, and a faster-than-previously-anticipated increase in Ontario's debt burden.

At the time, the Minister of Finance blamed the Liberals, but I want to point out to this House that the government has only made this problem worse, and this particular bill continues to make it worse.

Everybody can agree that Enron accounting is problematic accounting. The fact that there was a problem—no one is arguing with that, but this bill actually is going to continue to keep the province plunging deeper into debt while having absolutely no plan to move to cheaper energy. That is a real problem. That is an unforgivable and irresponsible problem.

I want to say that we're having this debate a day after the UN put out a catastrophic report arguing that a million species are on the verge of extinction. That cannot be reversed unless we deal with the human aspects of climate change.

In light of that, this government's actions that do nothing, that get rid of movements toward conservation, that do nothing to move towards green energy, make it absolutely reprehensible that you're continuing to move down this path. You need to go back to the drawing board.

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

**Mr. Will Bouma:** I do have to keep it short, but it's always tough to follow the member from Whitby. His calm, assured eloquence, telling truth to the House, is so fabulous to hear.

But I have to say, listening to the debate this afternoon, that the opposition's arguments come down to cheap shots against our legislation. Let's be honest: They agree that energy costs too much. They agree with OEB reform. They agree that the Fair Hydro Plan was anything but fair. But you know what, Mr. Speaker? The NDP don't have a plan, and they never, ever had a plan for this file.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Percy Hatfield):** Questions and comments? The member for Hamilton Mountain-Stoney Creek.

**Mr. Paul Miller:** I find it very interesting, this whole conversation, because I can remember, 30 years ago, the steel plants and the refineries and all the stacks that came up in our industry, heavy industry, throughout this country. We don't have a plan? Well, if you had come and talked to me, I might have had a plan that would be better than what you're doing. It's called cogeneration.

I don't know if you're familiar with it, but cogeneration is huge. Cogeneration: We were going to take the energy out of the stacks from by-products from coke ovens, from blast furnaces, those huge stacks with those big flames, and we had enough energy in the city of Hamilton to light up the whole city of Hamilton and beyond. That was 30 years ago.

The Liberal government at the time—I brought it to Tony Valeri, who was the minister at the time. He didn't go anywhere with it. I took it to Harper's government. They didn't go anywhere with it.

But this government right here has no excuse not to ask. You want a plan? I'll give you a plan that's better than what you're doing—better than the green energy plan, better than any plan. But the problem is, you don't listen. You're so arrogant, you don't believe there are other areas.

Well, I've got news for you. I can also tell you what goes on in heavy industry too. You don't have a clue about heavy industry. So if you want to talk about industry, if you want to talk about cogeneration—

*Interjections.*

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Percy Hatfield):** Government members, order, please.

**Mr. Paul Miller:** Did you even know that they're generating energy from vegetables? Did you know that? They're generating from vegetables. Did you know that in Gibraltar they're getting energy from waves out of the ocean? It's called wave action, but you wouldn't have a clue about that because you don't know anything about it. So if you want some information and you want to know something, come and visit me. I'd love to enlighten you.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Percy Hatfield):** Let me correct my record. I said the member from Hamilton Mountain-Stoney Creek. Obviously, it was Hamilton East-Stoney Creek. Thank you, sir.

Questions and comments?

**Mr. Vijay Thanigalam:** I want to make it crystal clear. The Fixing the Hydro Mess Act will focus on three main fronts: keeping electricity affordable and improving transparency; reducing costs by centralizing and refocusing on conservation programs; and building modern, efficient and effective energy regulations for Ontario.

Mr. Speaker, after 15 long years of Liberal mismanagement, relief has finally come to the people of Ontario.

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

**Mr. Lorne Coe:** It's always interesting to hear the cross-section of opinion on a bill such as Bill 87, but what's clear is, we're taking action to reduce costs and duplication. By streamlining the patchwork of inefficient electricity conservation programs in Ontario and by centralizing our approach, we're meeting 94% of our conservation goals and finding \$442 million in savings in the electricity system.

It's my honour to participate in this debate.

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

**Mr. Terence Kernaghan:** I'm happy to discuss Bill 87 today, the so-called Fixing the Hydro Mess Act, as many of my constituents in London North Centre struggle to pay expensive hydro bills. The name of this bill, though, is misleading. This bill does not fix the hydro mess at all. Rather, it continues the previous Liberal government's privatization agenda that saw hydro bills skyrocket throughout the province.

Again, it's got a misleading name. Unfortunately, this bill is the same Liberal policy with a new Conservative name. Some call this old wine in new bottles, while others call this continuing the Liberal-Conservative privatization consortium.

When I talk to Londoners about Ontario's hydro mess, they refer to one thing: the high cost of their monthly hydro bill. That's the mess that needs to be addressed. We've heard members today talking about the structure and talking about policy, but there's been too little talk of ratepayers. Too many Ontarians go without heat or cooling because their hydro costs too much. No one should have to make that kind of choice.

So today, I'd like to suggest two ways this government can legitimately and authentically fix the hydro mess instead of enriching their insider friends through further privatization. First, we need to protect the green energy rebates that promote hydro and energy conservation. It will not only help the province fight climate change but also lower the cost of hydro bills. Secondly, we need to fix the hydro mess by doing what the Conservatives and Liberals refuse to do: reverse the sale of Hydro One and return it to public hands.

The privatization agenda started under Conservative Premier—

*Interjection.*

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Percy Hatfield):** The member for Markham-Stouffville, come to order, please.

**Mr. Terence Kernaghan:** I hear the member from Markham-Stouffville upset over there. I think the privatization gravy train might have run over his tender toes.

The privatization agenda started under the Conservative Premier Mike Harris and, sadly, continued under the 15 years of their cousins, the Liberals, and is now about to get even worse under this government. We need to return Hydro One back to public hands, where it belongs. That's the only way we're going to see lower hydro bills in this province. I know this government simply wants to borrow money, kick the can down the road and make further generations pay for all of their mistakes.

1700

I'd like to take some time also to go through some of the conservation programs that this bill allows the government to axe. The heating and cooling incentive could be cut. This rebate helps provide rebates for those who purchase or install energy-efficient heating and cooling equipment—sounds like a good idea. This includes a variety of different devices like air conditioners and heaters, but also smart thermostats or pump systems. It's going to hurt the pocketbooks of regular Ontarians, but the government obviously does not care.

Most Ontarians are concerned about their heat and cooling. Their hydro bills aren't high because they forgot and left their lights on. Ontarians have learned under the last 15 years of Liberals that they need to conserve. Bills are most high because of our cold winter months, and our hot summers are simply getting warmer. We need a province where residents don't turn their heat off to save money or suffer from heat exhaustion in warm apartments. This is particularly true of Ontarians in the north, who have to keep the heat on longer and earlier than everyone in the rest of the province. If this government legitimately wanted to make the lives of Ontarians a little easier, they'd

let them keep this rebate. So do the right thing, government: Let them keep the rebate. Why are you trying to take money out of Ontarians' pockets?

There are also several rebates that this bill could eliminate that would, shockingly, target businesses looking to make green investments. It makes you wonder what this government has against green investments. What do they have against small businesses? Why are they making it more difficult for them?

The high performance new construction rebate provides incentives for building owners and planners to implement energy-efficient equipment in their buildings. Similarly, the residential new construction rebate provides incentives to improve energy-efficient products. We could lose both.

We're also going to see instant discounts removed from green products like LED light bulbs, power bars and other light fixtures that Ontarians frequently rely upon to use less energy. These rebates help small businesses create and maintain energy-efficient buildings, and they help regular Ontarians do their part for our environment. It's cheaper for businesses and developers to create green and energy-efficient buildings now, rather than have to retrofit them later. Let's think before you act, government. I know it's difficult.

The government is fond of saying Ontario is open for business—that is, unless your business wants to conserve energy. Bill 87 represents a step backwards when it comes to promoting this type of energy conservation in Ontario. The now former Environmental Commissioner of Ontario actually warned the government about the environmental impact that cutting rebates will have. Let me read you what she said in a recent press conference here at Queen's Park. She stated that the government has “cancelled Ontario's successful electricity conservation framework, and reduced funding for proven, effective conservation programs. Worse, we have no evidence that there will be any electricity conservation programs after 2020. The government's plan doesn't even mention electricity conservation ... abandoning electricity conservation after 2020 would push up greenhouse gas emissions from electricity.”

Speaker, how does this government plan to fix the hydro mess without a proper environmental plan? Are we going to have another bill in 2020 claiming to fix yet another hydro mess? That's the path we are headed down unless the government begins to think about the environmental implications of its actions.

I want to continue by sharing some remarks from the Environmental Commission of Ontario. Her report contained a well-reasoned explanation as to why the government's policies on hydro must include a plan for electricity conservation. We need to conserve our electricity to last us through periods of extreme heat or cold when demand is high. We've seen how unpredictable the weather has been in the winter, as well as now in the spring, and how hot it has been in the past. This is absolutely necessary.

The Independent Electricity System Operator acknowledged this fact too. They stated that by 2023, they estimated that Ontario will need more electricity at peak times than it currently has available.

It leaves me to ask the question, Speaker, why is this government blocking forward-thinking and future plans to avoid this headache? Let Ontarians do their part by offering rebates that will help them conserve energy. Tomorrow's crisis can be prevented today.

The commissioner goes on to explain that electricity conservation will also help Ontario reduce climate pollution. During peak times, Ontario generates some electricity through natural gas and oil, which we know from the facts is a less environmentally friendly way to generate energy. This has been low in the past, usually under 10%, but without electricity conservation, we could see this number skyrocket.

Furthermore, hydro conservation makes good economic sense. The 2019 Energy Conservation Progress Report shows that direct investment into hydro conservation measures can see positive economic results. Even without this direct investment, though, lowering hydro rates puts more money back into the pocketbooks of Ontarians. These people will be able to take that money and invest money back into the economy, instead of having to pay for yet another executive's vacation.

Businesses also benefit from energy conservation. It reduces company overhead and frees up extra money that businesses can invest elsewhere—new equipment, new facilities or even into their staff. Manufacturers in this province, in particular, can benefit from inexpensive or conserved hydro. It allows them to produce more at less cost.

Businesses can find new investors thanks to cheaper hydro. The Environmental Commissioner of Ontario noticed a trend in Ontario investors: They were and are more likely to invest in companies with a sustainability model. She found that communities respond better to companies that show their environmental credentials, and therefore consumers were more likely to support these businesses. Ontarians have a conscience, and they want to do the right thing by the environment. It's a shame, Speaker, that this government seems ill-equipped or unready to do so.

Hydro conservation can also support Ontario's growing efficiency sector and can help see this field grow. Employment in Toronto's green energy sector grew by 6.5% in 2016-17, and we can continue to see this number increase with government support.

I'd like to remind the government of this quite succinct summary of the need for hydro conservation from the Environmental Commissioner of Ontario: “Ontario's low-carbon electricity is a critical step in the province's transition to a low-carbon economy for two key reasons: It is both more efficient and has a significantly lower carbon footprint than Ontario's primary transportation and heating fuels. Electricity conservation is critical to free up space for fuel switching from fossil fuels to electricity, and to limit the province's need for more electricity generation to meet this new source of electricity demand.”

Let me provide a local example of energy conservation from my riding of London North Centre. If the government was serious about reducing hydro bills, I'd recommend they look at the innovative apps designed by London



Hydro. Last year, London Hydro introduced the Trickle app. This app allows my constituents to pre-select appliances that can be turned off or down when the Ontario Energy Board finds that the demand for hydro is higher than what the province can supply. This app also sends notifications through your phone, letting users know about their energy use, and tells them what appliances use the most energy in their home. It's a really intelligent and well-designed app. Essentially, it empowers users. It makes them aware of their energy consumption.

London Hydro's chief executive, Vinay Sharma, deserves an amazing amount of credit for introducing this innovative approach to energy conservation. It puts it back into people's hands. It's just one of the solutions that we need to promote energy conservation in this province.

I want to move on to my second suggestion on how to fix the hydro mess. There's only one way to truly fix the hydro mess, and that's reversing the privatization of Hydro One by returning it to public hands. This is something New Democrats have been fighting for for years. Mike Harris kicked off this province's privatization agenda and the Liberals carried it through to its natural conclusion under Kathleen Wynne. The Conservative-Liberal coalition has been very active on this file, I must say. As New Democrats, we've fought these schemes every step of the way, and it seems that we're destined to continue to do so—Liberal, Tory, same old story. New Democrats are fighting this privatization agenda stealing from the people of Ontario.

What's shocking, Speaker, is that the Conservatives didn't always support privatizing Ontario's public services and utilities.

1710

**Ms. Catherine Fife:** That's true.

**Mr. Terence Kernaghan:** I know; what a surprise. Conservatives actually used to support a strong, publicly owned hydro system in this province. Once upon a time, Conservatives had a conscience. In fact, it was a Conservative MPP and a Conservative Premier who fought for and implemented Ontario's publicly owned hydro sector.

I think some of us—and we heard the comments from the member from Humber River–Black Creek; he beat me to it—remember Sir Adam Beck, the province's utmost champion for publicly owned hydro. Adam Beck was a former member of this House and a predecessor of mine who was first elected as the MPP for London in 1902. Although he sat as a Conservative in this assembly, Beck did not believe in unbridled privatization and selling off parts of our province to the highest bidder. No, Beck believed strongly in keeping Ontario's utilities and services in public hands, including our hydro.

Beck first became interested in hydro when it came to his attention that the Toronto industrial elite sought to obtain a monopoly over the province's hydro. Whoa, here we have it again: people trying to obtain a monopoly over our hydro system, but just changing their face, Speaker. With a monopoly, they could exploit Ontario's municipalities and residents to reap enormous profits for themselves while the rest of the province paid the price. It certainly sounds familiar, doesn't it?

Thankfully, Beck had a heart. He knew that hydro had to belong to the people of the province. He knew that it could power Ontario's people and not just the pocketbooks of the select few.

In an address to this very Legislature, Beck said, "It is the duty of the government to see that" hydro "development is not hindered by permitting a handful of people to enrich themselves out of these treasures at the expense of the general public." Sounds great, doesn't it? Where has Beck gone?

In 1905, Beck lobbied the Premier until he finally conceded that hydro "should be as free as air" and serve the people of this province.

Speaker, it really makes you question how we went from a Premier that championed free and accessible energy for the people of Ontario to a Premier that said he would leave no stone unturned when it comes to privatization.

Although Beck was a member of the government, he recognized that hydro was an issue that animated the people, and wished to include them—and it still is to this day. Beck urged municipalities to submit petitions to the government cautioning against a private monopoly over hydro. He organized protests outside of the Legislature.

That's right: a member of the government, outside protesting with the people. Can you imagine that? Typically, they're too afraid to actually meet the people of Ontario. That's how strongly Beck believed in the power of public good.

In order to convince his colleagues that public hydro was the right choice, Beck used arguments that are familiar to the present-day New Democrats. Beck talked about how cheap, abundant power could light the homes of working people. That's still the reason New Democrats fight for public hydro: It keeps the cost of hydro bills down. Beck realized it; New Democrats realize it; and whether the government wants to hear it or not, the people of Ontario realize it.

Beck also said that cheap hydro would create more jobs in factories, as hydro would improve working conditions and allow manufacturers to produce more product—more profit; more product.

The language Beck used might be different from what we say today, but the sentiment remains the exact same: Public hydro keeps costs down and allows businesses to operate more cheaply in the province. Heating and cooling in the winter and summer aren't cheap, and there are more jobs left to create if this government took the green economy seriously. Affordable hydro is still good for business over a century after Beck first said so.

Beck also described how hydro was essential for building transit in this province. He hoped to see electric railways throughout Ontario's cities, and maintained that hydro would lead to cleaner cities. "No more dirt and fumes from coal," he argued. It's there that I think Beck would agree with the Environmental Commissioner of Ontario that hydro conservation will lead to a cleaner future.

Beck campaigned on these ideas with the slogan "Power At Cost," which really addresses the concerns of

people today. Power at cost is what Ontarians need. When you ask the average Ontarian about the hydro mess, they immediately think about the high cost of their hydro bill. They aren't thinking about how best to manage bureaucratic levels of government, and they aren't thinking about which rebates are best. Their minds immediately go to their pocketbooks, which is exactly where this government's hands seem to want to go.

The NDP ran a campaign that was very similar to Beck's wishes. We still believe in a publicly owned hydro system. Unfortunately, this government is continuing down the very same Liberal road, even though they've slapped a new label onto a tired, old plan that takes money out of people's pockets. We need to, first and foremost, return Hydro One to public hands, and in the summer of 2018, we could have actually brought Hydro One back and made a profit.

New Democrats will always fight for lower hydro bills for people. Bill 87 doesn't even pretend to do this. We also believe that there should be transparent public oversight to ensure that Hydro One is protected for Ontarians.

Let's fix the hydro mess by actually addressing what got us here in the first place: deregulation and privatization. It's time we broke up the Conservative-Liberal coalition and brought power back to the people. This coalition has continued for well over a decade. The Liberals and Conservatives have always worked hand in hand. You can call them by a different name, but their MO is always the same. They worked in tandem to sell off Hydro One to their rich insider friends instead of helping the people of this province. It's not going to help skyrocketing hydro bills, and it isn't going to help families keep the heat on during the winter.

If you can move beyond this government's bluster—and I know it's difficult—it's incredibly clear that this bill simply continues the disappointing Liberal legacy. Ontarians will watch their bills continue to go up until we finally get a government that returns Hydro One to public hands, where it belongs.

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

**Mr. Daryl Kramp:** Actually, I rather enjoyed some of the comments from the member because Sir Adam Beck, yes, was a Conservative, and quite frankly, that principle of water power is still strong today. But the reality is, it's not 1905. The reality is, we have maybe 35 to 40 different means of producing energy right now—45, minimum. To suggest that we have a real problem—it's a grid management problem. That's where our problem lies.

What I'm suggesting to the member is—they're worried about a cost-benefit analysis etc., as if a CEO does not assume that responsibility. He has a board of directors that holds him or her accountable. That's the reality that we face in today's world, and that's why we need a comprehensive and very intelligent force that's going to fix the hydro mess. That's what you have in front of you.

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

**Ms. Catherine Fife:** It was really good to listen to the member from London North Centre discuss the solutions

that actually should be part of this broader conversation we're having around the cost of energy in the province of Ontario. It's really interesting, because many of the members who are on that side of the House weren't here when the entire privatization of Hydro One was part of the discussion.

At that time, the Conservatives and the New Democrats were standing together in resisting the sell-off of Hydro One. In fact, the finance minister, who used to sit right there, day in and day out, said, "Do not privatize Hydro One. Do not sell off this resource. It needs to remain in the public domain." So now, when the government has a majority, they bring forward a bill that does not address the core issue, which is what the member from London North Centre addressed: that holding our public utility in public hands and not selling it off is actually in the best interests of the people of Ontario. The fact that you stood on this side and you told the people that you would keep it in the public's hands, and now that you are on the government side, you've suddenly forgotten that promise—I mean, this is another promise made, promise broken.

1720

What I would like to say is that the member also referenced the lost economic opportunity around conservation. It's so ironic that "conservative" is part of "conservation." It's really missing the point, I have to say.

Good jobs would be created with retrofitting and renovating our public buildings and homes. Those are good local jobs. They flush out the underground economy. It's needed revenue for the province of Ontario, and you can't outsource those jobs to, say, India, for instance.

Congratulations to the member from London North Centre for well-researched and well-delivered comments.

**The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott):** Questions and comments?

**Mr. Paul Calandra:** Mr. Speaker, I was remiss earlier. I didn't think to congratulate the leader of the Green Party. I know they won a by-election last night in British Columbia in a former NDP stronghold. In fact, the NDP came third in that by-election last night. So, congratulations to them.

But when you're talking about policies, when your policies are based on 1902 Ontario, I guess that's why they're losing by-elections so badly in British Columbia and why they have a Conservative mayor in London.

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

**Mr. Tom Rakocevic:** I want to thank the member for London North Centre—

*Interjections.*

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Percy Hatfield):** The member for Markham-Stouffville: the last time you'll be called to order.

**Mr. Tom Rakocevic:** I'd like to talk about Tory math and how the Tories—this government—turned a \$6-million man into a \$113-million man. How did that happen?

They railed against him. They said, "We're going to get rid of this guy." His corporate salary was part of the stuff

that they helped create through the Mike Harris government in the late 1990s and moving hydro towards a privatized system.

What happened was that out of that \$113 million, \$103 million came as follows: There was a \$6.7-billion deal for an American utility provider, Avista, to be taken over. What happened was, that fell through. What did they say at the time? They said they were doing this because of provincial government interference over Hydro One. So the \$6-million hydro guy became \$10 million, or whatever it was they agreed to with him, and that went up by another \$103 million. Talk about waste.

But that's because this government has created a new religion, and it's called "privatization." They sold the 407, and they will privatize absolutely everything they can get their hands on so that their friends who come to their golden spaghetti dinners with ruby meatballs can make lots and lots, more and more money.

That's the reality. They will privatize everything they can get their hands on to make their rich friends richer and have comfy jobs when they leave this legislative chamber.

*Interjections.*

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Percy Hatfield):** We will return to the member from London North Centre for his summation. I'll call the government members to order, please.

**Mr. Terence Kernaghan:** I'd like to thank the members from Hastings–Lennox and Addington, Waterloo, Markham–Stouffville and Humber River–Black Creek for their comments.

The member from Hastings–Lennox and Addington mentioned that there is a grid management problem. There's a reason that we have that, and it is because of the system being broken up into different crown corporations.

He also mentioned that there are a number of different types of generation projects, which raises the question: Why is this government cancelling so many energy generation projects and cancelling any development into green energy?

I'd also like to recall the comments from the member for Hamilton East–Stoney Creek, who mentioned co-generation, which is absolutely brilliant, and I wish that the government would listen.

The member from Waterloo brilliantly spoke about how we need solutions, and, yes, that is to have hydro in public hands.

To the member from Markham–Stouffville: Well, he does know something about losing elections, and a conscience is never out of style.

To the member from Humber River–Black Creek, thank you very much for bringing up the \$6-million man. It would be a shame if he was left as the \$6-million man by the Liberals—but the Conservatives decided to enrich him further, and it seems that their gravy train was just getting fired up.

As we take a look at this debate itself—we have monikers here in this House. We call ourselves New Democrats and the government calls themselves Progressive Conservatives. I think we really need to consider the

name of this government and, instead, perhaps call them, more aptly, privatization Conservatives.

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

**Ms. Catherine Fife:** I'm surprised that the government doesn't want to speak to this piece of legislation. Usually that's what happens when you're proud of a piece of legislation and it comes to the floor of the Legislature for third reading. You get up and you say, "And another thing: This is why I believe in it." But for some reason, they don't want to speak to it.

I, on the other hand, am very pleased to be here today to raise some concerns that have been brought forward by the people of Waterloo. This has been a very interesting time, I think, in the history of the province since the election. From my perspective, and where I am in this place, it's hard for me not to reflect back on the entire privatization discussion that we had in this House prior to the election.

There's no doubt about it—and I think I referenced this in the second reading on this particular piece of legislation, which is Bill 87, the Fixing the Hydro Mess Act—that in the 2014 election, a lot of people missed the mark on how devastating the cancellation of the gas plants was to the people of this province. But then we came into a minority situation, and because it was a minority government, and because there was a power imbalance in the committee, that was how we got to the bottom of the gas plants scandal. That's where we learned that the Liberals had cancelled two gas plants at a cost of \$1.2 billion to the people of this province. It was such a large number. To be fair, it's understandable: \$1.2 billion. That's a lot of money.

For some reason—there were a number of issues with the Conservatives of the day—the Liberals still got in. That emboldened them to move forward with the—they wouldn't call it "privatization." They called it "broadening the ownership." They called it—what else?

**Ms. Teresa J. Armstrong:** Modernization.

**Ms. Catherine Fife:** Modernization—the same language that we use today with the Conservatives, actually. They felt that they had a mandate, even though they had never mentioned this during the election. But they had already embraced the idea of privatization, picking up where the former Conservative government had left off, particularly on power.

I have to say that when the Green Energy Act came to the floor of the Legislature, while I wasn't here, in theory the idea was that we would create a renewable energy option for the province of Ontario, reducing our greenhouse gas emissions, and that this potentially could be an economic driver and could, of course, reduce the greenhouse gas emissions in the province of Ontario, and good jobs could be created throughout that process.

The Liberals did not embrace that philosophy. They fully privatized all green energy options, really shutting out communities across the province of Ontario. They actually were signing contracts for 86 cents per kilowatt hour, when the competitive rate was between eight and 10

cents at this particular time. Then they locked the people of this province into 25-year contracts, with no oversight.

I think the point has been made here today: If you don't have regulatory oversight, then you will have high rates. There's a direct correlation between a lack of oversight and control and regulation in the energy sector that automatically passes on high rates and high costs of energy to the people of this province.

In the 2014 election, that \$1.2-billion cost of the gas plants was too big of a number. But come the 2018 election, the one that just happened this past June, people were getting their hydro bills and we were hearing about the high costs of hydro every single day. We were hearing it from seniors; we were hearing it from families; we were hearing it from businesses. So it was tangible, because people got their hydro bill on a regular basis. It was a constant reminder to the people of this province that the Liberals had broken their promise. They had betrayed the people of this province on so many—and then it got tied to a number of other issues like, for instance, hallway medicine. Once that trust is broken and once that breach happens, I believe, in the political arena, it doesn't matter how many commercials you put out and it doesn't matter how much money you drop in those communities. Once that trust is gone, it is gone.

1730

That happened on the energy file, which is why, when you brought Bill 87 forward and it went to committee—and my colleague here has discussed how those conversations happened in committee, because we genuinely tried to make it better. We tried to increase the oversight and improve the transparency in this piece of legislation, because we'd been through this mess before with the Liberals. It was, I have to say, disheartening to see the government of the day, the government who, when you sat over on this side of the Legislature, were very clear that you were dead set against the privatization of Hydro One. Yet now that you're on that side and some people, unfortunately, are on this side, you've forgotten how important—and all those talking points and all of that research and those reports that you put out. I think there was even an opposition day, which we really couldn't even believe at the time, where the Conservative Party of Ontario was fighting privatization.

You didn't put that in this piece of legislation. You didn't put that in the Fixing the Hydro Mess Act. It was one of the core issues that you brought to the people of this province. You've conveniently forgotten that point. I've raised this in this House because there are a number of new members. Forgive the pun, but once that light switch goes on and people see that the government is intentionally not being transparent about how energy policy is being created in the province of Ontario, and once they see that you've had the opportunity to truly fix the hydro mess by refocusing the attention of this province on conservation—as I've already mentioned, conservation is the smart investment on energy; for instance, the cancellation of the retrofit tax credits and the work that Reep has done in the province of Ontario. They had demonstrated, with evidence and policy, that with investment in reducing heat

loss in homes, addressing basements, addressing windows, addressing insulation and HVAC systems—these are good, local jobs. They can't be outsourced to China. They are in your local community. If you're applying for a tax credit, then obviously a certified tradesperson is doing the work, which means that there's a consumer protection angle in this idea. There's revenue generated because those local jobs in the community also create provincial revenue. And there's this underground economy, which is alive and well in the construction industry in the province of Ontario—it flushes it out.

So it truly is a winning solution to investigate and to invest in conservation. It's good for the economy; it's good for the environment; it's even good for the provincial coffers in the province of Ontario. And it's so ironic that you have conservation and have “conservative” embedded in that philosophy, but you've completely turned your back on what is a very rational concept: that energy conservation can be good for the economy and can be good for jobs.

Once that tipping point happens, though, and this government clearly—now they are not even standing up and defending this Bill 87. I have to say that I haven't really seen that too many times in this Legislature. Even in the dying days of the Liberals—and, believe me, there were some tough days in this Legislature for the Liberals—they still got up and spoke to the philosophy of where they were going. I raise the issue of the political arena to this government because, as I mentioned, there are some new members. You have to remember that, from our perspective when we were over here, that whole side was wiped out: all gone, everybody, down to seven seats over here. That is the breach of trust and that is the connection with energy. And I have to say that as this government has unveiled, if you will, budget 2019, “Things that Matter Most,” or something like that, we've got tailgating. We've got more beer in corner stores. We've got a breach of contract with the LCBO—no, the Beer Store of Ontario—that's going to cost upwards of \$1 billion. That is not a good investment. People are not protesting on the front lawn because they want more access to their Carlsberg beer in the corner store, at the Short Stop.

It was really interesting when the Premier did come to Toyota. He actually said to the people on the floor of the shop there, “Yes, you should be able to go to the local variety store and get a beer after a shift.” Nobody who works at Toyota is going to go down to the Short Stop for a quick pint of beer. It's outside of the real priorities of the people of this province. It is about priorities.

*Interjection.*

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Percy Hatfield):** Member for Sarnia–Lambton, come to order, please.

**Ms. Catherine Fife:** I know they get a little sensitive too, because in that budget are these priorities which should involve environmental initiatives and should address the climate crisis. We shouldn't even be calling it “climate change” anymore; we are in a climate crisis. Of course, what does this government do? It defunds all of the think tanks that are actually producing the evidence and

the research which counter the perspective of the finance minister and this particular Premier. But if climate change is not on your agenda—and clearly it isn't, because there are some talking points related to the environment, but there really isn't any dedicated funding.

I've always said this about budgets: Budgets are moral documents. They are moral documents—because there was a strategic sneeze in there: moral documents which tell the story of the priorities of the people of this province. What we did see in response to this budget—we keep peeling back the layers of this budget, and with every layer, there's more harm to the people of this province on education, on health care. The issue of hallway medicine, hallway health care in the province of Ontario: This budget is not going to address that, because the rate of inflation is not factored into it. When the Conservatives were on this side of the House, they believed in the concept of building in operating costs and the rate of inflation, because you have to recognize that hospitals and schools and government buildings and government services have operating costs, and those costs have gone up. I'm circling back, of course, to the energy issue, because the energy issue—the Windsor hospital came to us in the 2016 budget. Their hydro bill went up \$7 million in an operating budget. That means that people are in the hallway.

And education: The education minister did not factor the child tax credit—which is a whole big issue unto itself—into the education funding, did not address the high cost of operating schools and energy and the rate of inflation, as well, and so has underfunded students in the province of Ontario. Not only are we going to have hallway medicine in the province of Ontario, hallway health care; we're going to have hallway education, because you actually can't put 40 students in one classroom. You really can't.

#### *Interjections.*

**Ms. Catherine Fife:** We're going to get it trending: hallway education.

I raise this because the students have come to this place time and time again and have actually been on the front lawn of the Legislature, and their primary concern is climate change. They've connected it to education and access to post-secondary. They have addressed, obviously, the minimum wage, which was obviously a big issue for youth in the province of Ontario.

But this is what happened. Yesterday, a major report came out, and this is the title: "One Million Species Facing Extinction, Posing a Risk to Human Well-Being." This is from a United Nations report. It's a compilation of 15,000 reports, 50 of the best scientists in the world, and they are calling on politicians and calling on policy-makers, and they are calling on activists to hold us to account as politicians.

Energy is obviously a major factor in greenhouse gas emissions and how we produce our energy, and right now the natural environment is in an unprecedented decline. There's this artist in Spain who has developed this sidewalk art where the politicians are still talking about climate change and the water is up to their noses. We will

still be talking about this issue, because there's no severe call to action that this government seems willing to listen to, but this is where we are.

This is a quote from that report: "Nature can be saved, but only by tackling the interlocking challenges of feeding populations, producing energy and supplying cities in a way that doesn't obliterate biodiversity in the process." And yet when you see—I mean, you'd actually have to read the reports. You'd have to believe the reports.

#### **1740**

We were fortunate, I guess, in some regards that the Premier happened to be up in Muskoka last week looking at the flooding in the province of Ontario. He referenced Lake Joe and Lake Rosseau. There's one other very classy lake up there. That infrastructure is in dire need of modernizing, if you will. But he did say that climate change is real. It is. In 2017, the floods happened. He said that it was only supposed to happen every 100 years, but it happened in two years.

This budget does not address—there is no climate change plan right now in the province of Ontario. A plan would be defined by having a strategy, by having dedicated funding and by having targets. If you don't have targets to reduce greenhouse gas emissions, then you have no plan. If your fingers are crossed behind your back as you unroll a strategy that says, "You know what? We really don't like garbage and we want to deal with waste, and we're just going to put it out there to the private sector and hope for the best," that is not a plan that will effectively deal with one of the most urgent issues in the province of Ontario.

The fact of the matter is that it's a missed opportunity because good jobs could be created. When we look at the environmental impact of human beings, of energy, of waste, of transit in the province of Ontario, these are good jobs that could be created. Any strategy going forward should incorporate the concept, as I mentioned, of creating those local trades jobs to modernize and update and retrofit housing. We shouldn't be building government buildings that are not to LEED standards. We should be embracing the concept that we are part of the problem as government, and leading in that regard.

There is a major modernization happening just across the way there—a modernization of a government building. I believe it's Whitney Block. I have to say that they've had some long-standing issues, but to the best of my knowledge they are not building that building to LEED or bronze or gold or silver status at all. What a missed opportunity. How can you expect the private sector to ante up and to be a team player if the government isn't going to come to the table as well?

The jobs that we need in the future are going to be in the automotive sector. If we get ahead of it, if we actually have a strategy, instead of the \$40 million that was announced in the province of Ontario—which is just sort of hanging out there while the government rips out electric chargers in our GO stations. If you can get on a GO train in the province of Ontario and it goes to where you want to go, you're doing okay. There's no GO service in your

area. The rail service in the province of Ontario is part of the transit option around the energy sector as well.

So here we are, Mr. Speaker. We have less accountability right now in the energy sector than we ever had. If the Liberals had done this, the Conservatives would absolutely be raising this issue, and they wouldn't accept a "no" answer; they would hold the government to account. That is what we are doing, as the official opposition. I remember and we remember—it's actually part of Hansard—what you said when you were on this side. You said that you would address the privatization of hydro. You said that you would increase the accountability and the oversight in the energy sector. You even recognized, in the debates, the correlation between regulation and the cost of energy. The value of conservation was something at that point, in 2018, that Ontario Conservatives still considered to be an option in the province of Ontario.

Yet we have Bill 87 here, which does not address the core issues. We're actually, as a province right now, fighting carbon pricing in court. Saskatchewan lost that case last week, I believe it was. Ontario is going to lose that case as well. You've got \$30 million to go to court to fight the pricing of pollution when we know that this is an effective strategy to deal, in the province of Ontario.

But there's a little girl down the street at SickKids hospital, Abigail Lobsinger, who, through the OHIP+ changes, has lost the funding for her feeding tube. She has stage 4 lymphoma, and the cost of her feeding tube has been defunded through this government.

When I talk about priorities, I think about the stories and the people that come to me in the riding of Waterloo. I don't understand how the government can be fighting a losing battle in court around carbon pricing and not have enough money to ensure that a little six-year-old girl who's fighting cancer is funded for her feeding and her nutrition, which she needs to fight cancer. Let's get our priorities straight.

We won't be supporting this piece of legislation because it doesn't fix the mess, and you left it.

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

**Mr. Will Bouma:** It's always a pleasure to rise and debate with the member from Waterloo, but I will not receive advice on finances from someone who represents a party that had a \$7.5-billion hole in their platform.

This government was elected to get Ontario back on track to sustainability and affordability for its people, and that is exactly what we are going to do.

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

**Ms. Rima Berns-McGown:** It's always fun to stand up and be able to say to this government that they're being both bad for the economy and bad for the environment. Again, it's really shameful, and the member who just spoke should really be ashamed of himself, because this bill is demonstrably disastrous for the economy. You do not run debts when you have absolutely no plan to fix them. You don't run a debt when you have absolutely no

plan to ensure that in the future, you're going to be paying less money into that debt. That is not what this bill does.

Furthermore, it's an absolute disaster for climate change. I don't know about each of you, but I'm certain that you're getting the same number of letters and emails from constituents who are terrified about the brink that we've come to. In the time that this government has been in office, there have been a number of reports that have come forward that show that we are on the verge of no return in terms of climate change. We are starting to snowball. Just yesterday, I was listening to a piece on CBC about how the permafrost is starting to melt. The permafrost itself, basically like nature's freezer, holds a lot of frozen carbon that is about to be released into the atmosphere. That itself is going to start to perpetuate this change.

Unless we start to act now, there is going to be no going back. But instead of having a thoughtful plan that both tackles debt and tackles climate change, moves toward green energy, moves toward further conservation, this bill does neither of those things. It's really irresponsible.

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

**Mr. Mike Harris:** You know what? We hear about this great plan that the NDP has, but they had one shot at government here in Ontario—one shot. They formed government for five years. Their plan bankrupted this province, and a PC government had to come in and clean up their mess.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Percy Hatfield):** Thank you very much. Now we'll have a question and comment from the member from Hamilton East—Stoney Creek.

**Mr. Paul Miller:** That's the shortest response I've ever heard. Speaker, thank you.

Earlier I was talking about cogeneration. I'll try to stay cool about it. If we harnessed the energy that we waste yearly in Ontario up the stacks, out the windows and other things, we wouldn't have to worry about major investments in electricity, because we could generate enough energy to the grid that would control it. They could build dams in northern Ontario; they could be self-sufficient. We haven't allowed them to do that. Years ago, we should have cut a deal with Quebec and Manitoba. If we had done that then, we would be paying two thirds less for electricity than we are now. We're actually paying people in Ohio and New York to take our excess electricity, which is ridiculous. We're paying them to take our excess electricity: What is wrong with that picture?

1750

The member from Waterloo touched on one thing that I'd like to finish with, about climate change. I watched a program the other night from renowned scientists throughout the world. I think it was National Geographic, but I can't remember. Do you know, Speaker, that as soon as 2042, which isn't that long from now, if we don't do something as a collective when it comes to all countries and all climate change, we're going to have level-7 tornadoes. We're going to have level-8 typhoons. Flooding and forest fires will be uncontrollable throughout

North America, and we're going to get hit hard. Our firefighters will have no chance whatsoever to control those fires. There will be wildfires going on for years.

We have no idea where we're headed. I'm concerned about my grandkids and future generations, because I probably won't be around when this hits. But the bottom line is, if the world doesn't do something soon, we're all going to regret it.

You can hide and put your head in the sand and think it's going to go away. It's not going away. In fact, we're 1.5 degrees away from total disaster.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Percy Hatfield):** We'll return now to the member from Waterloo for her two-minute summation.

**Ms. Catherine Fife:** I want to thank, for their comments, the members from Beaches–East York, Hamilton East–Stoney Creek, Brantford–Brant—and Kitchener–Conestoga, albeit very short.

I do want to point out that the energy sector and the environment are very much intertwined. All of the research demonstrates that we need a solution on energy in order to address the greenhouse gas emissions, yet the budget for the Ministry of the Environment, Conservation and Parks has been slashed by 35%, and that of the Ministry of Natural Resources and Forestry has been cut by 14%. Between those two ministries, it's \$461 million.

People have said that this is “the most anti-environmental budget in Ontario since the deadly tainted-water disaster in Walkerton. The gutting of Ontario's climate action plan in combination with the taxpayer-financed partisan campaign against federal climate action expose a government that is deeply in denial on the urgency of climate change.” This is from Greenpeace.

Finally, there's a cost to not having a plan. This budget offered few details on its plans for climate action, choosing instead to tout the policies that the Ford government had axed to make cost savings, including the cap-and-trade system and the 750 green-energy contracts and energy conservation programs. But what the budget did not mention is the costs of cutting these programs. Axing the province's cap-and-trade system alone increased Ontario's deficit by \$3 billion, according to the Financial Accountability Officer, an independent officer of the Legislature.

When you have no strategy, when you have no plan, when you deny the fact that evidence and research demonstrate that you should be heading in a completely different direction—this government is stalled, and we will all pay the price for your inaction one day.

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

**Ms. Goldie Ghamari:** Mr. Speaker, before I begin, I just wanted to let you know that I'll be splitting my time with the honourable Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing.

It's a privilege to be able to rise once again in the House today to discuss Bill 87, the Fixing the Hydro Mess Act, 2019. I want to express my gratitude to the Minister of

Energy, Northern Development and Mines for introducing this necessary and much-needed piece of legislation.

Our government for the people was elected last June with a clear mandate on the hydro file. All throughout the election and the months leading up to it, our party was very vocal on the need to clean up the hydro mess created by the previous Liberal government. This file was so critical that we made fixing the hydro mess one of the five core priorities of our campaign platform and our government.

It is important not only to fix the disastrous policies put in place by the Liberals, but to fix it quickly. That is why it is so important to have time allocation on this bill.

Part of the reason we fought so hard is that we saw the damage that was being done to the residents of Ontario. Since we got elected, we have been taking a step-by-step approach to bring back our hydro system, to put back into place a system that our small, medium and large-sized job creators can all rely upon and, most importantly, a system that the residents of Ontario can rely upon.

For decades, one of the things that separated Ontario from other jurisdictions we compete with was the fact that we had a strong, stable, reliable and affordable energy sector. It's what drove our manufacturers and allowed our great province to grow. That advantage was not lost because we had a bad energy sector but, instead, because we had a bad government.

Ontarians have been waiting far too long for us to get that advantage back. And that is why, Mr. Speaker, we're moving forward on Bill 87.

Mr. Speaker, I just want to talk about an announcement that the minister made. I'm going to read what he said, and I'm actually going to say it in French for all the Franco-Ontarians who are watching here today: L'honorable ministre de l'Énergie, du Développement du Nord et des Mines a dit que notre gouvernement va réparer le gâchis dans le secteur de l'électricité et d'autres initiatives réglementaires qui permettraient, si elles étaient adoptées, de réaliser des économies pouvant atteindre 442 millions de dollars en recadrant les programmes d'économie d'énergie et en les transférant à la Société indépendante d'exploitation du réseau d'électricité.

What this means is that we are working to bring accountability, affordability and reliability back to our much-needed hydro system, a system that has been damaged and left devastated by the previous government and their bad policies, which, by the way, were supported—

**Mr. Paul Miller:** Here we go.

**Ms. Goldie Ghamari:** —by the current members sitting on the other side, of the opposition there. Mr. Speaker, it's interesting that they'll catcall and they're yelling and they'll say, “Here we go.” But you know what, Mr. Speaker? Here we go. Now that the PCs are back in power under the leadership of our Premier, we are going to go, and we're going to go strong. We're going to have to pick up the pieces. We're here because we care about what matters most, and that is protecting our economy, protecting our hydro system, protecting our education and our health care.

We have a moral responsibility to make sure that our children and their children and future generations of Ontarians to come have a place where they can live and they can grow. That is our responsibility as government. And it is shameful, Mr. Speaker, that the previous government, supported by this current opposition, brought in policies that devastated that. We're here to fix the mess. We're here to clean it up.

Like I said earlier in my hit, even though the Liberals decided to call it the Fair Hydro Plan, in fact, it is the unfair hydro plan. It is so unfair, in fact, that the Auditor General herself, who is an independent legislative person—and, by the way, she was appointed by the previous Liberal government—took it upon herself to come out with a special report, because she could see the devastating impact that the unfair hydro plan would have on Ontarians. She could see that the accounting principles used by the previous government to hide that deficit, to hide the debt and to hide those interest payments was unfair, and it was inappropriate and it was contrary to any accounting principle that you could think of. She even went to other jurisdictions, she went federally, and it was the same thing everywhere. The auditing standards used by the previous Liberal government to hide the unfairness of their “Fair Hydro Plan” were terrible. All it did was obfuscate the amount of debt and the billions of dollars in interest that they were putting on the backs of our children and our children's children.

Mr. Speaker, with Bill 87, we're looking to rectify that. We're looking to fix that, and we're looking to move forward. Not only that, but our Minister of Energy, Northern Development and Mines said that our government for the people will be holding consultations across the province in order to hear from businesses about industrial electricity pricing and programs. In fact, the minister is going to be coming to Ottawa on May 24, and we're actually going to be holding a round table in Ottawa to discuss this particular issue. My staff and I have been working with stakeholders in Carleton and across Ottawa—

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Percy Hatfield):** I'm sorry to interrupt.

*Third reading debate deemed adjourned.*

1800

**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, as I'm told by the table officers. However, we have late shows this evening. Am I doing this right? I know the member had said she wanted to share her time, but I guess she did say. So are we sharing time, or are we not sharing time?

*Interjection.*

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Percy Hatfield):** Next time, she shares her time. I guess that's the way we're going to play it.

So pursuant to standing order 38, the question that this House do now adjourn is deemed to have been made. However, we do have three late shows this afternoon.

## ADJOURNMENT DEBATE

### EDUCATION FUNDING

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Percy Hatfield):** The member for Davenport has given a notice of dissatisfaction with the answer to a question given by the Minister of Education. The member for Davenport will have up to five minutes to debate the matter, and the minister's parliamentary assistant will have up to five minutes to respond. We'll turn now to the member from Davenport.

**Ms. Marit Stiles:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I want to say, first of all, that it really gives me no pleasure to have to submit these notices of my dissatisfaction with the Minister of Education's responses to our questions. I have had to do this on many occasions. But day after day, the minister fails to respond to the most basic requests for information and to answer the questions that we are bringing forward.

My question to the minister was pretty straightforward, and I think I'll start by just reading it out again so that we can all recall—and also, there were many interruptions that day, so it's nice to be able to repeat it: “Educational assistants, custodians, clerical workers, library staff and language instructors all play a crucial role in supporting Ontario students and keeping our community schools safe. Yet so far, we have at least 2,500 education worker positions in jeopardy because of this government's cuts to our schools—and that's just the beginning.”

I asked if the minister would set aside her talking points and admit that the government's radical changes to class sizes and cuts to programs will mean lost jobs and less support for our students.

The minister didn't want to answer the question, so I tried again. I want to also note that the Speaker had to intervene on a number of occasions to stop the clock and ask for order etc. So I asked, “This is about more than numbers on a balance sheet; this is about the programs and the people who make our schools the absolute heart of our communities. This is about the services and the supports that help our children learn and thrive. But this government's actions will remove thousands and thousands of caring adults from schools, shutter programs and courses, and leave kids with a bare minimum.”

I recall that day we had about 300 students, trustees and education workers in the gallery, which I'll return to and explain why in a minute. They were from the Toronto Catholic District School Board, and they came here because their international languages program is at risk.

I said, “They deserve to know, Minister: Will the minister reverse her education cuts and start investing in our kids?”

Again, there was a lot of unhappiness with that question, and I can understand why Mr. Speaker, because there were, as I said, about 250 to 300 students, teachers, trustees, education workers and parents from the Toronto Catholic District School Board here that day for a very important day of action, their first-ever to save the integrated international languages program at the board.



I'm not going to get into the ins and outs of what happened that day, but suffice to say that this is a group of people who were feeling very let down by this government that day—pretty abandoned, in fact. They get a lot of nice words from the members opposite, a lot of promises, but they are empty—empty words, empty promises—because the truth is that this government's cuts are threatening that program and many, many others.

Those MPPs opposite didn't even end up meeting with the students and the trustees and the instructors and the parents who came here that day. Because the truth is—and I do get this, Mr. Speaker; I know that the members opposite want to be liked. I know that they do. I mean, we all, I think, want to be liked, Mr. Speaker. But they're not very liked these days—not very much at all—and they're not going to make those families happy as long as they continue with these cuts. They're not going to make those students happy because it is not their priority, and I just wish they would be clear and honest about that.

The priority of this government is to make cuts, and to take many of those dollars and fund tax cuts for very wealthy people—people who can afford \$1,600 dinners with the Premier, let's just say, for example. And those cuts are coming out of the programs that support our most vulnerable: our children and our students. Thousands of education workers, not just teachers but other education workers, like educational assistants who work with kids with special needs and ECEs, are receiving notices.

As the Leader of the Opposition mentioned today, our high school students are being called to redo their course selection for the fall because the courses are being cut. What I've heard from the educators in the minister's own riding is that classes in many high schools there are already stacked, so they have everything from grade 9 English to grade 11 English in one class already. That's just going to get worse.

Minister, I ask again, before it is just too late for an entire generation of students: Will you reverse these misguided decisions?

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Percy Hatfield):** The parliamentary assistant to the Minister of Education is the member for Niagara West. I'll turn to him now for his response.

**Mr. Sam Oosterhoff:** Before I begin, I wish to say that the member opposite commenced her question by saying that it gives her no pleasure to bring forward her dissatisfaction with the responses from the Minister of Education. I wish to assure her that it gives us no satisfaction to receive them.

I wish to also begin by thanking the member from Davenport for her question in the late show this evening, because as a member who spent some time in opposition myself, I value the important role that the member opposite plays in this Legislature. Speaker, a good opposition holds the government to account, bringing forward the concerns of constituents and offering constructive insight into areas that can be improved. When an opposition party brings forward ideas that respect taxpayers and look to the future, when they offer collaborative teamwork with the

government, this is beneficial for all Ontarians. But sadly, we have not seen this perspective on the role of the opposition from the New Democratic Party.

Before getting into great detail around some of the issues the member for Davenport brought forward regarding education in the province of Ontario and some of the excellent work that the Minister of Education is doing to ensure that we have an education system that truly works for students, parents and educators, a system that prepares students for post-secondary education and gives them the skills that they need to succeed in a rapidly changing workforce, I must bring forward an issue that I believe should concern all members of this Legislature. To quote the Toronto Sun, "On May 1, actual communists rallied on the lawn at Queen's Park and called for the beheading of Ontario Premier Doug Ford.

"They showed up not only with their standard hammer and sickle flags, they even brought a homemade guillotine.

"May history repeat itself. Chop! Chop!" read a sign held up by a protester standing next to the guillotine."

And what did the member opposite say? Nothing.

From the Toronto Star: "The May Day protest last Wednesday on the front lawn of the Legislature involved several hundred demonstrators, including unidentified people with Soviet-era flags and a two-metre-high mock guillotine made of wood, complete with faux bloodstains.

"On social media, a woman wearing a black bandana was pictured holding a sign that read, 'May history repeat itself, chop, chop.'"

The most concerning part of this is the fact that the member opposite and the New Democratic caucus failed to meaningfully distance themselves from this type of dangerous and anarchic display of hate. Rather, they laughed and treated it like a joke.

Threatening to behead anyone is no laughing matter, and I take great offence that the member opposite bismirches the name of this House and, through association, the entire province by failing to uphold the parliamentary protocol and decorum expected in this, the temple of democracy. Speaker, until the member from Davenport and the entire New Democratic team distance themselves from these radical, hateful and divisive displays, it will continue to be an enormous challenge to take seriously their cries of "The sky is falling."

The numbers speak for themselves, Speaker. In the budget tabled by our excellent Minister of Finance last month, the Ministry of Education received additional funding of over \$300 million. In 2000, Ontario spent around \$12 billion on combined elementary, secondary and post-secondary education. Today, that number has gone up to over \$41 billion—from \$12 billion to \$41 billion in less than two decades. So we're investing more taxpayer dollars in education than ever before.

**1810**

But for the NDP, it's never enough. You know, it's not just about how much money you can throw out the door, but rather also the results that can be achieved with the money. That's why we're investing more in our education system that our students, educators and parents depend on,

while also ensuring that we have a results-driven education system that actually works.

Our announcements on March 15 charted an exciting path forward for education in our province. We announced that we're modernizing classrooms by expanding broadband; developing a new policy that will ban the use of cellphones during class except for educational purposes; and modernizing the approach to assessment and evaluation, with a renewed focus on equity across the province.

We introduced changes to education funding to keep resources focused on students in the classroom. We're supporting teacher mobility, and transparency, fairness, consistency and accountability to school-board hiring practices of teachers.

We have repeatedly stated that through the \$1.6 billion in teacher job protection, not a single teacher will lose their job as a result of our proposed changes in class sizes and e-learning.

To conclude, Speaker, I'm very disappointed in the path that the member from Davenport has decided to take. She has taken the path well travelled by the Liberal-NDP alliance: the path of the politics of fear, of misinformation and of division.

I wait for the day that we will hear practical, positive contributions from the party opposite, to help build up our province and ensure that we can have an education system that works. Unfortunately, I don't think I'll be holding my breath.

#### PUBLIC TRANSIT

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Percy Hatfield):** The member for University–Rosedale has given notice of dissatisfaction with an answer given by the Minister of Transportation. The member from Rosedale will have up to five minutes to state her case, and the parliamentary assistant from Etobicoke Centre will have up to five minutes to respond.

We turn now to the member for University–Rosedale.

**Ms. Jessica Bell:** Last week, I asked the minister how it was possible for the province to be negotiating in good faith with the city of Toronto while at the same time putting forward legislation to take over the TTC and upload it from Toronto to the province. Rather than answer the question, the minister repeated talking points and made some empty promises.

What I'd really like to know is how the minister can justify going behind the city's back and introducing legislation that takes decision-making power for all new transit projects from the local level and hands it over to the province. Last week's bill, which we will be debating starting tomorrow, was one more step forward in Premier Ford's takeover of the TTC.

Here is what we do know: This government says frequently that they had an election platform that included uploading the TTC, and that's frankly untrue. I can't find it in your election platform anywhere, in any shape or form, even though this government says it again and again.

What we do know is that back in December, Toronto city council made it very, very clear that they believe the TTC belongs to Toronto and not the province, and they introduced and passed a motion reaffirming their support for local ownership.

How has this Premier and how has this government responded? By cutting the city out of transit decisions and refusing to provide any reasonable information to our municipal partners and to the transit agency—the TTC—about their grand transit vision or about the subway upload. In fact, it was our office that sent the bill to some of the transit agencies, because they hadn't even seen it yet, even though it directly affects them.

This disconnect between what the province is doing and what is actually happening on the TTC level was made very, very clear when the city issued a report with 61 preliminary questions to the province, asking them about their plan.

These questions were very sensible. They covered things like: What is your cost estimate? How did you reach your cost estimate? Who did you talk to? What are the project life cycles? Are we going to have a situation like we have at the Scarborough RT, where it's essentially falling apart and will fall apart years before transit in Scarborough is actually built? What kind of vehicles are you planning on using? Given that you expect the relief line to carry as many people as Line 2, what kind of vehicles are you using? What are the ridership levels for all the lines? And where exactly will the station locations be? These are all pretty important things to have figured out before making big announcements and before seizing control. This is the kind of information that the province should be sharing with the city if it was actually serious about working together to get transit built that meets the needs of Toronto transit users.

Let me also be clear: In this \$28.5-billion grand plan that you have, you expect the federal government and the city of Toronto to cough up money. How do you reasonably expect them to want to cough up money if you're not even sharing the plan with them in the first place? It doesn't make sense to me.

The minister has said on numerous occasions that he's doing what Toronto wants. But as someone who represents a Toronto community of 100,000 people, who rides the TTC daily and talks to Toronto transit users, transit riders, transit agencies, urban planners and experts on a very regular basis, I can tell you very, very clearly that the people of Toronto do not want the TTC to wind up in the hands of the province. I'll tell you why: Because we have seen the impact of what happens when the province takes over the management of local projects and privatizes them. We've seen the impact of this, which is exactly what you wanted to do.

We've got the Union Pearson Express. The Liberals had this grand, crazy idea that they were going to sell off that line to the private sector. It didn't work: No private sector provider wanted to buy it. Then they introduced a \$27.50 fare, because they thought it would be reasonable to have the operating costs covered by the fare box. Maybe it happens in Hong Kong, but nowhere else.

We've got the Eglinton Crosstown, which just had a \$230-million settlement that taxpayers paid—the largest P3 settlement in Ontario's history—even though that consortium promised, and the province promised, that it would take on the risk of cost overruns and delays. But guess what? It didn't. The taxpayers took it on.

Then we've got Presto. Presto is quite frankly a disaster. Over five years ago, the Auditor General said that this was the most expensive fare collection system in the world. And guess what? All these transit agencies are going to be asked by Presto to pay more next year.

I ask you to go back to the drawing board and introduce legislation that—

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Percy Hatfield):** Thank you very much.

We'll turn now to the member for Etobicoke Centre, the parliamentary assistant to the Minister of Transportation.

**Miss Kinga Surma:** Our government for the people was elected last June with the mandate to grow our economy and make life easier and more affordable for Ontarians. Everyone knows that when we get communities moving, people will have access to new jobs and new opportunities. We promised to build better public transit and deliver more transit services faster, while saving taxpayer dollars by forging new partnerships.

The province has a track record of delivering on infrastructure projects. We have the skills, the resources and expertise to build transit better, faster and more cost-effectively. We know we can improve everyday commutes and allow for a truly integrated regional transit plan for the greater Toronto and Hamilton area.

Last month, we unveiled a bold vision for transit, a \$28.5-billion transit plan to expand the subway network by 50%. This is the most money ever invested to get shovels in the ground and to get new subways built. The people of the greater Toronto area have waited long enough for an integrated regional transit system, and it's time to deliver.

The new Ontario Line will provide relief from congestion on Line 1. It will be twice as long and move twice as many people as the original relief line project. We know that we can get this built well before the 2029 target set by the city. We are going to deliver it by 2027.

The Yonge North subway extension will connect the subway to the growing cities of Richmond Hill and Markham. It should be opened soon after the Ontario Line.

We will build the long-awaited three-stop Scarborough subway extension, to better serve communities in the east end of the city, and we will deliver it before 2030. This turns a one-stop subway proposal into a three-stop subway solution for the people of Scarborough and connects a community that has waited for 30 years.

I know my constituents are excited about this: We'll add the Eglinton Crosstown west extension through Etobicoke. A large portion of it will be built underground, to keep people and goods moving on our roadways. We also plan for it to connect to Pearson airport, further linking Ontarians to the world. This will be delivered before 2031.

Let me be perfectly clear: Every bit of the city's previous planning on transit is being used. We're going to be working with the city, the federal government and the cities in the region to build a truly regional transit system that connects new neighbourhoods and gives more people more transit options.

**1820**

Last week we introduced the Getting Ontario Moving Act. If passed, it will give us the legislative tools to upload ownership of future subway expansion projects to the province so that we can get them built faster. This is our government's plan to get people moving, and it will get the economy going.

In the past, other governments have made promises to expand transit, but red tape and politics have always stopped them from delivering.

**Mr. Daryl Kramp:** Not now.

**Miss Kinga Surma:** Not this time.

Time and time again, people have been disappointed when nothing gets built.

During the campaign, we promised to upload responsibility for subway infrastructure, to build subways faster, to get Ontarians moving, because the province is in the best position to build transit. We would be able to prioritize transportation projects and make decisions based on what is best for the people of Ontario, not just Toronto. We have a greater capacity to finance projects and move them along quickly, and the resources and the decision-making abilities. We're open to new ideas and technologies that will help us deliver subway lines better, faster and smarter than has been done in the past. Different technologies like lighter trains will allow us to utilize more trains that go faster and help decrease cost.

We're working with the private sector to help secure funding. If the legislation passes, the province would be able to be in a better position to offer commuters a seamless regional transit network. That means fare integration and improved connectivity between transit systems. The fact is, we can get it done.

When we build and invest in transportation, we do more than get you from point A to point B; we're getting people moving so that they can focus on what matters most.

#### TREE PLANTING

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Percy Hatfield):** The member for Thunder Bay–Atikokan has given notice of dissatisfaction with an answer given by the Premier. However, earlier today, both sides of the House agreed that the response would be given by the parliamentary assistant to the Minister of Natural Resources and Forestry, the member from Haldimand–Norfolk.

We turn now to the member from Thunder Bay–Atikokan. You have up to five minutes to state your case.

**Ms. Judith Monteith-Farrell:** I'm speaking this evening about the government's decision to abruptly cut provincial funding to the 50 Million Tree Program. This decision will harm our environment and harm small busi-

nesses across Ontario. I am dissatisfied with the government's answers to my questions about this. I would also like to clear up a number of misconceptions about this issue.

First, the 50 Million Tree Program is an afforestation program. Afforestation is a plan to increase the number of trees in order to reduce greenhouse gases and stop soil erosion. The program plants trees primarily in southern Ontario on private land that has not been classified as woodland since 1989. It is separate from the 68 million trees planted by the forestry industry each year. That is reforestation, required by law on crown lands, primarily in northern Ontario.

I am proud of the forestry industry. They employ thousands in my riding and across the province. But the trees planted under the Crown Forest Sustainability Act are not the same as those planted by the 50 Million Tree Program. These are two separate things. The forest industry replaces trees that have been harvested in a sustainable plan, and the 50 Million Tree Program plants new trees in places that don't already have them, to replace forests destroyed years ago. It is irresponsible for the government to conflate the two.

Afforestation—growing new forests to protect our environment—should be publicly funded. Repeated statements by the government that the private sector will pick up funding where the government left off is a real stretch, and the abrupt way that the government made its decision left no time to plan for alternative funding models. We need coordinated, multi-year afforestation efforts to effectively fight climate change. Cutting funding to the 50 Million Tree Program effectively means that large-scale, centralized afforestation in Ontario will end.

In addition to the negative impact on our environment, the government's decision to cancel the program will have a devastating effect on the small businesses in this province. Businesses made multi-year investments and planted millions of tree seedlings in good faith. Business owners like Fred Somerville of Somerville Nurseries in Everett, Ed Patchell of Ferguson Tree Nursery in Kemptville, and Jenny Millson of Millson Forestry in Timmins all stand to lose large investments they made in good faith because of this government's actions.

The government now says that the program will continue for this year, as if that was a concession, but continuing the program this year was never in dispute. It has not addressed the real problem for these businesses. Seedlings used by the program take approximately three years to grow. Cancelling this program after this year means that millions of trees already planted for future years may be thrown out and that businesses will lose the investments they made. They could have made other investments, but chose to work with this program. They did so in good faith. The government should also operate in good faith.

Ontario made a commitment to plant 50 million trees. The government should honour this commitment. The whole world knows that we need more forests, yet Ontario may soon be throwing trees away.

I again call on the Premier and the minister to reverse the decision to cut funding to the 50 Million Tree Program.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Percy Hatfield):** The parliamentary assistant to the Minister of Natural Resources and Forestry is the member from Haldimand–Norfolk, Mr. Barrett. We turn to you now for your response.

**Mr. Toby Barrett:** This debate is about what our government was elected to do. We campaigned on bringing Ontario back to balance, after 15 years of the previous Liberal government recklessly spending taxpayer dollars. We inherited a \$15-billion deficit. The province is over a third of a trillion dollars in debt.

I will say, the member opposite knows these facts, Speaker. Her party chose to support the previous government every step of the way. In order to ensure that the services Ontarians rely on are there for future generations, we had to make choices. Our government committed to balancing the budget in a responsible manner to protect what matters the most: health care, education and other critical public services. We are following through on that promise.

Tree planting is important, Speaker. That's why our government has committed to winding down the 50 Million Tree Program in an orderly way and providing funding that will allow all trees scheduled for planting this year to proceed. One fact that is important to keep in mind is that the 50 Million Tree Program's initial target was to have completed the project by 2020. But since the program was started in 2007, they've planted just over half that total.

We are pleased that Forests Ontario expects to continue the program with support from new and existing funding networks, confident that continuing to support the planting of trees in 2019 will give them ample time to secure alternative funding for the following planting season, in 2020. However, the Ontario taxpayer will no longer be on the hook for a program that has failed to meet their own initial targets.

I know first-hand the benefits of planting trees. Since the 1960s, my family has reforested over 200 acres of our farmland in southern Ontario. It's personally important to me that tree planting continues in southern Ontario. The rhetoric coming from the opposition parties fails to recognize that our government continues to encourage good forestry management practices on private land through other programs—programs like the Managed Forest Tax Incentive Program and the Conservation Land Tax Incentive Program. For example, over 17,000 property owners in Ontario have enrolled in the Managed Forest Tax Incentive Program. It's open to anyone with at least four hectares of forested lands who prepares and follows a 10-year management plan. These properties comprise over 1.6 million acres.

Similarly, the Conservation Land Tax Incentive Program reduces the tax burden for property owners who agree to not undertake activities that damage or degrade the eligible areas of the property.

We remain committed to these programs. We will continue to work to rebuild the forestry sector in Ontario. As

has been mentioned in the House before, the forestry sector plants an average of 68 million trees every year, and has planted over a billion trees since 2005.

Our government was pleased to be able to continue to invest \$54 million in forestry access roads, which not only support the forestry industry but also form a vital part of the transportation network in northern Ontario, as I'm sure the member opposite is aware.

I'll close with a quote from Jamie Lim, president of the Ontario Forest Industries Association, in regard to the cancellation of the provincial transfer payment for the 50 Million Tree Program: "The cancellation of this program will not impact tree planting in our managed crown forests as there is a legal requirement to regenerate our public forests. Regeneration is the pillar of our forest sector and it is something our members take very seriously.

"The most recent data for Ontario shows that, along with other regeneration methods, 72 million seedlings are

planted by the forest sector on provincial land annually, and this will continue to occur regardless of government funding decisions.

"The current fiscal environment has put pressure on essential public infrastructure programs such as the province forest access roads program, which provides economic development opportunities and emergency access to remote areas of the province. We are thankful to Minister Yakabuski and the MNRF for their commitment to this program and the development of a provincial forestry strategy."

Thank you, Speaker.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Percy Hatfield):** Thank you all for your good behaviour this past half hour.

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 1832.*









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Glover, Chris (NDP)	Spadina—Fort York	
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Mantha, Michael (NDP)	Algoma—Manitoulin	
Martin, Robin (PC)	Eglinton—Lawrence	
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Mitas, Christina Maria (PC)	Scarborough Centre / Scarborough- Centre	
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Sarkaria, Prabmeet Singh (PC)	Brampton South / Brampton-Sud	
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