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(Hansard)**

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**Standing Committee on
Finance and Economic Affairs**

Protecting What Matters Most
Act (Budget Measures), 2019

1st Session
42nd Parliament

Wednesday 8 May 2019

**Comité permanent
des finances
et des affaires économiques**

Loi de 2019 pour
protéger l'essentielle
(mesures budgétaires)

1^{re} session
42^e législature

Mercredi 8 mai 2019

Chair: Stephen Crawford
Clerk: Timothy Bryan

Président : Stephen Crawford
Greffier : Timothy Bryan

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LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF ONTARIO

ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE DE L'ONTARIO

**STANDING COMMITTEE ON
FINANCE AND ECONOMIC AFFAIRS**

**COMITÉ PERMANENT DES FINANCES
ET DES AFFAIRES ÉCONOMIQUES**

Wednesday 8 May 2019

Mercredi 8 mai 2019

The committee met at 0900 in room 151.

**PROTECTING WHAT MATTERS MOST
ACT (BUDGET MEASURES), 2019**

**LOI DE 2019 POUR
PROTÉGER L'ESSENTIELLE
(MESURES BUDGÉTAIRES)**

Consideration of the following bill:

Bill 100, An Act to implement Budget measures and to enact, amend and repeal various statutes / *Projet de loi 100, Loi visant à mettre en oeuvre les mesures budgétaires et à édicter, à modifier ou à abroger diverses lois.*

The Chair (Mr. Stephen Crawford): Good morning. Welcome, everyone, to the Standing Committee on Finance and Economic Affairs. We're meeting this morning for public hearings on Bill 100, An Act to implement Budget measures and to enact, amend and repeal various statutes.

Pursuant to the order of the House dated May 1, 2019, each witness will receive up to five minutes for their presentations, followed by up to 10 minutes of questions: five minutes from both the government and opposition sides. Are there any questions before we begin?

**ONTARIO SECONDARY SCHOOL
TEACHERS' FEDERATION**

The Chair (Mr. Stephen Crawford): With that, we'll call up our first witness. It's the Ontario Secondary School Teachers' Federation. If you could please state your names for the record, you can get right into your presentation for five minutes.

Mr. Harvey Bischof: Thanks. I'm Harvey Bischof, president of the Ontario Secondary School Teachers' Federation. With me is Dave Barrowclough, who is on staff with us. Thanks for the opportunity to make this submission.

OSSTF represents over 60,000 public high school teachers and support staff, from junior kindergarten up to and including support staff in a half-dozen universities in Ontario.

I will speak to proposals regarding education, including post-secondary.

Ontario's education system is one of the world's best. This is verified by a multitude of international tests and measures. While we can and do regularly recommend

improvements, the notion that Ontario's education system is broken is demonstrably false. The government claims to be taking steps to strengthen education. However, the cuts outlined are going to not only weaken the education system but, in turn, weaken Ontario's workforce and ultimately our economy.

With regard to the funded average class size in secondary schools, the government has outlined an increase to the funded average to 28 to 1 for secondary schools, putting Ontario behind other Canadian jurisdictions. We are already witnessing program cuts, which drastically restrict student choice. Students will not be able to continue studying certain subjects and might have to resort to outside sources to finish their Ontario Secondary School Diploma.

Despite the claim of no current teacher being eliminated, at the end of four years, one in four teaching positions will be cut. Every lost teaching position results in the loss of six classes that teacher would otherwise have taught. This will not improve student success, and the damage done to student choice will be amplified with the removal of secondary programming grants and the local priorities grant.

The removal of this many adults from our schools will have a negative impact on supervision and safety as well. Additionally, extracurricular programming that engages many students and enhances their school experience will be lost. In order to maintain smaller credit programs, such as those for students with special needs, some classes will balloon to 40 or more students.

We recommend that the government listen to parents, students and other stakeholders and reverse these devastating cuts.

With regard to the impact on our support staff, without the release of the technical paper, it's impossible for us to make a full submission. Announced changes to the operations grant based on the larger average class size will almost certainly cause a reduction in maintenance, clerical and custodial staff that will exacerbate the supervision and safety concerns.

The cancellation of the local priorities grant, the human resources transition grant, and the base funding from the Cost Adjustment and Teacher Qualifications and Experience Grant alone will require school boards to remove support staff. This affects Ontario's most vulnerable students.

EQAO testing has not proven itself to provide any value for money. Many alternative methods of testing—for

example, random sampling—would save millions of taxpayer dollars that could be better invested in staffing schools appropriately, to support students and maintain student success.

Moving on to post-secondary education and the tuition cut of 10%, provincial funding for post-secondary education accounts for less than 50% of these institutions' revenue, forcing them to find revenue elsewhere, usually to the disadvantage of students and non-academic staff. The government's intention to lower tuition by 10% would normally be good news for students. However, without corresponding adjustments in the block grants, it will mean a cut of 10% to the funding of universities and colleges, or \$440 million provincially. This will result in fewer services for students, as institutions will make cuts, with non-academic staff being the most vulnerable.

The Chair (Mr. Stephen Crawford): One minute.

Mr. Harvey Bischof: The cancellation of the grant and loan program under OSAP and eliminating free tuition for low-income Ontarians will mean that students and families will have a higher loan burden. The government has shifted the burden of paying for post-secondary education onto students and families that need the program the most.

Finally, with regard to outcome-based funding, the government plans to increase that portion of funding for universities from the current just over 1%. When the previous government introduced this form of funding, concerns were raised and it was limited to that low number of just over 1%, and only for special-purpose funding. The Higher Education Quality Council of Ontario studied outcome-based funding and found that this type of funding in higher education has shown little evidence of improved student outcomes. Outcome-based funding will advantage large urban institutions, disadvantage those in the north, stifle equity and access for students, and demolish the culture of universities as an incubator of free thought and of academic liberty.

The Chair (Mr. Stephen Crawford): Good timing. Thank you. We're going to start questions today from the government side. Ms. Skelly.

Ms. Donna Skelly: Good morning, gentlemen. I wanted to ask you a little bit about—obviously, you're concerned about our changes to education. Would you agree that we have had a change in enrolment, that there is a declining enrolment in our educational system in Ontario?

Mr. Harvey Bischof: Over the last little over a decade, there has been a decline in enrolment, which is tied directly by staffing formulas to teacher jobs as well. There isn't the same kind of direct tie to support staff jobs, but there is a direct formula that generates teacher jobs.

Ms. Donna Skelly: So there is a decline in enrolment. Would it not make sense, then, to change the number of teachers within our educational system to reflect the change in enrolment?

Mr. Harvey Bischof: Indeed. That's what I was pointing to in my first answer, which is the fact that there is a formula that ties teaching positions to enrolment, and therefore as enrolment floats, the number of teaching positions floats as well.

But it depends on what you're trying to accomplish. While there is a tie between enrolment and teaching positions, there are other metrics that we ought to look at. For example, graduation rates have increased by about 20% over 20 years in Ontario. That means one out of five more students prepared to go on to, for example, the skilled trades and contribute to Ontario's economy in that fashion; one out of five more students prepared to go into post-secondary studies. So we've seen significant improvement in rates over those 20 years while the ratios were being adjusted between enrolment and staffing.

Ms. Donna Skelly: Thank you. Do you recognize and acknowledge that we are actually increasing funding in education?

Mr. Harvey Bischof: I recognize that there is an envelope into which other things have been placed that create the appearance of increasing funding in education. For example, there is \$700 million in child care funding that didn't previously exist within the education envelope that has now been placed within it, but—

Ms. Donna Skelly: So there is an increase to the education envelope.

Mr. Harvey Bischof: —it isn't, in fact, an increase to base funding for education, for teachers, for support staff.

Ms. Donna Skelly: But it's in the education envelope, and it is an increase. That's what I find frustrating.

Do you acknowledge that we have a deficit and debt that must be addressed? Do you think that is an important challenge for any government?

Mr. Harvey Bischof: Indeed. That's why OSSTF proposed to the government that we take a look at, for example, school boards wasting money on a litigious approach to grievance arbitration. It's why we have proposed changes to the School Boards Collective Bargaining Act, which is currently cumbersome and unnecessarily expensive. It's why we proposed changes to the EQAO, which delivers very poorly in terms of value for money: tens of millions of dollars spent for information that could be garnered for a tenth or less of the cost.

We made all of those proposals, none of which were taken up by the government. Instead, the cuts are coming to front-line workers who deliver the direct services to students. So absolutely I acknowledge—

Ms. Donna Skelly: I would have to disagree with that completely, but I'm wondering if anybody else would like to—go ahead, Mr. Piccini.

The Chair (Mr. Stephen Crawford): Mr. Piccini?

Mr. David Piccini: Thanks very much for coming today. I appreciate your presentation.

You did delve into the post-secondary file, which is one close to my heart, so I just wanted to ask you about that. Have you read the Auditor General's report on the OSAP file?

Mr. Harvey Bischof: I am familiar with it. I haven't read it in detail, but I've been briefed on it.

Mr. David Piccini: I was just curious for your recommendations, because I think you would agree that, were student enrolment to go up, we would need to raise the number of teachers. Correct? Would you agree with that sentiment, notionally?

Mr. Harvey Bischof: Sure.

Mr. David Piccini: Yes. So with OSAP, the percentage of grants went up, yet that did not correlate with the increased enrolment—

The Chair (Mr. Stephen Crawford): One minute.

Mr. David Piccini: —in the post-secondary file. We saw the highest earners among us getting non-repayable grants. It was just a grant. Would you agree that would be a prudent spot to first start tackling our debt repayment, given the Auditor General's report?

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Mr. Harvey Bischof: I'm sure, this being an area near and dear to your heart, you're probably as familiar, and probably much more so, with the criticisms of the Auditor General's report on the OSAP file as I am. I'm sure that you've seen some of those and recognize that it was based on an insufficient length of time to actually assess the value of those changes to OSAP and the contributions they made to, particularly, low-income Ontarians having access to post-secondary—

Mr. David Piccini: Just back to my question on the highest earners: Do you believe that they should have a non-repayable grant, that it should be grants-based funding for the highest earners?

Mr. Harvey Bischof: I don't believe that's a position that OSSTF has ever taken, no.

Mr. David Piccini: Okay. Thank you.

The Chair (Mr. Stephen Crawford): Okay. We'll move to questions now from the opposition side. Mr. Arthur.

Mr. Ian Arthur: Good morning. Thank you so much for your presentation. How much has enrolment gone down over 20 years?

Mr. Harvey Bischof: I'm sorry, I actually don't have that figure. I don't know if you happen to know, Dave.

Mr. Ian Arthur: It's not 25%?

Mr. Harvey Bischof: In fact, we've actually turned the corner on declining enrolment in Ontario. It had gone down for about a decade. We are in the process now of balancing and, in fact, going up, particularly at the elementary level right now, but that's moving into high school in a lot of areas. So, no, there is not a 25% decrease in Ontario's enrolment.

Mr. Ian Arthur: So it's a fallacy to tie the decrease in enrolment to a 25% reduction in teaching staff over four years?

Mr. Harvey Bischof: Sorry; I missed the first part.

Mr. Ian Arthur: It would be a bit of a fallacy to try to tie decreasing enrolment to a 25% loss of teachers over four years.

Mr. Harvey Bischof: Absolutely. In fact, what we're talking about simply is a one quarter loss in face-to-face service for students, and I include in that a quarter of the classes that are currently being delivered. With every teacher who goes out the door, six classes go with them, and that means that the opportunity to provide courses in the arts, in technologies, in any of the non-fundamental courses will be gone. In some cases, those courses are

fundamental for some students because some will pursue careers through the arts, through technology.

Mr. Ian Arthur: Absolutely. I brought up yesterday that there was a study done by the British Council where they found 55% of business leaders had degrees in the humanities and social sciences.

Mr. Harvey Bischof: Absolutely.

Mr. Ian Arthur: Can we talk a little bit about the two streams of information that are out there regarding these teacher layoffs? Can you lay out how not-routine the layoffs that are happening in school boards across Ontario are for us?

Mr. Harvey Bischof: We've not seen layoffs in these numbers in the 29 years that I've been involved in education. The numbers are enormous. I would give the example of the Near North District School Board, where they've laid off 50%. These are from the school board, by the way; these aren't union figures. This is the employer sending letters out to individuals. There haven't been layoffs there—

Mr. Ian Arthur: Yes, so there's a little bit of misinformation about that as well, on behalf of the Minister of Finance, who said that it was the unions portraying those numbers, when actually it had been a school board that sent that out.

Mr. Harvey Bischof: I've seen some peculiar claims in that regard. It's the employer that sends out layoff notices, not the union, for fairly obvious reasons. There haven't been layoffs in the Near North District School Board, at least at the secondary level, for years. If there have, there have been—two or three are the sort of numbers we're talking about, not 121 or whatever the precise figure is this year.

The point of all of that, though, is that even if there are recalls of a number of those positions—even all or most of those positions—the fact is that's just a preview of what will happen four years down the road when 25% of teaching positions are removed from Ontario's high schools. Find me another sector in Ontario where you can remove a quarter of Ontario's front-line workers and continue to provide the same sort of service. Ontario student success rates will take a hit, our graduation rates will take a hit and Ontario's economy in the near future will take a hit because of that.

The Chair (Mr. Stephen Crawford): Ms. Shaw.

Ms. Sandy Shaw: I just want to really, in the time we have left, talk about some of the classes that are being lost. We've been hearing a lot about skilled trades and the importance of skilled trades and apprenticeship programs, but it's my understanding that we're losing some classes in that because of the changes that are being made. Can you talk a little bit about that?

Mr. Harvey Bischof: Indeed. In some ways, they've become amongst the hardest to continue to offer because they are classes in which you have to restrict the size because of safety considerations, for example. So if you have a shop that has equipment that requires closer supervision of students, you need to have a smaller class size. When your average—average—class size goes to 28

to 1, that means that it becomes almost impossible to preserve any of those smaller classes if you're not going to have classes of 40 or 45.

The Chair (Mr. Stephen Crawford): One minute.

Mr. Harvey Bischof: One employer, the Halton District School Board, talked about classes of 46 students being entirely foreseeable under this change to the funded average.

Ms. Sandy Shaw: Wow. Very quickly—we don't have much time: The requirement to have four online classes, without any consideration for kids actually having access to computers, never mind broadband in the far north.

Mr. Harvey Bischof: It's discriminatory against students who don't have access, who can't afford computer equipment. It's done in no other jurisdiction in the world. Our current success rates in online courses don't come close to matching the success rates in face-to-face classes, where students have teachers and support staff who are there to provide them with the supports they need in order to succeed. It too will drive a reduction in the graduation rates and subsequently a hit on our economy.

The Premier was just in New York talking about Ontario's highly skilled workers and the value they bring to our economy, but those people don't just spring out of nowhere.

The Chair (Mr. Stephen Crawford): Thank you.

Mr. Harvey Bischof: Thank you. My pleasure.

ONTARIO SKILLED TRADES ALLIANCE

The Chair (Mr. Stephen Crawford): We'll move on to our next presenter, the Ontario Skilled Trades Alliance.

If you could please state your name for the record, and you can get right into your five-minute presentation.

Mr. Patrick McManus: Good morning. Thank you for giving me the opportunity to come to speak about the budget bill.

My name is Patrick McManus. I am the chair of the Ontario Skilled Trades Alliance. We're a broad coalition of 30 large-employer-based associations from the construction service and motive power sector across the province. Our members, which number in the thousands, employ over 100,000 skilled tradespeople across the province. I'm here on behalf of our coalition to thank the government for its ongoing focus to improve access to the skilled trades.

It's an incredibly important endeavour right now. Our workforce is aging very, very quickly and we're losing high-skilled workers every year to retirement. We simply don't have that reliable pipeline of people seeking careers in the skilled trades to replace those people who are departing. Successive governments have recognized this as a problem. Billions have been spent over the last 10 years to try to address this issue, but frankly, a lot of that money has been misspent because despite the investments we've seen no discernable increase in the number of people entering into the skilled trades.

We spent years focused on the wrong problems. Between the Ontario College of Trades and the administrative disputes that we've been going through to protect this

employment model that has not been allowed to evolve since the 1970s, we have fallen really far behind on the skilled trades. Our system has been paralyzed because we've been ignoring the needs of the labour market, and so now we're left playing catch-up. Schedule 40 of the bill is going to help take important steps forward on addressing the skills gap, and it's doing this by getting away from the same old, same old approaches that we have been employing for decades with nothing to show for it. We need new and innovative ideas, or we're going to continue to be stuck in neutral.

The most important change that's being tabled here is modular, stackable training. This is a training model that's based on fixing bottlenecks that we have in getting people to work. It does so by modelling the training programs after how we actually employ people in the field. To give you an example, in the 21st century, new home construction is a production-based business. We no longer hire jack-of-all-trades carpenters who in one single unit can build cabinets, build stairs, frame walls and install baseboards. Each of these tasks is highly specialized work now, and each of these tasks requires a specialized person, either on-site or in a factory, to do just that one thing.

We no longer hire an individual to install baseboards who has to go through a 7,200-hour apprenticeship in order to do this work or to receive their full pay. A modular training program that provides training for this specific job which matches the way that things are being built in the field will get people to work faster and get them to full wage faster.

Similarly, in an instance where there is a market slowdown in one of the construction sectors, which happens periodically, a modular training program allows for rapid retraining and allows tradespeople to transition in between trades more easily. Given the government's transit and transportation investment priorities, there's likely going to be a need for workers who can build roads and build transit infrastructure. If a slowdown hits the housing market in the GTA, then a modular training program on asphalt-raking or concrete-forming, or any other number of job-based programs, can help workers transition into new roles with relative ease. All of these changes are very important for the long-term health of the skilled trades employment sector.

0920

This isn't to say that schedule 40 fixes all of the problems that are out there, but it actually moves us into new territory for the very first time in a long time. It brings fresh ideas to this issue that has been stalled for well over a decade, and we're quite appreciative of the new approach—

The Chair (Mr. Stephen Crawford): One minute.

Mr. Patrick McManus: —and we believe that it is offering some of the beginnings of sustainable changes that can help employers begin to actually chip away at the skills gap. The baby boomers' exodus from the workplace is affecting our job sites today. So the opportunities to establish a new governance framework, to address skills promotion to students in high school and elementary

school, and to match skills training with the jobs that actually exist in the marketplace are all very timely.

We encourage the government to continue down this road, because there are such incredible career opportunities in the skilled trades. We just have to fix some of these barriers that have prevented jobs in the trades from evolving to meet the modern market requirements.

The Chair (Mr. Stephen Crawford): Thank you very much. We're going to start with questions from the opposition side. Ms. Shaw.

Ms. Sandy Shaw: Thank you very much for your presentation.

Were you here in the room when we had the representatives from OSSTF talking about the changes that they're making for kids in high school? When we talk about the skilled-trades shortage, when we talk about getting kids interested in a career in the skilled trades, it starts at that level. I know that the Ontario Youth Apprenticeship Program often gets kids connected.

We're hearing concerning information about shop classes being cut, and teachers who are teaching STEM—science, technology, engineering, math—are the first ones to be losing jobs at some of these boards. Can you comment on how you think that will impact the pipeline, if you will, of people who would be moving into skilled trades?

Mr. Patrick McManus: Certainly. In the market research that we have done, we believe the biggest initial piece that is being looked at is promotion. We don't get to students early enough. By getting to students in elementary school and high school, promoting careers in the skilled trades, by getting guidance counsellors to understand the viability of careers in the trades and understanding that these are career opportunities that pay in excess of what traditional jobs that require university educations can pay at initial levels, there is going to be some uptick there.

We also understand that the private sector has a role to play in this. We've been investing heavily in the promotion piece and in the skills-training piece for students all across the province. We've been doing that for well over a decade through the Ontario Construction Careers Alliance and a number of other industry-based programs. We have a role to play, as well. We understand that we're in a time where there is not a lot of money; we have a huge debt. We have that role to play in order to help bring students along, as well. It's something that we feel we've been doing already, and now we just need to take a more central role in partnering at the local level.

Ms. Sandy Shaw: But would you agree—you can't not agree that cutting shop classes in high school is not going to help this problem; it's only going to make it worse. It's going to delay people getting connected to the trades.

There's other criticism out there. They're saying that these changes that they're making to high school are not only going to connect to poor grad rates for students; the economy is going to take a hit in terms of people being able to participate in the economy, which is exactly what you're saying. I think that between what you're presenting here and what we're hearing about the layoffs and

increased class sizes and cutting classes, we're not getting this right at all. We're moving in the wrong direction. That's one piece about the education side.

The other thing I wanted to talk about is that there are concerns that there wasn't a lot of consultation with skilled trades. For example, the Ontario building and construction trades council said that they weren't adequately consulted. They do lots and lots of training in their workplaces. I know that they invest in training. Safety is the number one priority for them, and they're particularly concerned with some of these changes—the ratio, understanding that the ratio may not be appropriate in all cases. Can you tell me how you think that—there have been provisions made—that this ratio won't make workplaces safe for apprentices, young people, most often, in unsafe conditions? Young people are the ones who get hurt on the job, and statistics will bear that out.

Mr. Patrick McManus: The consultation piece is an interesting argument, because we've been discussing precisely these same issues for well over a decade, and the changes that have been made just move us to a model of apprenticeship that has long existed in the province, removing the Ontario College of Trades. The reduction of ratios to 1:1—I mean, the statistics in British Columbia will show that there was no increase in lost-time injuries as a result of that move.

The Chair (Mr. Stephen Crawford): One minute.

Mr. Patrick McManus: There is still a heavy responsibility on the employer to ensure safety. It's not the responsibilities of the unions to measure safety; it's the responsibilities of the employers to make sure that the workers on their job sites are safe. We have for the last 10 years pushed those lost-time injuries down very, very low in the industry, understanding that in decades past we had a major issue.

Ms. Sandy Shaw: I don't want to put words in your mouth. Did I hear you say that unions don't have a role in making sure workers are safe?

Mr. Patrick McManus: No. I mean, the responsibility on a job site is on the employer to ensure that their employees are safe.

Ms. Sandy Shaw: Not jointly with unions? They have all kinds of joint safety committees, all kinds of joint safety initiatives.

Mr. Patrick McManus: With the workers who are union members.

Ms. Sandy Shaw: Quickly, I'll ask, how can you ensure, given these changes, that workers will actually get a decent wage? Because one of the things they say is that if you want 100 carpenters, we can find you 100 carpenters, but they're not really dying to show up for less than minimum wage. So what provisions—

The Chair (Mr. Stephen Crawford): Unfortunately, we have to move to the government side for questions. We'll start with Ms. Skelly.

Ms. Donna Skelly: Thank you for your presentation. I want to expand on what my colleague raised, and that was the concern of safety on the job site. You stated—and maybe you can expand a bit. In BC, where they have

changed the journeyman-apprentice ratio to 1:1, has there been an issue with safety?

Mr. Patrick McManus: There has been no increase; their rates of lost-time injury have stagnated since the time that they've introduced those changes.

Ms. Donna Skelly: This is important to reinforce, because we have heard time and again—again, I'd like to clarify, when I hear from opposition members that there has been no consultation, that I've had so much consultation on this file. We've met with hundreds and hundreds and hundreds—I'd say thousands—of people collectively in this particular sector to deal with what we know is a critical shortage that we are currently facing and is only going to get worse.

Is this going to help us address that pending tsunami of a shortage of workers, do you think, the journeyman-apprentice ratio?

Mr. Patrick McManus: It's going to open up the opportunity for employers to hire more people to train individuals, to train under people who have been in the trades for a very long time and are approaching their retirement age. We so desperately need those people to follow in the footsteps and learn from the people on job sites. A lot of really important training happens when people are in the field. Just opening up that opportunity for employers to follow that model is really important.

Ms. Donna Skelly: We've heard from one stakeholder who had his own business and said that because of the prior journeyman-apprentice ratio, he was unable to hire his own son. He was prevented from bringing his own offspring into his own business because he would have had to have more people on-site just to bring in his own son.

Again, a comment made earlier that we want people to make a good wage—are these highly paid jobs? Are these good-paying jobs?

Mr. Patrick McManus: We're hiring people out of high school after training programs for several months at over \$60,000. These jobs that we're paying in construction are not minimum wage; they're not \$20 an hour. These are jobs you can make careers off of and support families off of. We've understood that we need to catch up on wages, and we've done that for well over a decade now to try to attract more workers in. Even with increased wages, we've still had difficulty finding workers to come into the industries.

Ms. Donna Skelly: Thank you.

The Chair (Mr. Stephen Crawford): Mr. Piccini.

Mr. David Piccini: Thanks for coming today. I appreciate your sentiment.

You spoke about stackable credentials and the sustainable changes being made as being refreshing after a decade of talking about it but no concrete action. If you could talk to me about the stackable credentials—and I think you mentioned a really good point about the sustainability long term, given the succession planning and given how disruptive technology is nowadays with respect to the skilled trades. If you could just talk to me a bit more about the importance of the stackable credentials and how you see that playing out over the next decade.

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Mr. Patrick McManus: When it comes to certain components in the trade, there are pieces of education that you receive in the construction industry that apply across the board. So if somebody is interested in transitioning between trade A and trade B, they shouldn't have to start at zero in trade B. They have a base understanding of how construction works, and a lot of those transferable skills should be recognized. That should allow for people to transition into a trade much quicker.

The Chair (Mr. Stephen Crawford): One minute.

Mr. Patrick McManus: If you have stackable, modular training, that's going to encourage that movement in between trades, without having to start from scratch all over again. You'll get people into jobs quicker, and you'll get them to full rate much quicker.

Mr. David Piccini: With how disruptive technology at times can be in a worker's life, and how that affects their role, do you think this will make a more competitive Ontario, able to be a leader in the skilled trades and advanced manufacturing?

Mr. Patrick McManus: Certainly. This is addressing and will allow for a much quicker retraining. As technology changes, it will allow the training programs to change much quicker, and will allow people to keep up to date on their trades, rather than back and forth between school and training. This is a very important approach that has been used elsewhere in other jurisdictions, and it's something that we're certainly encouraged by.

Mr. David Piccini: Thank you very much.

The Chair (Mr. Stephen Crawford): Thank you very much.

ONTARIO FEDERATION OF LABOUR

The Chair (Mr. Stephen Crawford): We'll call up our next witness: the Ontario Federation of Labour. If you could just state your names for the record, and you can get right into your presentation.

Mr. Chris Buckley: Good morning, everyone. Thanks for inviting me here today to speak on Bill 100. My name is Chris Buckley. I'm the president of the Ontario Federation of Labour. With me today is the director of research and education, Thevaki Thevaratnam.

The Ontario Federation of Labour is a champion of all workers' rights. We're here today because people are what matter most. Like the Ontario budget, Bill 100 fails to protect workers, their families, their communities or the public services they rely on. The government must withdraw Bill 100. There are 199 new legislative changes in this bill, but in this case, more doesn't mean better. The priorities set out in this bill are wrong-headed and will hurt Ontarians.

Bill 100 makes it harder to sue the government, instead of increasing access to justice for equity-seeking groups. It raises the legal threshold needed to proceed with civil litigation, including class action lawsuits and breaches of contract.

Let's also remember that the 2019 budget cut next year's funding for Legal Aid Ontario by \$133 million.

Specifically, the government has targeted immigrants and refugees, stating that Legal Aid Ontario can no longer use provincial funds on these cases. That cuts away two thirds of their funding for refugee and immigration cases. The government must reverse this discriminatory decision.

Bill 100 sets the stage for age discrimination in the workplace, instead of respecting collective bargaining rights. Pensions are workers' deferred wages. Bill 100 allows the government, through regulation, to require post-secondary institutions to reduce, limit or change the compensation of individuals who are working after having taken their pension. This can override legal, binding collective agreements, a violation of workers' constitutionally protected charter right. It also targets workers based on their age.

Collective bargaining must happen at the table, between the employer and the union. The government must respect the collective agreements.

Bill 100 proceeds with one of the biggest structural changes in Ontario's health care history, instead of investing in publicly delivered health care. It narrows the scope of where the Public Sector Labour Relations Transition Act, PSLRTA, is applied. The PSLRTA offers predictability in labour relations. By changing it, Bill 100 will contribute to more labour disruptions and greater instability. Ontario's health care system is built and sustained by public health care workers. This government needs to reverse its decision to drastically change our health care system.

Bill 100 prohibits a school board from having an in-year deficit for a fiscal year, instead of investing in public education and reversing the government's decision to increase average class sizes.

Bill 100 introduces the inequitable and inefficient CARE Tax Credit, instead of building more child care spaces. Ontario has the most expensive child care in the country, with some parents paying more than \$20,000 a year. The CARE Tax Credit fails to bridge the affordability gap for Ontario parents, even for the lowest-income families. Tax credits do not build quality child care spaces, reduce wait-lists or create decent work for all child care workers. Low-income families cannot afford to pay high child care fees up front, then wait until tax season to receive a rebate. Parents will now be forced to rely on unregulated and for-profit care, which provides low-quality care compared to public and non-profit providers. The government must protect our children and establish universal access to child care that is affordable, high-quality and publicly delivered.

Instead of enforcing workplace rights and protecting vulnerable workers, Bill 100 legislates gas stations to drive the government's anti-climate-action agenda. Gas stations will now be required by law to display stickers about the cost of the federal carbon price. Otherwise, fines of up to \$10,000 will be issued daily.

Meanwhile, in March, the Minister of Labour launched a new online self-audit tool for employers to determine for themselves whether they are in compliance with the Employment Standards Act. We know self-regulation does not work. Enforcement is needed.

The Chair (Mr. Stephen Crawford): One minute.

Mr. Chris Buckley: The government must lift its freeze on new proactive inspections, which are meant to prevent wage theft and other employment standards violations.

Instead of consulting with the labour movement and ensuring worker and public safety, Bill 100 is creating the conditions for a race to the bottom for worker protections, and a race to the bottom line by allowing construction firms to hire more apprentices at a lower wage than journeypersons. The government must restore authentic apprenticeship training in the trades that teaches the whole trade, not just parts of it.

When it comes to the governance of the board of trades, there must be a worker-selected representative in all positions earmarked by an employer.

In conclusion, the OFL urges the government to withdraw Bill 100. The OFL had submitted numerous recommendations in our pre-budget submission that would have shifted this government's focus from big business to the people who power our economy. People are what matter most. Thank you for your time.

The Chair (Mr. Stephen Crawford): Thank you very much. We're going to start questions on the government side. Mr. Downey.

Mr. Doug Downey: Yes, thank you for being here. I guess I'll start with our Childcare Access and Relief from Expenses program, the CARE program. Your submission says that it's inefficient and inequitable. I'm not sure, in terms of the geography with Ontario, if you're familiar with where Elmvale is? Elmvale is just outside of Barrie. It's in my riding near Horseshoe Valley ski hills—

Mr. Chris Buckley: Good. Nice area.

Mr. Doug Downey: It's a beautiful area. There is no child care there.

Mr. Chris Buckley: Well, there should be.

Mr. Doug Downey: Yes, there should be, and now—

Mr. Chris Buckley: There should be child care right across the province.

Mr. Doug Downey: Yes, and now there is, because parents can now choose to use the home child care that they choose—with the neighbour who's running a child care. It's not an institutional facility. I think we're coming at it—

Mr. Chris Buckley: Is it regulated?

Mr. Doug Downey: Of course it's regulated. All child care spaces are regulated in Ontario. The parents get to choose where they go.

In terms of equity, I think we have to take our Toronto lens off and look at what's happening in the rest of the province—

Mr. Chris Buckley: Oh, I'm not just talking about Toronto. I'm talking about the entire province.

Mr. Doug Downey: Well, it doesn't appear to be—if we're talking about efficiency and equity. But let me go on to the next piece.

You touched on legal aid. We're not directing legal aid on how they spend their money. We've been clear in the media about that, although people initially thought that we

were directing them in terms of immigration. But I do want to—

Mr. Chris Buckley: So \$133 million out of their budget is not directing them?

Mr. Doug Downey: They have to make decisions about—they've had increased costs and lower service, so there are some decisions to be made in that program. I just want to touch on—because you mentioned immigration—the division of powers in Canada and who is responsible for immigration.

Mr. Chris Buckley: So now you're playing politics with our submission.

Mr. Doug Downey: No, no. Look—

Mr. Chris Buckley: I know exactly where you're headed with this.

Mr. Doug Downey: I didn't write the BNA Act. I'm just asking you who's responsible.

Mr. Chris Buckley: But now you're playing politics with our submission.

The population is growing. It grows every month. Legal aid provides an excellent service to those who need it, the most vulnerable people who need it. Now, you're slashing their budget.

Mr. Doug Downey: I'm asking who's responsible for immigration.

Interjection.

Mr. Chris Buckley: Sure. Go ahead, Thevaki.

Ms. Thevaki Thevaratnam: It's actually a shared responsibility between the federal and provincial governments. This provincial government, the Ford government, has withdrawn all provincial funds, and that's two thirds of the funding that these immigration and refugee cases receive. That means that all they have now is \$45 million, whereas previously they had 66% as a top-up to that to get to 100%. So you've actually directed them by withdrawing provincial funding.

To your point about child care, let's not forget that in Bill 66, you actually loosened the restrictions as to the number of children an individual can care for at any given time, whether that is in licensed or in unlicensed child care. Now, through this initiative, not only are you not bridging the affordability gap—because really, by giving folks up to—not exactly, but up to—75% at a \$6,000 maximum cap, that means that you can only get child care for about \$8,000 in this province. Where in this province are you going to get child care for \$8,000?

When you're looking at the group for toddlers in Toronto, for example, it's \$20,000 per year. And I know it's not just Toronto. This submission also talks about, for example, Mississauga; it's about \$13,524 annually. In Ottawa, it's \$12,084 annually. It's not just a Toronto concern; it's a provincial concern.

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So for folks—they're only getting at most \$6,000, but again, they have to pay the entire cost up front. At the end of the day, at tax season the following year, you receive a rebate of up to 75%. That's what—

Mr. Doug Downey: So—

Ms. Thevaki Thevaratnam: No, no, no. I'm sorry. That's what makes it inefficient—

Interjection.

Ms. Thevaki Thevaratnam: I'm speaking.

Interjection: No, he's the Chair.

The Chair (Mr. Stephen Crawford): One minute.

Okay, Mr. Downey.

Mr. Doug Downey: Your facts are right in terms of us providing more child care spaces and providing an income-tested refund. It is true that somebody making \$300,000 is not going to get the same subsidy as somebody who is making \$50,000. That's intentional.

We are creating more child care spaces. We already did in Bill 66, with changing the ratios. So you're absolutely right about those things. Those are intentional. Those were things that we meant to do to provide more service. I guess we'll leave the rest—

The Chair (Mr. Stephen Crawford): Thirty seconds left.

Ms. Thevaki Thevaratnam: I'm sorry, but was it also intentional to relax those regulations that were actually introduced when there were deaths, infant deaths, in the GTA?

Mr. Doug Downey: Okay, I don't need to hear fearmongering about it.

Ms. Thevaki Thevaratnam: It's not fearmongering.

Mr. Chris Buckley: That's not fearmongering. That's actual, factual truth. That's not fearmongering. We're not here to fearmonger.

Ms. Thevaki Thevaratnam: That's why those regulations were introduced—in response.

The Chair (Mr. Stephen Crawford): Okay, we're going to proceed to the opposition side for questions. Ms. Shaw.

Ms. Sandy Shaw: I think we could discuss child care and I think we need to, because when we were talking about this change to the ratios in the House, the member from Eglinton—Lawrence—when we said, “Children died in care,” she said, “Only one baby.” First of all, I can't believe I could hear that comment in the Legislature.

Mr. Chris Buckley: One baby is too many.

Ms. Sandy Shaw: Exactly. Would you please just explain again the number of children that died in home-based child care and why those regulations were in place, number one—which would be important—and really just address how, for example, if there were a fire in one of these daycares, which has happened, someone is going to be able to carry two children and other children out of a fire? I mean, these are serious concerns that we have raised.

This is over and above this CARE rebate that does nothing to address making sure that there are increased, adequate, safe child care spaces, and it really does nothing to address the number one problem when it comes to the cost of child care, which is unregulated fees—costs. So can you just tell us, in your experience, the landscape of child care and how this is in no way doing anything to build an adequate child care system in Ontario?

Ms. Thevaki Thevaratnam: There was a report that came out from the ombudsperson, who actually looked

into this after—I think there was about seven or four—I can't remember; I'm sorry—

Ms. Sandy Shaw: It was four, yes.

Ms. Thevaki Thevaratnam:—child care deaths in the GTA itself during that period. The reality is that these ratios also don't count the number of children that you have as the provider itself, right? So you're then compounding it on top of that.

You're right; this is not only an issue about affordability, but it's 100% an issue about safety. By relaxing those regulations, you're putting children's safety at risk. It's not just about affordability. It's not just about high quality. It's about the fact that it's publicly delivered. Ultimately, you want to think that the government, that our institutions, have our best interests at heart, and that they're looking to make sure that our children receive high-quality, safe and affordable child care. When that is taken away, it makes folks no longer believe that they can trust their government, and that is problematic in itself.

Ms. Sandy Shaw: Thank you for that. This child care file is not an easy one. There are no easy fixes to this, and just to introduce a tax credit—they talk about people getting \$6,000. You know, there was a study done that, in fact, based on the requirements of that tax credit, 41 people in the province of Ontario would qualify for the full amount. So it's fallacious to say that this CARE is going to increase or create anything like the child care system that we need in Ontario.

Having said that, do any of my colleagues have any further questions on any of the issues? No?

Okay, so now that we've done the child care, I just would like to talk a little bit about when you talked about the changes to the Labour Relations Act. We heard from the Ontario Nurses' Association yesterday. We heard from the Ontario Hospital Association that what they're creating with this change to making it a requirement is that they're able to move the work without taking the workers. Can you just talk about how your members are feeling in terms of the security of their job, their ability to do their job with this hanging over their heads, that there's going to be destabilized—

Mr. Chris Buckley: It's no secret; there has been so much insecurity over workers' heads for far too long.

As a movement, we made significant gains under the old Bill 148. As of last June 7, life has changed in this province. Bill 148 was gutted. Bill 47 was introduced after five hours of consultation. Workers' rights were destroyed.

The Chair (Mr. Stephen Crawford): One minute.

Mr. Chris Buckley: I just don't understand why today's government needs to consistently chip away at workers' rights, especially for our young people. We talk about child care—that is our future, our children, our grandchildren. I think collectively, driven by the government, we should do everything we can to ensure that our young people have a great chance of having a great future and a great life.

As you chip away at workers' rights, such as the piece where employers are going to judge themselves whether

they're compliant with the Employment Standards Act—not every employer is a bad employer, but there are some bad employers out there. So if you leave it up to them to police themselves, workers' rights are going to be chipped away, day in and day out.

I would just say that this is not the type of environment we want to create for workers. We're all for creating good-paying, permanent jobs in the province of Ontario, but in reality, that's not the case. That's why workers' rights, whether it's the Employment Standards Act or the Labour Relations Act, should be strengthened, not diminished, like the current government has done when they eliminated—

The Chair (Mr. Stephen Crawford): Thank you very much. We appreciate it.

Mr. Chris Buckley: Thank you for your time.

PRIVATE CAPITAL MARKETS ASSOCIATION OF CANADA

The Chair (Mr. Stephen Crawford): I'd like to call up the next presenters: Private Capital Markets Association of Canada. Please state your names for the record, and you can get right into your presentation.

Mr. Frank Laferriere: Good morning. My name is Frank Laferriere. I'm the chairman of the Private Capital Markets Association of Canada. To my immediate right is Mr. Brian Koscak, our vice-chair. The person taking pictures is Ms. Georgina Blanas, our executive director and vice-chair. I've been a securities industry participant for 25 years, most recently in my role as senior vice-president and chief operating officer of the Mandeville group of companies.

I want to thank this committee for giving us the opportunity to present our support of the Ontario government's five-point plan for creating confidence in Ontario's capital markets.

The PCMA is the national voice for the private capital markets and its stakeholders. The private capital markets are the foundation for job creation, innovation, global competitiveness and prosperity. The private capital market is the arena where people requiring capital for creative, innovative business concepts are matched with providers of capital seeking growth and income. This activity is called "capital formation," and it is critical to the prosperity of a society.

The private capital market is larger than the public market. In 2018, Ontario residents alone invested \$91.6 billion in Canadian and foreign corporate issuers in the private market.

The PCMA supports the government's objectives and believes that the role of government is to facilitate and enable prosperity for all through a regulatory regime that protects investors while at the same time is dedicated to wealth creation for all Ontarians. This means:

- reducing barriers and friction to capital formation;

- embracing the private capital market and the ownership of private investments by average investors as a key investment strategy where suitable;

—removing prejudices and concepts that have historically been associated with the private capital market by securities regulators;

—establishing oversight of the securities regulators themselves with a goal of improving Ontario's capital formation competitiveness, while at the same time protecting investors through meaningful enforcement against those who operate outside of the system; and

—educating all citizens and stakeholders as to the importance of business ownership and financial literacy.

I'll move quickly into our support for the Burden Reduction Task Force. Speed to market and the ability to obtain capital is a key element when operating on the global stage. Unnecessary or ineffective red tape created by the securities regulators has increased the regulatory burden to the point that investment firms are exiting Ontario and issuers are seeking to raise capital and create jobs elsewhere. We applaud the OSC's Burden Reduction Task Force as a big step in the right direction. Increased regulation does not necessarily increase consumer protection, but it does impose a barrier to job creation and capital formation. The PCMA supports smarter regulation.

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The PCMA also supports the establishment of the Office of Economic Growth and Innovation and would like to participate in its development. We have a number of suggestions that we'd like to bring forward—for example, flow-through share investment vehicles. These are highly successful capital formation tools used in the mining, oil and gas, and exploration sectors. We would like to suggest that these should be considered for other businesses and industries that are of strategic importance to Ontario's future.

As well, we'd like to suggest infrastructure investment vehicles. These investment vehicles have typically been reserved for the Canadian government, banks, pension funds, insurance companies and the wealthy. We believe that these investment opportunities should be democratized so that the average Ontarian is able to co-invest alongside these institutional players.

In Ontario, securities are offered for distribution to the public through a costly prospectus document.

The Chair (Mr. Stephen Crawford): One minute.

Mr. Frank Laferriere: The Ontario government brought in the offering memorandum in 2016. In its current form, it is ineffective and expensive, and issuers are failing to use it because of these impediments. We would like to suggest that these items be amended and reviewed.

I'll skip to the end.

My final remarks relate to the proposed legislation regarding title protection for financial planners and financial advisers, which speaks to the professionalism of those offering these services to Ontarians. We applaud the recognition of this professionalism in the industry, but going hand in hand with this should be the ability by independent advisers, who are essentially small business owners, to behave and to structure their affairs like other professionals, like doctors, lawyers, dentists and chiropractors. Now is the time to support long-overdue changes

to allow independent advisers who operate in small communities to incorporate their practices. In our view, this is an integral part of supporting the professionalism, and part of the title protection framework.

The Chair (Mr. Stephen Crawford): Thank you very much. We'll start questions on the opposition side. Ms. Shaw.

Ms. Sandy Shaw: Thank you very much for your presentation. I just want to start by saying that understanding the idea of raising capital, especially for innovative projects, is something that we recognize is important, particularly with a lot of call to move forward with a green economy, and with the issue of climate change, and some of the things that people are saying—that we lag behind in having a green economy. In general, understanding that maybe raising private capital would be more efficient to get to some solutions that we need as we're facing this climate crisis—I get it.

I just want to talk about protections for investors, which you address a little bit. I think you did say that increased regulation doesn't necessarily increase investor protection—

Mr. Frank Laferriere: I said it also may not increase—

Ms. Sandy Shaw: But it may also increase investor protection, so I just want to focus a little bit on investor protection. Can you talk about some of the reasons why these regulations would exist? For example, some of the risks to private investors, who may not be as sophisticated, perhaps, as institutional investors, as high-net-worth individuals, private foundations—the risk of losing their investment. More than anything, I guess it's around disclosure. Prospectuses—is it prospecti?

Mr. Frank Laferriere: Prospecti.

Ms. Sandy Shaw: Prospectuses provide information. People really need to know whether this is where they want to put their money. When people have the ability to read a prospectus, how do you ensure that there's full disclosure?

Mr. Frank Laferriere: On those points, I'll go one by one. The prospectus is an extremely expensive document. I've created and distributed many of them myself. The issue with a prospectus is, who reads them? The usual investment client doesn't read them. It's usually done up by the lawyers.

This is why the value of advice is so critical, and why I'm so proud of the PCMA, which has increased the professionalism within the industry. We've actually created the proficiency examination that is required by statute. Again, this speaks to the professionalism of the industry.

We personally believe that private investing as a realm of the wealthy is a fallacy. It is open to everyone. Our good friends from the Teachers' Pension Plan—that pension plan invests in private investments. It is sort of an oxymoron to suggest that a teacher, through their pension plan, has access to private investments, but I, as an individual, don't, because I'm not a wealthy, accredited investor.

The whole purpose of bringing the offering memorandum in was to provide access for individuals to co-invest alongside the wealthy and the institutions. Unfortunately, in its current form, it provides limits, and it provides rolling administrative costs, and because of these inefficiencies, the OM exemption is not being widely used to raise necessary capital to fund projects—

The Chair (Mr. Stephen Crawford): One minute.

Mr. Frank Laferriere: —like greening, like job creation, like fintech.

The one aspect I'd like to really quickly—

Ms. Sandy Shaw: Well, actually, I want to talk a little bit about the liquidity of these investments as well, so if you want to roll that into the risk that people can't sell these investments on a public market.

Mr. Frank Laferriere: I am so glad you asked that question.

Ms. Sandy Shaw: Okay. I'm glad you're glad.

Mr. Frank Laferriere: If you look at the average investment for a person, their house, people aren't buying and selling their houses every 10 days. The concept of liquidity being a risk minimization tactic is actually something that's been perpetrated and is a dysfunctionality by the industry as a whole.

Ms. Sandy Shaw: A defunctionality?

Mr. Frank Laferriere: It is a dysfunctionality—

Ms. Sandy Shaw: Oh, dysfunctionality.

Mr. Frank Laferriere: —of the industry as a whole. We believe that, like the pension plans, you have to go through liquidity planning. There's going to be a one-year, a three-year, a 10-year requirement where you're going to want to hold these investments, because invariably, quality private investments will generally yield greater results.

Ms. Sandy Shaw: What if they're not performing well and you want out?

Mr. Frank Laferriere: That's why you need to have an adviser, to be able to look for quality private investments. You can lose all your money in the public market, too.

The Chair (Mr. Stephen Crawford): We're going to move to questions on the government side now. Mr. Rasheed.

Mr. Kaleed Rasheed: Thank you so much for the presentation.

What are your thoughts on the changes to the Securities Act that require a cost-benefit analysis of proposed rules by the Ontario Securities Commission?

Mr. Frank Laferriere: As I've said, I've been in the industry now for 25 years. We welcome this requirement to actually impose some sort of cost-benefit analysis. There are many rules that are coming out where those of us in the industry are left scratching our heads, because ultimately it's the consumer who pays for this infrastructure. A regime that will allow a business approach to rule creation with the goal of protecting the investor will be welcomed by the industry.

Mr. Kaleed Rasheed: Can you also provide this committee with advice on implementing the establishment

of the office of economic growth and innovation, burden reduction, and establishing clear service standards?

Mr. Frank Laferriere: Again, that's a wonderful—a business owner within the OSC, market participants require certainty. We want to know how rules are going to be evaluated and we need to be able to build a business. These rules and this certainty are welcome.

With respect to the office, maybe I'll turn it over to my colleague.

Mr. Brian Koscak: Hi. I'm Brian Koscak. I was at the OSC's round table, and part of it was service standards. My clear recommendation was that they need to have an understanding of KYR, know your registrant, a relationship manager, to establish the service standards. They can have a dialogue on how to get the outcomes they are seeking. Having a change of staff and turnover doesn't work.

I think, when it comes to rules and regulations, we all took biology. We understand nature versus nurture. I don't think you're going to win that argument in terms of what's better, rules or regulations. I think some matters are better principles-based; others are rules. For EMDs, we're looking for more rules and guidance in terms of what outcomes are expected across Canada. But in terms of that office, I think there needs to be greater collaboration between the government, capital-raising, jobs and capital formation in particular while protecting investors.

Just to respond to your concern about investor protection, in the exempt market, in the OM exemption, they have a robust offering memorandum that is prospectus-like, and it's for the quasi-public markets. So that investor protection, risk acknowledgement forms—there are a lot of documents that protect investors. That all remains. I think we just have to get smarter and more efficient in terms of how we can raise capital here to support many companies that are looking for under \$10 million, and there's a lot of them—not moving up institutionals, because if we're going to help this economy, we have to help the small businesses, the small and medium-sized enterprises in Canada and in Ontario.

Mr. Kaleed Rasheed: Agreed.

The Chair (Mr. Stephen Crawford): One minute. Mr. Downey.

Mr. Doug Downey: I just want to touch on the flow-through shares. There are different mechanisms in different jurisdictions: Nova Scotia, BC and whatnot. Where are the companies currently gravitating to, if you know, for that advantage?

Mr. Frank Laferriere: We distribute a number of flow-through share activities. Typically, it has been BC-based, as a model. That's where most of the oil and gas and exploration is. But this represents a real opportunity for Ontario to set a new standard. Ontario is the economic engine of the country. There's no reason why we can't be a global trendsetter in basically everything we do. This flow-through share model would be an ideal start, because there are many, many industries, as Brian suggested, that are looking for capital and are in need, and there are investors who are willing to look and provide their capital for this.

The Chair (Mr. Stephen Crawford): Okay, thank you very much. We appreciate your time.

Mr. Frank Laferriere: Thank you.

The Chair (Mr. Stephen Crawford): With that, it's 10 a.m., so we're going to conclude this morning's presentations. We'll be in recess until 2 o'clock here in the same room. Thank you very much.

The committee recessed from 1000 to 1400.

The Chair (Mr. Stephen Crawford): Good afternoon, everybody, and welcome to the finance committee. We're meeting this afternoon to resume public hearings on Bill 100, An Act to implement Budget measures and to enact, amend and repeal various statutes. Each witness will receive up to five minutes for their presentation, followed by up to 10 minutes of questioning from the committee equally divided by both the opposition and government sides.

Just as a reminder, the deadline to send a written submission to the Clerk of the Committee is 6 p.m. tomorrow, Thursday, May 9. Are there any questions before we begin? Okay.

OPSEU

The Chair (Mr. Stephen Crawford): We'll get started with our first witness, which is the Ontario Public Service Employees Union. If you could just state your name for the record, you can get right into your presentation.

Mr. Smokey Thomas: My name is Smokey Thomas. With me today is Clarke Eaton. He's my presidential assistant.

Hi, my name is Smokey Thomas, and I'm president of OPSEU. I'm not just here to provide my reaction to the government's recent budget; I'm providing the reaction of 155,000 Ontarians who work in almost every Ontario community in just about every kind of job you can imagine. In one word, our reaction is "betrayal."

Ontarians want to believe the best about their leaders. We wanted to believe Doug Ford when he vowed "no deep cuts and no job losses." We wanted to believe he was going to make life more affordable for everybody. This budget, and the fall economic update before it, betrays all of those promises. I'll go into a few damning specifics in a moment, and there are even more damning specifics in my written submission.

But my main point is this: The government's decision to stoke unfounded fears about Ontario's debt is deeply disturbing and outright dangerous. At best, it is a simplistic, almost childish misunderstanding of basic economics. At worst, it's a cynical smokescreen hiding a much darker agenda of cuts to services.

Almost everything in this budget seems to be pointed at reducing our debt—everything except revenue tools, that is, and I'll get to that point in a moment—and it's easy to see why the idea of reducing debt strikes a chord with so many folks. Many of us are over our eyeballs in personal debt, and we're drowning. According to the Bank of Canada, the average Canadian owes \$1.70 for every dollar they make. In other words, for every dollar you earn,

you're sinking 70 cents further into the hole. A poll released just last month showed that nearly half of all Canadians—48%—say they are just \$200 away from bankruptcy.

No wonder people feel terrified of debt. No wonder they shrug helplessly when this budget cuts \$1 billion out of social services, nearly \$1 billion out of post-secondary education and training, \$850 million out of public schools, \$200 million out of public health, and more than \$130 million out of legal aid. No wonder they let it slide when the budget failed to provide desperately needed investment in our jails, in our long-term-care homes and in our health care.

Government says that public services are important but we simply can't afford them because of Ontario's debt. There's a word for that argument, and it's called "bull." It's complete and utter bull.

For one thing, this budget doesn't actually tackle the debt. The debt barely goes down at all. For another thing, the budget adds to our debt with all kinds of new spending that we don't actually need to spend. Why are we setting ourselves up to pay up to \$1 billion in penalties to giant breweries just so we can get a crappy selection of six-packs at the corner store? Why are we pushing the door wide open to mass privatizations when the Auditor General has shown that it will cost us billions more than necessary—what we've always called the "pay more, get less" plan?

But back to the debt itself, here's the main point I want to make: Comparing personal debt to government debt is like comparing apples to oranges. They are as different as night and day. Personal debt is scary; Ontario's government debt is not.

Ontario's debt is not out of control—far from it. Our debt-to-GDP ratio is around 40%. Germany has a debt-to-GDP ratio of 60%. In Belgium, it's 102%. In the US, it's 105%. In Japan, it's 200%. So Ontario does not have a debt problem and Ontario does not have a spending problem, either.

Ontario's economy is bigger than it has ever been. We are more productive and wealthier today than any other day in the province's history, and yet we invest less in our public services—we invest less in ourselves—than any other province in the country.

The real problem is revenue. For decades, the wealthy have been contributing less and less every year. While that has made life more affordable for the wealthy, it has made life less affordable for the rest of us. The government claims that the budget will start righting this imbalance, but with its \$3.8-billion corporate tax cut, it would actually do the opposite. It will make life more unaffordable—

The Chair (Mr. Stephen Crawford): One minute.

Mr. Smokey Thomas: —more difficult and more desperate for the vast majority.

Let me give credit where credit is due. There are two ideas in this budget that deserve applause: extending dental coverage to seniors, and cutting tuition for college and university students. This is government at its best: Pooling our ample resources to make sure everybody has

a fair shot at a decent life. No wonder those ideas got a lot of headlines and are very popular.

When the treasury department announced recently that it is centralizing purchasing, they trumpeted the savings that we'll see because of bulk buying. Well, strong public services are the ultimate bulk buy. We all need health care, so let's buy in bulk with universal public health care. We all need an education, so let's buy in bulk with universal public education.

Sadly, though, the investment in seniors' dental care is just a pittance, and the tuition cuts are being imposed in a way that's going to leave front-line workers with the bill. But the ideas themselves are solid. They are an affordable investment in ourselves, and that will pay huge dividends today and for years down the road.

The Chair (Mr. Stephen Crawford): Okay. Thank you very much, Mr. Thomas. We're going to go to questions. We're going to start on the government side now. Ms. Skelly.

Ms. Donna Skelly: Good afternoon. Did you want to finish?

Mr. Smokey Thomas: No. I was just wrapping up to say thank you.

Ms. Donna Skelly: Okay. Clearly, I appreciate your perspective. I disagree wholeheartedly with the points that you've raised. But I would like to ask you—in one of your bullet points you said, “The government's decision to stoke unfounded fears about Ontario's debt is deeply disturbing and outright dangerous.” How much debt, in your opinion, in the opinion of OPSEU, is too much debt?

Mr. Smokey Thomas: Well, I'd answer it this way: You didn't have to add more debt if you had not given \$3.8 billion in corporate tax cuts. You wouldn't have had to make all the cuts to public services.

We have an economist that we deal with. They say Ontario can afford more debt—they didn't advise it, but they could afford it—but the debt shouldn't be reduced or shouldn't be flatlined on the backs of public services and people who can't afford the cuts.

Ms. Donna Skelly: So the debt, minus \$3 billion, is fine? Is that what you're suggesting?

Mr. Smokey Thomas: When Mike Harris was in power he racked up debt too. Every party has, including yours.

Ms. Donna Skelly: So you agree, then, as you stated, this is not too much. Just in terms of taxes, revenue—the problem isn't the debt; it's the lack of revenue, if you will. How much would you tax? What would you like to see as a tax increase and where would you direct it?

Mr. Smokey Thomas: I don't know how much tax is enough on the rich. All I know is that I was asked a question on a TV talk show. The guy said to me, “Smokey, what do you suppose would happen if they increased taxes on the rich?” I said, “I'm guessing they'll still be rich.” All I'm saying is, they can afford to pay some more; right? I don't know how much more but—and I'll tell you what businesspeople tell me; I interact with a lot of them on pension plans. They say that they don't like corporate welfare. They want a flat playing field for everybody. Of

course, if you're getting that corporate welfare, the handouts—the Liberals did, in the government before you. If you stop the corporate welfare, if you stop privatization and wasting money on that stuff, guess what? You probably wouldn't have to tax the rich.

Ms. Donna Skelly: I agree with you with the corporate welfare, and I think our government does as well. We are in agreement on that.

I will share with you, as well, they'll say, “Skelly, you keep taxing us and I can tell you right now, we're packing up and we're heading south of the border.” I meet with a lot of business owners who say that the competitive business environment south of the border is just too attractive, and if we don't do something, if you want to increase taxes—and this is my experience. I've met with thousands of business owners across Ontario, and they don't want to see an increase in taxes and a less competitive environment. They find it challenging enough.

Can you define to me the rich? Who are these people? How much money do they make, in your opinion? You keep saying, “Let's tax the rich.”

Mr. Smokey Thomas: I'd define it as the 1%, and then that 1% of the 1%—a guy like Galen Weston. The federal Liberals are giving him millions of dollars to upgrade his coolers. That's just outrageous. Those are the kinds of things that really upset working people who struggle just to get by, the people on ODSF and Ontario Works. He gets on TV and he's like, “Oh, I'm the nicest guy in the world,” and sells that nonsense. The rich are the people—I don't know. I make a decent living; I can afford to pay a little more tax and I wouldn't complain. But when you get the wealthiest people in Canada—

Ms. Donna Skelly: I'm going to assume you're in the six figures, maybe?

Mr. Smokey Thomas: I make \$134,200 a year.

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Ms. Donna Skelly: So for people who make \$134,000, do you think they'd be willing to pay more?

Mr. Smokey Thomas: This is one guy that would. I can't speak for everybody.

Ms. Donna Skelly: Okay. I think that's it.

The Chair (Mr. Stephen Crawford): One minute.

Ms. Donna Skelly: That's all. Thank you.

The Chair (Mr. Stephen Crawford): You're good? Okay, we'll go to the opposition side. Ms. Shaw?

Ms. Sandy Shaw: Thank you for being here today. I just want to talk about the investment that governments are making in public services and the people of Ontario who use those services. It's just a matter of fact that under the Liberals they underspent on things that matter most to people. In Ontario, we currently have the lowest per capita spending on health care. We have the lowest per capita spending in post-secondary education. Those are two areas, to start with, that we are not overspending in. We're underspending in terms of our competitors.

When we talk about the subnational debt, well, if you compare our spending on those important things to other subnational governments, we are at the bottom of the pack. We're also at the bottom of the pack in Canada in terms of

net per capita revenue. So we are also under-earning in this province.

This is not a new situation. The Liberals put us in this position. They underspent in health care and we're in this position where we have hallway health care.

Now, this government has done nothing to increase the investment beyond just keeping up with inflation. This lack of investment in our public health sector was one of the reasons that the Bank of Canada cut in half the GDP projection.

Can you talk a little bit about how you see the economy and people's inability to afford the things that they need, and the fact that they—

Interjection.

Ms. Sandy Shaw: Oh, sorry. Thanks, Tim. He's like a roadie.

Mr. Smokey Thomas: I could hear you.

Ms. Sandy Shaw: I'm talking about two things: macro-economics and individuals. But individuals are struggling to keep up, and as a province, our lack of investment in these things is really impacting our GDP.

Mr. Smokey Thomas: In the budget, there's \$3.8 billion in tax breaks to wealthy people and corporations. In the budget, there's \$3 billion in cuts to services. Those cuts to those services are for the most needy and the most vulnerable people in our society, by and large, and an underinvestment in health and real cuts in every ministry, real cuts in education. So if they just had abandoned that corporate tax strategy—the Liberals kept reducing it, right? I don't see any CEOs out there clamouring, "We need to compete with Arkansas." Corporate taxes in Ontario are actually fairly low. So the government could have done the right thing and invested more in public services and increased the debt a little bit by just not giving out all those tax breaks.

If they would have abandoned privatization—private labs cost, and the Liberals admitted this, 40% more for lab services that used to be in a hospital. Those public-private partnerships—over a nine-year period, the Auditor General said Ontario spent \$8.2 billion more.

They're going to build a new jail in Thunder Bay. I applaud them building a new jail, but why not build it the old way and not overspend by \$50 million or \$60 million, transferring the risk, in theory, to the private sector, and when the buildings aren't right—Toronto South and Waypoint need \$100 million already and they've only been open a couple of years. The contractors are saying, "It's not our responsibility. We don't have the risk; the government does." Meanwhile, unsafe buildings are going unfixed, and it's all because of those public-private partnerships.

Vic Fedeli agreed with me on that when he was finance critic, that they shouldn't do all that privatized stuff.

Ms. Sandy Shaw: Yes, there's been a lot of flip-flopping we've seen.

Mr. Smokey Thomas: If they would just abandon some of those failed strategies of the Liberals and other governments around the world and the federal Liberals, I think we wouldn't be sitting here today, being so critical of them.

Ms. Sandy Shaw: In the time we have left, can you just tell us how this is impacting your members, the members that you represent—these cuts?

The Chair (Mr. Stephen Crawford): One minute.

Mr. Smokey Thomas: Well, they said there would be no cuts to the front line. There are a couple of thousand unfilled vacancies in the Ontario public service. People who work providing autism services—you know, there are 15 layoffs here, 20 there, 30 there. Public health is laying off all over the province. Doug Ford just keeps saying, "We're not going to cut the front line," and that's just not true. They're cutting hundreds and hundreds and hundreds of jobs just in my union, not to talk about CUPE and ONA and every other public sector union. So there are literally thousands of front-line jobs being cut and not one bloody manager laid off anywhere, not one.

And again, the Tories agreed with me that there were 60,000 too many managers when they were in opposition. Tim Hudak agreed. Patrick Brown agreed. Doug Ford has never talked to me, except to shake hands once. So why don't you get rid of some managers? They're laying off front-line; not one bloody manager has gone out the door anywhere.

The Chair (Mr. Stephen Crawford): Okay. Thank you very much. We appreciate your time.

CANADIAN CREDIT UNION ASSOCIATION

The Chair (Mr. Stephen Crawford): We'll call up our next witness. It's the Canadian Credit Union Association. If you could state your name for the record, and you can get right into your presentation.

Mr. Nick Best: Absolutely. Nick Best from the Canadian Credit Union Association.

Members of the committee, thank you for the opportunity to be here today to explain how Bill 100 will impact Ontario credit unions. Je suis heureux d'être parmi vous pour vous expliquer comment la loi 100 va impacter les caisses populaires en Ontario.

My name is Nick Best. I am the director of Ontario government relations at the Canadian Credit Union Association. We represent 65 credit unions who serve 1.5 million Ontarians and 150,000 businesses at 551 branches across the province. Bill 100 is critical to our sector because it will give Ontario's new financial services regulator, the Financial Services Regulatory Authority, FSRA, some of the powers it needs to undertake its activities when it launches in June 2019.

First, some background. As you may be aware, the previous government appointed an independent panel in 2015 to lead a mandate review of the three agencies that regulate financial insurance in Ontario: the Deposit Insurance Corp. of Ontario, DICO; the Financial Services Commission of Ontario, FSCO; and the Financial Services Tribunal. They recommended that these three agencies be consolidated into a single new authority with a mandate to challenge the status quo and develop a new regulatory approach, one founded on principles rather than process. In their words:

“We call ... for ... the replacement of the current regulatory structure and approach with a more nimble and accountable one; we simply do not believe the necessary transformation could be accomplished within the current regime.”

This proposal was met with some concern within the sector because credit unions had grown familiar with DICO, and while all regulated entities will on occasion be frustrated with their regulator, by and large DICO has served the province and the credit union sector well. Change can pose significant risk, and at first some of our member credit unions were hesitant to support this transition to FSRA, but as credit unions have become increasingly large, complex financial institutions, the need for a different kind of regulator has become more and more apparent.

Moreover, throughout this transition, we appreciated that the senior management and the board of FSRA have sought to address the sector’s concerns and integrate our ideas for a modern, principles-based regulator into their practices. After all, our interests are aligned. We both want the same thing: a regulator that responds to risk faster, better and for less cost.

This bill proposes necessary technical amendments to the Credit Unions and Caisses Populaires Act that will allow FSRA to begin its regulatory duties. Among them is granting the agency rule-making authority, which, to put it simply, is the power to introduce rules, after appropriate consultation, that would have the force of law, so the regulator can create regulations rather than the Ministry of Finance. This is beneficial to both the regulator and the sector, as it allows for quicker regulatory interventions, which are critical in a rapidly changing financial services environment. Bill 100 also gives FSRA some of DICO’s existing powers to verify compliance with the act, including on-site inspections.

I am aware that all of you have heard from us several times that we are looking for a modernized Credit Unions and Caisses Populaires Act. Concurrently, we are looking at all the regulations that govern our sector, and we’re very happy to have the support of everybody here, but as we go about modernizing the CUCPA, we look forward to working with FSRA on modernizing all the rules, all the regulations, guidances and advisories that govern the way our industry operates.

In conclusion, we endorse the provisions contained in Bill 100 and appreciate the commitment expressed in the budget to modernize our act. These three actions—modernizing the act, transitioning to FSRA and a review of all regulations, which will take place over the coming year—will benefit our sector and the entire Ontario economy. At the end of this year, we believe the regulatory burden on credit unions can be meaningfully reduced. If we are successful, our costs will be lower, our ability to help businesses will be higher, our ability to help our members achieve their financial dreams will be increased, and our capacity to contribute to local communities will be increased as well.

While these technical amendments are relatively minor on their own, the full package of reforms that we are seeking

and pursuing as a sector with the government and our new regulator will have tremendous benefits to our sector and the 1.5 million Ontarians who bank with a credit union.

The Chair (Mr. Stephen Crawford): Okay. Thank you very much. We’re going to start questions from the opposition side.

Ms. Donna Skelly: Sandy, you have to start.

The Chair (Mr. Stephen Crawford): Ms. Shaw.

Ms. Sandy Shaw: You said something this morning that you had done, and I thought, “Oh, that’s a new thing.” I forget what it was, but it was something else I didn’t know.

You know I have some background in the credit union sector. I was the chair of the board for FirstOntario Credit Union, and I know at the time, as a director, it was very important that we made sure that we were in compliance with our regulator, and that there was a lot that limited us from making—especially extending credit to certain sectors, which we thought was a competitive niche for the credit union, which is the case. So this has been long overdue.

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We’ve heard from you before, and we’re happy that you’re happy with these changes.

Mr. Nick Best: So far so good.

Ms. Sandy Shaw: So far so good.

I have a very specific question; I suppose I should have figured this out in some other way. DICO was the insurer, as well—

Mr. Nick Best: Yes, they had both.

Ms. Sandy Shaw: So who will play the role of the backstop now that those three have merged?

Mr. Nick Best: One of the things we’re actually most happy about is that FSRA will have the dual role, being the insurer and the regulator, but FSRA will have separate—previously, DICO billed credit unions one amount every year. From that amount, they drew the about \$13 million a year they needed to fund their prudential regulatory activities, and the remainder went into the fund. Now FSRA will do one dues for actual regulatory actions and a separate dues for the fund. The fund will be managed independently from the day-to-day operations. It will be managed as a separate entity within FSRA. So the separation is—we see this as a benefit.

Ms. Sandy Shaw: I know there was a concern with DICO, that when they became both the regulator and the insurer, there was a perceived conflict. You’re okay with the way that’s going to be managed?

Mr. Nick Best: So far we are happy, although the specifics have not been completely fleshed out. FSRA has indicated that they’re willing to let us participate in how the fund is managed going forward, just at a high level, priorities. We’re happy with that, but the devil is in the details, and this has not been fleshed out completely yet.

Ms. Sandy Shaw: I’m just curious: How do you see that being fleshed out? What will the ongoing communications be through—

Mr. Nick Best: On a yearly basis, I think if FSRA is willing to sit down with credit unions to just outline its view of how the fund is growing, its availability, whether

it's reaching the target for its growth, what the premiums will be—these types of information. Our biggest concern, though, is that—we're very, very keen on having the funds separated, that regulatory activities are no longer being paid for by the fund as an insurance mechanism.

Ms. Sandy Shaw: That makes sense.

Mr. Nick Best: That's our biggest one. Everything else is small details that can be worked out.

Ms. Sandy Shaw: Do you have any issues or concerns or information regarding any changes to the way that credit unions can raise share capital or investment offerings?

Mr. Nick Best: It's not on our list of concerns at this time.

The Chair (Mr. Stephen Crawford): We'll go to the government side. Mr. Roberts.

Mr. Jeremy Roberts: Thank you so much for being here, Mr. Best. It's great to see you.

In my previous role, when I was working with the federal government, we were looking at some of the ways that we could try to level the playing field between the big banks and the credit unions. At the time, we were dealing with the issue around banking terminology, which was the big issue of the day.

I'm just interested, from your perspective at the CCUA, as we move forward with this review of the act, what are some of the things that your members would like to see to help us level that playing field to benefit your customers?

Mr. Nick Best: Thank you for the question.

The main difference that we are looking for is that—right now, the Ontario credit union act says that a credit union may do only these certain things; the federal Bank Act and a number of credit union acts across the provinces, including PEI, Nova Scotia and Manitoba, say, "Here are the things you cannot do." Instead of the regulator telling you what you can do, being told what you can't do is a far more inclusive process. This is the big levelling item.

The second element is, OSFI, the federal regulator, has moved into a more principles-based regulatory framework. I don't want to give the impression that principles-based is less regulation. Principles-based allows you to put more resources into more complicated cases. If you are an underperforming credit union, if you were not answering promptly to the regulator and they have concerns, they can put their entire weight behind their inspections. And then, if you are a better-acting credit union, you will earn a regulatory dividend. So you actually benefit from being compliant, from being proactive in your compliance and thinking about it. We would really like to see our regulator move in this way. FSRA has, to date, been fairly proactive in saying that they'd like work on principles, work on high level, and we're happy to see that.

But the big item for us is, instead of saying what we can do in the act, we'd like to just limit the restrictions on future business powers.

Mr. Jeremy Roberts: You mentioned a couple of other provinces. Are there any provinces that you guys look to as a model that we want to move towards?

Mr. Nick Best: Every province has things that are—we think that the PEI act is probably the most permissive in terms of business powers, but Ontario credit unions are a little bit different because, for example, we have caisses populaires, we have a strong francophone history and we compete against the banks here. We are in the shadow of Bay Street, which is good because there's a bit of awareness of the actual sector and it's a pool of capital. The number of CFOs in the credit union system in Ontario who are former members of the large banks who came out and are blown away by what they can do—there's an additional pool of talent there. There's also a pool of talent for the regulator to draw from which doesn't exist in other places. So every province has different things that are beneficial to it. There's not one single perfect act.

Mr. Jeremy Roberts: Absolutely. Another topic that I'm always curious to get some thoughts on from folks in the credit union industry is financial literacy, which is something that we're moving forward on in the education sector and working to figure out how we can increase financial literacy levels amongst our youth. What role do you think credit unions can play in helping support that? This has historically been something that the caisses populaires have been involved in in Quebec. Is that something that your members are eager to contribute to?

Mr. Nick Best: It's something that they are doing right now, and we'd like to do more and more of it. There's never enough financial literacy out there.

I was at an annual general meeting for Quinte First Credit Union about a month ago. They're a credit union with three branches: in Trenton, Belleville and Frankford. They have maybe 18 employees, about \$150 million in assets. The full-time community officer gave 100 financial literacy seminars in the past year, and she reached about 1,200 people during that. That's just one credit union with three branches.

The Chair (Mr. Stephen Crawford): One minute.

Mr. Nick Best: Everybody wants to do this. It's just growing the scale one at a time. We do this entirely for free within the membership. It's something that's embedded within the DNA of credit unions. We believe that this is best led by the private sector. We define the relationship with our communities and our membership, and we want to keep doing that. We will do it without any government assistance and without any government prompts or pushes. We do this because it's the right thing to do for your membership. At its core, financial literacy helps people choose the right financial products for them, which is a critical part of a co-operative.

Mr. Jeremy Roberts: Sure. Excellent. Well, thank you so much.

The Chair (Mr. Stephen Crawford): Okay. Thank you very much. We appreciate your time.

Mr. Nick Best: Thank you.

MÉTIS NATION OF ONTARIO

The Chair (Mr. Stephen Crawford): We'll call up our next witness. It's the Métis Nation of Ontario. Good afternoon, and welcome to the finance committee. If you

could just state your name for the record, and we'll get right into your presentation.

Ms. Margaret Froh: Sure. Good afternoon. My name is Margaret Froh. I want to start by acknowledging the territory that we're on, the Mississaugas of the Credit First Nation, and also that we're in the territory which is known historically as under the treaty of the Dish With One Spoon or the Bowl With One Spoon. It's also the contemporary home of many, many different Indigenous communities, and I want to acknowledge the Toronto and York Region Métis Council in particular.

I wanted to start by thanking the committee for the invitation to come and speak. I am here both as president of the Métis Nation of Ontario but also as a former member of the Debwewin implementation committee. This is the committee that was established to oversee and provide advice to the government of Ontario on the implementation of Justice Iacobucci's 2013 report on the underrepresentation of Ontario First Nations on Ontario's jury roll. I also, up until just very recently, served as co-chair of the Indigenous justice group.

These two committees, the Debwewin committee and the Indigenous justice group, in fact represent the first two recommendations that Justice Iacobucci made, establishing these two committees to provide advice to the Attorney General and to Ontario on how to address the underrepresentation of Ontario First Nations on the jury roll, but also to address how to move forward, on a nation-to-nation basis, to address the systemic issues and the challenges with regard to all Indigenous peoples—First Nations, Métis and Inuit—with the Ontario justice system.

I'm going to limit my comments only to the proposed changes in the bill to move away from using MPAC data for the purposes of populating the Ontario jury roll, to start using OHIP data, so that I'm limiting my comments to that specific aspect of the bill.

What you may or may not know is that Justice Iacobucci made two recommendations with regard to how we get information, how we get data, onto the Ontario jury roll. This was fundamental to the issue around the underrepresentation of on-reserve First Nations people. The Debwewin committee made a recommendation to the Deputy Attorney General that the OHIP database—we considered various ones. We considered the MTO database and other databases. The OHIP database was, we felt, by far the most comprehensive and up-to-date database, for a variety of reasons, that Ontario could use in order to populate the Ontario jury roll. We were in agreement on that point.

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The point that we weren't necessarily in agreement on was with respect to how Ontario should roll out a move from the MPAC to the OHIP database. In particular, we expressed concern to ensure that it's clear that just changing the source list alone won't necessarily increase the representation of Indigenous peoples on the jury roll. It actually requires—and this is something that Justice Iacobucci spoke to quite specifically—a nation-to-nation, government-to-government approach with First Nations

and Métis in order to increase representation on the Ontario jury roll. I wanted to make that point.

With regard to the implementation, the important piece around the move toward OHIP is to ensure that that be done in a way that provides significant and meaningful engagement with First Nations in particular, but all Indigenous peoples in Ontario. Simply to move to OHIP alone is not enough—that's essentially what the Indigenous caucus of Debwewin said—and there really needs to be significant and meaningful engagement with Indigenous peoples in order to make that move.

Speaking more specifically with regard to the Métis population and our citizens across Ontario, OHIP will not solve all of the issues.

The Chair (Mr. Stephen Crawford): One minute.

Ms. Margaret Froh: Our people are very transient. In fact, we move between provinces as well. But it certainly is an improvement.

In particular, the reality is that Métis, like other Indigenous peoples in Ontario, live in poverty. With regard to the MPAC lists, they don't capture our people in the same way that they would those who have homes, obviously.

The other thing that I would add is, this may well be the best way to ensure that marginalized people, transient people, in addition to Métis and other Indigenous peoples, have access to the justice system and serve in the justice system in this way.

I'm going to wrap up my comments there, and I'm happy to take questions.

The Chair (Mr. Stephen Crawford): Thank you very much. We're going to start with questions from the government side. Ms. Skelly.

Ms. Donna Skelly: Thank you for your presentation. It's interesting, because yesterday Chief Hill from Six Nations was here, and she raised the exact same issues and concerns. I was speaking to the Attorney General about this this morning, and she was sharing that we, of course, are looking at the OHIP list as a way of addressing this.

It really hasn't been until organizations such as your own raised it that I was aware. I never really stopped to think of where our jury pool is taken from. I understand how they select the final jury, but how do they arrive at that group to come in? As I mentioned yesterday, I've been called four times for jury duty. I've never sat on a jury, but I've been called four times, and I can tell you that probably a lot of people in this room have never been called once. So it's interesting how they arrive at finding certain people.

But OHIP, as you said, isn't the final solution. It isn't the only way to seek a true general cross-section of potential jurors. Maybe you can share other ways. Do you have any other ideas—

Ms. Margaret Froh: Thanks for the question. Moving towards OHIP means a more comprehensive list. It also means a list that gets updated more regularly.

Not all on-reserve First Nations people will necessarily have OHIP cards and, in fact, not all Métis people will necessarily have OHIP cards. In particular, if somebody

doesn't have an anchor in terms of a home address and those types of things, I think it will prove a particular challenge.

I think the move to OHIP is a positive one in that it provides a more comprehensive list, but there needs to be a lot more done. One of the things that we did talk about and explore and recommend through Debwewin was looking at providing systems for Indigenous people to volunteer to serve on jury rolls.

In fact, we implemented a really successful pilot for the purposes of the coroner's inquest jury roll in northern communities, where we went out—when I say “we,” there were teams of people who went out. It was led by the Nishnawbe Aski Nation. We went out into communities, talked to communities, talked to First Nations people on-reserve about the coroner's inquest juries and what they did, and came back the next day to see who would respond and who would come forward. We were hoping to have just over 100 people volunteer; we had well over 400 people volunteer. So there is a keen interest. If you can talk in a meaningful way and have a true nation-to-nation collaborative approach, there is a lot of interest, I believe, within our communities, to serve in that way. I think the opportunity to establish a volunteer system, both within the criminal justice system as well as the coroner's inquest system, is another way to help augment the list that's provided. I think that's one very specific set of recommendations that Justice Iacobucci put out there that we felt were important ones that would help augment the OHIP.

Ms. Donna Skelly: To expand on this, another area that we're just looking at now is, how, then, do you communicate to potential jurors? My concern is, without any sort of a registered letter—you may have a letter in a post office box that could sit there for weeks if a person doesn't go down to the post office to pick it up. But then again, how do you find someone's email address if it's an electronic delivery? Again, any suggestions on that, the communication?

Ms. Margaret Froh: Communication is critical. I think, especially for people who are transient, having an up-to-date list—that's, I think, where OHIP is particularly helpful. Every time an individual accesses the health care system, there's a check in terms of if this is your current address, if this is your current contact information. It's one way to ensure—that's why I was saying that it's the most up-to-date database that we were aware of. But communication is absolutely critical.

The Chair (Mr. Stephen Crawford): One minute.

Ms. Margaret Froh: In fact, from an Indigenous perspective, as Métis people and First Nations and Inuit as well, ensuring that there are ways to get in and communicate with communities to ensure that there's an awareness. Even around the justice system or the jury roll system in and of itself, ultimately, when you get that questionnaire in the mail, it's up to you to respond. If people aren't aware, if they're not engaged in a meaningful way, they just won't do that, even in the face of the language that used to appear on the questionnaires, that you may be subject to prosecution. So communication is critical and reaching people where they are is absolutely critical.

Ms. Donna Skelly: I have about 10 seconds. I'm just curious: In that 400 to 500 people you said did come forward and say, “We're interested,” what was the breakdown between male and female? Do you recall?

Ms. Margaret Froh: A fantastic question. I don't know, but I'm sure that the Indigenous Justice Division can provide that. It's a really great question. I do know that there was that strong interest, though the gender breakdown—I'm not sure. I'm going to pose the question back.

The Chair (Mr. Stephen Crawford): We're right at five minutes. We're going to go to the opposition side. Mr. Mamakwa.

Mr. Sol Mamakwa: Thank you for your presentation, Margaret. My name is Sol Mamakwa. I'm the MPP for Kiiwetinoong, the northwestern riding.

You spoke about the Nishnawbe Aski Nation and you spoke about the north and some of that work that was done. One of the things I picked up is when you said “nation-to-nation.” I know sometimes the government across the way, when I talk to them about First Nations and Indigenous peoples—even as early as today, I heard the government refer to our people as “stakeholders.” That's not proper.

I'm wondering if you're able to expand on the jury under-representation, the work that was done, but also what exists: the overrepresentation, in the jails, of Indigenous peoples. I'm wondering if you can share your thoughts on that.

Ms. Margaret Froh: Thank you for the question.

It is a bit of a—not a bit; it is perverse reality that Indigenous peoples are far overrepresented within jails within the justice system and yet under-represented among those who will make decisions about penalties like incarceration within the justice system.

This is the reality that we face within the justice system. We, as Métis, as First Nations and Inuit people, are very large consumers, if you would call it that, in the justice system, in that we end up in jails disproportionately, as compared to non-Indigenous people in Canada. Yet when it comes to our participation in the justice system as advocates, as lawyers, as judges, as jurors, we remain far under-represented.

There are many, many different reasons—we're not going to be able to get to all of those today—but the systemic racism that exists within the justice system in Ontario and within Canada is essentially at play there. This is the legacy of colonization, of residential schools, of the Sixties Scoop and of government policy that has, in effect, demonized Indigenous people and created that environment where for law enforcement to the justice system—there is a different treatment of Indigenous peoples when we come before the court as accused.

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Mr. Sol Mamakwa: Thank you for that. I think what you described with the overrepresentation—even sitting here as a First Nations person, this is a colonial system, and all the systems, whether it's justice, whether it's health, whether it's child welfare or education, these aren't our systems. They're colonial and they're designed to take away the rights of our people.

How can the government work with First Nations to start working towards reconciliation? What are your thoughts on that?

Ms. Margaret Froh: Great question. I would say with regard to First Nations and Inuit and Métis people in Ontario, it really is truly about starting to move beyond the language of “stakeholders,” starting to recognize the obligations that the crown has with regard to Indigenous peoples under our Constitution in Canada, under section 35. As rights-bearing Métis people within Ontario, as First Nations within Ontario, there are absolutely obligations to change that relationship, to shift that relationship. “Reconciliation” is a word that’s used a lot these days, but what it means on the ground and—ensuring that there’s meaningful progress to change the reality of First Nations, Métis and Inuit people in Ontario is ultimately what it’s all about.

The Chair (Mr. Stephen Crawford): One minute.

Ms. Margaret Froh: That work is ongoing right now. The Métis Nation of Ontario, in fact, recently signed an agreement to advance reconciliation with Canada and with Ontario, to move forward, to recognize our governments and start to address a whole range of issues, including justice, education, health, housing. All of these things are completely interrelated and feed into the system that we have today.

Mr. Sol Mamakwa: I’m not sure if you’re familiar with schedule 17, the Crown Liability and Proceedings Act—that you can’t sue the crown. When we talk about First Nations, Indigenous claims, land claims, do you have any thoughts on that?

Ms. Margaret Froh: There’s a long history around prohibitions against suing the crown. It was actually part of the Indian Act for a long time. You couldn’t hire lawyers in order to advance a claim against the crown. I don’t know enough specifically about that provision, that schedule, but what I will say is that the Supreme Court of Canada has been extremely clear that we cannot advance with reconciliation in Canada if we don’t address reconciliation with Métis under section 35 and if we don’t start—

The Chair (Mr. Stephen Crawford): Thank you very much. We appreciate it. The time has expired.

Ms. Margaret Froh: Thank you. Merci.

RESIDENTIAL CONSTRUCTION COUNCIL OF ONTARIO

The Chair (Mr. Stephen Crawford): We’ll move to our next group: Residential Construction Council of Ontario. Good afternoon. Please state your names for the record, and you can get right into your presentation.

Mr. Andrew Pariser: My name is Andrew Pariser. I’m the vice-president with ResCon.

Ms. Amina Dibe: My name is Amina Dibe. I’m a programs and policy analyst with ResCon.

Mr. Andrew Pariser: Good afternoon. Thank you, Chair Crawford and members of the finance and economic affairs committee. ResCon appreciates the opportunity to speak in front of you today and speak in favour of Bill 100, the Protecting What Matters Most Act.

ResCon is an association that represents new builders. We have approximately 200 members, and our builders are the ones who build new low-rise, mid-rise and high-rise residential construction units. We are committed to providing leadership in fostering innovation in the industry through our six core focuses, which are labour relations, building science and innovation, building code reform and technical standards, training and apprenticeship, health and safety, and government relations.

Today we’re here to speak about schedule 40 in particular. ResCon was very happy to see that this bill focused on the skilled trades and a commitment to improve training and apprenticeship in the training and apprenticeship system. The system that is being amended was, quite simply, flawed. There were negative effects on employers, on workers, on the general public and Ontarians across the province. Specifically, when we looked at the role of the Ontario College of Trades, it should be noted that it had a very admirable goal, but that it was never able to reach its full potential.

There were several reasons for this. The first and probably most important is that the governance structure, in our opinion, was flawed, and it did not recognize what’s enshrined in labour legislation, which is that specifically in construction there are seven recognized sectors. It was very much focused on ICI. Because of that structure, it ran into a number of problems, which we’ll outline.

It also relied upon something called scopes of practice, and these were quite outdated. I’ll give you one example. The bricklaying scope of practice was last updated before two individuals whom I think everybody knows walked on the moon. I’d like to suggest that things have changed in Ontario since then, but unfortunately, those scopes of practice remained outdated and were—there’s no other word for it than “problematic.”

The final theme was, because there wasn’t enough of a focus on the seven sectors of construction and the importance and uniqueness of them, there wasn’t an understanding or a recognition of how we fundamentally build in residential construction. There wasn’t an understanding of the on-site practical realities, which involve things like composite crews, as well as the specialization of the trades. Specifically, if we go back in history on this debate—because obviously, this is not a new issue—there was a lot of debate on what carpentry is and what the carpentry scope of practice is.

I’d like to date it back to at least about 30 years ago. The way we build houses is not the same as it once was. About 30 years ago, we started to have specialization. In the carpentry classification are a lot of what I’ll call “jobs” now. We’ll call them subsectors of the trade. The way a house gets built now is that you have a very specialized company and crew and workers who would form the basement, and we would call them basement formers. That’s their job, that’s their specialization, and they’re very good at it. They build very high-quality basements.

Next, you would have people whom we’d call house-framers take over. They frame the houses.

The Chair (Mr. Stephen Crawford): One minute.

Mr. Andrew Pariser: Anyway, moving along, this legislation will allow for stackable modular training, which will allow for Ontario to move into the 21st century and really give Ontario a training and apprenticeship system that's capable of moving forward.

I did bring two reports, and I'd quickly like to highlight them. ResCon, on March 19, released a report on recruitment and a report on retention. Essentially, we examined the two, and in them were able to survey 400 tradespeople, look at why they love their jobs, what's important to them, and then also apply behavioural economics to the problem of recruitment and look at what can be done better so that we get young people and their influencers the information they need to make the career decisions that are best for them. What we found in the research is, if people are given the right information, then they'll make better decisions and we'll naturally get more people in the skilled trades.

The Chair (Mr. Stephen Crawford): We're going to now go to questions. We're going to start with the opposition side. Mr. Mamakwa.

Mr. Sol Mamakwa: Thank you for your presentation. When we talk about residential construction, residential homes—I come from a riding that has 25 fly-in communities, mostly First Nations. I had a very difficult time visiting one of the communities on Saturday. This past Saturday, I went to Big Trout Lake. It's about 1,800 people there. I visited because of a house fire—a family of five: a mother, 47, and her four children. The youngest would be six years old, and 12 years old was the oldest. I got to visit the families affected, the leadership. Sometimes, when these incidents happen—what I was told was that the fire was gone in 45 minutes.

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How can your organization start working with First Nations in northwestern Ontario? How can you help?

Mr. Andrew Pariser: Our association is Ontario-based, but our focus is on the GTA. Before I joined ResCon, I was actually a provincial mediator, so I was lucky enough to work all over the province, including northern Ontario. I never got to that community, but I did get to northern communities—Moose Factory, Moosonee and places like that.

I do understand that housing is different, depending on where you live in the province. We view housing as infrastructure, so housing is just as important as a road or a bridge, because it's somewhere that you go with your family, and you spend a considerable amount of time there. We fundamentally believe that we need housing solutions for everyone in Ontario, whether it's in Toronto or the Big Trout Lake community.

My current role with my association now—we're more GTA-focused, so we don't work in that jurisdiction. But I think, as you pointed out, it's on everyone in Ontario to make sure that everyone in Ontario succeeds and is given the resources they need.

Hopefully, everyone is okay. I think that what you said deserves attention, so I thank you for sharing it.

Mr. Sol Mamakwa: Would it be fair to say that the residential council of the GTA—it says "Ontario." We're in Ontario.

Mr. Andrew Pariser: In my notes—I might not have said it, because five minutes is not a long period of time. We do say that we do focus on the GTA, so as a ResCon representative, I don't have members in northwestern Ontario. I apologize. I can't, in my capacity, make specific comments to that. I'm sorry.

Ms. Sandy Shaw: You could change the name of your organization.

Mr. Andrew Pariser: Yes.

Ms. Sandy Shaw: I think we're done. Thank you.

The Chair (Mr. Stephen Crawford): All right. We'll go to the government side for questions. Mr. Piccini.

Mr. David Piccini: Thank you both for attending today and for your presentation. It's much appreciated, your continued advocacy. Thanks again for that great gathering the other day. I thoroughly enjoyed it.

I just wanted to touch a bit on two questions, but I'll start with the next generation. I really think the skilled trades, of course, the untapped potential of failed meaningful action on this file—I'm pleased that we're working with yourselves and, really, anyone who will work with us on modernizing this file.

You talked about career influencers and how we're going to promote it. Part of modernizing the apprenticeship framework involves utilizing organizations and influencers to promote the skilled trades. If you could just elaborate a little more on where you think this government should head, whether utilizing Skills Ontario—how we can target our youth at a younger age?

Mr. Andrew Pariser: Thank you for your commitment to the skilled trades. In the report—hopefully, everyone has the time so that they can go through it. Looking at it, and applying the BE framework, what we need to do is apply metrics to the programs that exist, and we need to promote the successful ones and obviously dedicate the resources where they can be most effective.

There are a number of programs out there. Skills Ontario is definitely one of them. We also have close relationships with groups like STEP to Construction, which is out of the TDSB; and OYAP; as well as HIEC, which does a lot of work around mentoring.

With groups like Skills Ontario, what we found is that when people get more information on what a career in the skilled trades is, they're interested in it. The average age of an apprentice right now is 27. Ideally, we'd like to bring that age down, because that means people are graduating high school and they're doing something other than what their eventual calling is, which is the skilled trades, for up to 10 years. Organizations like Skills Ontario can be very helpful in educating the public, and it definitely has a large role to play.

Mr. David Piccini: Part of the commitment we've made is on stackable credentials and modular training. We know disruptive technology can impact one's journey in the skilled trades, and rather than starting back from zero—talk to me a bit. Are you supportive of that? What are your thoughts?

Mr. Andrew Pariser: That's a great question. When you look at other jurisdictions and you look at common

sense, what makes sense, stackable/modular works because when you look at something like carpentry, you don't want to put a number on it, but a large percentage of the skills that a framer would use to frame a house would be used by someone who is pouring a basement, to build the forms or to install the forms or to do that work.

When you look, on the compulsory side, the difference between electrical and plumbing, there are safety issues that are comparable. The idea is, instead of forcing someone to essentially relearn the skills that they already have, how can we best top up the skills that they need in a safe and effective way, and then get these people back into the workforce? It's just an efficient, more effective way to look at training.

Mr. David Piccini: Thanks very much for that. I'll turn it over to my colleague, MPP Rasheed.

The Chair (Mr. Stephen Crawford): Mr. Rasheed.

Mr. Kaleed Rasheed: Thank you very much for your presentation. I think you were just talking about some of the barriers. How does Bill 100 address those barriers?

Mr. Andrew Pariser: Specifically schedule 40, we view it as foundational legislation. This will give the government and MTCU, and the groups necessary, the foundation that they need to make the changes that are required. By moving to a modular, stackable training approach, by recognizing the needs of employers who are the ones that hire skilled tradespeople, by looking at what skilled tradespeople candidates need to get into jobs—

The Chair (Mr. Stephen Crawford): One minute.

Mr. Andrew Pariser: —by looking at what young people need to get a pathway into the trades, we can transform the Ontario economy.

There is one stat that I was given this morning. It said that in 2013 there were 20,000 registered apprentices. Five years later, only 6,000 of them had their CFQ. What it shows is that there's a lot of room for improvement. This legislation is foundational. And if there's a sector approach to it, so you recognize the differences between residential and ICI and heavy civil, then we can start to make meaningful changes in each of those sectors and increase completion rates, increase the number of people who are successful in getting through the pathway to a job in the skilled trades. Because I think that's the future of Ontario, in my opinion.

Mr. Kaleed Rasheed: Okay. I'm good, Chair.

The Chair (Mr. Stephen Crawford): Thank you very much. We appreciate your time.

Mr. Andrew Pariser: Thanks, everyone, for your time.

ONTARIO COALITION FOR BETTER CHILD CARE

The Chair (Mr. Stephen Crawford): We'll call up our next presenter, the Ontario Coalition for Better Child Care. Good afternoon and welcome to the finance committee.

Ms. Carolyn Ferns: Hello.

The Chair (Mr. Stephen Crawford): If you could just state your name for the record, you can get right into your presentation.

Ms. Carolyn Ferns: Sure. My name is Carolyn Ferns, and I'm the policy coordinator at the Ontario Coalition for Better Child Care. We are Ontario's central child care advocacy organization. Our coalition is made up of parents, child care workers, grandparents, child care centre directors, trade unionists and community advocates. Most importantly, we're people who care about child care.

Thank you, Chair and committee members, for this opportunity to discuss Bill 100. I'm going to focus specifically on schedule 57, which introduces the Ontario Childcare and Relief from Expenses Tax Credit. This tax credit is aimed at parents and, as the name suggests, it's ostensibly designed to help address the issue of child care affordability. Now, there is a very good reason for the government to make policy to address child care affordability: Ontario parents pay the highest child care fees in the country. But I will argue that this tax credit scheme is a particularly poor way to address the child care crisis in Ontario, or even to address the specific issue of child care affordability.

Our coalition advocates for action on three big ideas to tackle the child care crisis in Ontario: affordable fees for parents; decent work and pay for educators; and expansion of public and non-profit child care spaces. Those are the three metrics by which I judge any child care policy: Does it make child care affordable for parents; does it create decent work for educators, who are the key to good programs; and does it create enough spaces for families that need them?

Does the tax credit make child care affordable for families: The clear answer to this is no. While the CARE Tax Credit provides a small payment to parents of children up to the age of 16, for parents of children before school age, who have the highest child care costs, the tax credit doesn't come close to adequately addressing their real child care expenses, which could be over \$20,000 a year.

Both David Macdonald from the Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives and Dr. Gordon Cleveland from the University of Toronto have addressed this issue in their analyses of the tax credit. I've provided copies of David Macdonald's short analysis for committee members today, where he looks at child care fees, the effect of the tax credit, the importance of fee subsidies for families, then how many families would actually have access to the full amount of the tax credit and then the various decreasing amounts.

It's clear from his analysis that the tax credit doesn't address affordability in a meaningful way. It doesn't provide much support to families—not nearly as much as is being advertised by the government. Only 41 families are going to receive the full amount, according to Mr. Macdonald's analysis. And most importantly, it doesn't do anything to cap child care fees.

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Many researchers and policy experts who have looked at the child care issue—as well as parents like myself, who are paying the highest child care fees in the country, have come to the same conclusion. That is that the best way to address child care affordability is actually to cap child care

fees at an affordable rate for families at the doorstep when they're paying and then to make up the difference to providers so that they can operate quality programs.

If we look at the other two areas, the other two issues—decent work for educators and the creation of adequate spaces—of course, the CARE Tax Credit or a tax credit scheme doesn't address these issues at all. Our organization advocates that to tackle the child care issue efficaciously, we must design smart policies that address all three issues—affordability, decent work and accessibility—simultaneously. What's troubling is that the at least \$390 million that is going to be spent on the tax credit. Dr. Cleveland has warned that that cost could go much higher.

The Chair (Mr. Stephen Crawford): One minute.

Ms. Carolyn Ferns: The funding being spent on the tax credit will create additional pressure on the child care and education budgets. We're already facing this year \$80 million in cuts to child care. I worry that if the cost of the tax credit balloons, as I worry that it will, it will mean even greater cuts in the future, which will destabilize child care services that many families rely upon.

It's our position that this tax credit is taking Ontario child care in entirely the wrong policy direction. It's unaccountable, risky and in some ways a deceptive use of public funds that will make the Ontario child care situation worse for many families and not better.

Thank you very much for your time. I'm happy to take questions.

The Chair (Mr. Stephen Crawford): Okay. Thank you.

We're going to start with questions from the government side. Ms. Skelly.

Ms. Donna Skelly: Thank you. It's Ms. Ferns?

Ms. Carolyn Ferns: Yes.

Ms. Donna Skelly: Thank you.

This is one of many funds that parents have access to—is that not correct, depending on your income level?—in Ontario and in the country.

Ms. Carolyn Ferns: The other one, the tax measure that you're probably referring to, is the Child Care Expense Deduction.

Ms. Donna Skelly: But there are other—and I'm serious; I don't know the answer to this—

Ms. Carolyn Ferns: The other things that help families financially with child care are child care fee subsidies. What I was talking about at the end there—about all parts of child care funding really having to work together and looking at it as a whole—is that, if we try to address only one of the issues or one part of child care funding without looking at the rest, it can destabilize things.

Right now, if there are cuts to the allocations that go to municipalities, which is what we're facing this year—and municipalities are still crunching the numbers on that. The city of Toronto has suggested they could be losing 6,000 child care subsidies. The government has disputed that number, but even if it's half that many, what happens is child care fee subsidies get frozen. That means no new children are being admitted to fee subsidy. For those families, if they need a full fee subsidy to be able to access

child care, a tax credit isn't going to help them because they won't have the money in their pocket to pay for child care and wait for tax time to get their rebate. So I think that it's important to look at child care policy holistically because it's actually a pretty complicated policy area.

Ms. Donna Skelly: Exactly, and that's why I'm genuinely asking you to share the information that I'm trying to seek. For example, a good friend is a small business owner. She doesn't make a lot of money. She's a single mom. Her child care is completely subsidized, so that funding, then, comes from the municipality? Is that how it works?

Ms. Carolyn Ferns: Yes, that's how it works.

Ms. Donna Skelly: Okay. So when we talk about this child care tax credit, it's somewhat misleading—disingenuous, if you will—to suggest that this is the only thing that families have access to. This is part of a very complex approach to addressing expensive child care in Ontario. Would that be fair to say?

Ms. Carolyn Ferns: It is. It's one part of it. But again, if the estimates for how much will be spent on it—I worry that it will create pressure on other parts of the child care budget and municipalities this year are going to be facing fee subsidy freezes. I think that that effect—not only does it make child care less affordable for families, but the other problem is that if there aren't enough subsidies, child care programs then have to operate with vacancies, which creates this ridiculous situation where you have families that need child care but not enough fee subsidies to make it affordable for them and they can't access care. That destabilizes programs. That's what leads to child care programs closing their doors. It's really concerning. A couple of hundred dollars in your pocket isn't going to help if you can't find child care space in your community and you can't get a subsidy.

Ms. Donna Skelly: Is there any national funding at all? Today—and my children are far too old—as a family, as a mom or a dad, what type of funding comes from the feds?

Ms. Carolyn Ferns: From the federal government? Yes. I think three years ago now, the federal government signed a multilateral framework agreement with provinces across the country and a bilateral agreement with Ontario that does provide some directed funding on child care to the province of Ontario.

The Chair (Mr. Stephen Crawford): One minute.

Ms. Carolyn Ferns: It's not much in the grand scheme of a child care budget, but it's what's allowed. Some municipalities, to say, have child care affordability pilot projects, which is actually a really good way of addressing—

Ms. Donna Skelly: I know we're going to run out of time. Just quickly: Do you still get—years ago, it was the child-family cheque in the mail. I can't even remember it.

Ms. Carolyn Ferns: Yes, the Canada Child Benefit.

Ms. Donna Skelly: Is that still available to Canadian families?

Ms. Carolyn Ferns: Yes, that is.

Ms. Donna Skelly: What is that? Do you know?

Ms. Carolyn Ferns: They've actually just redesigned the Canada Child Benefit from the universal child care benefit that it was under the Harper government to make it a variable for families according to income spectrum, so that low-income families are getting more and higher-income families are getting less. That's funding that goes to all parents, whether or not they have child care expenses, but it's not—

Ms. Donna Skelly: But you don't get a family allowance?

Ms. Carolyn Ferns: No, you don't get a family allowance, per se.

The Chair (Mr. Stephen Crawford): Thank you very much. We have to move on. We're going to move to the opposition now for five minutes of questioning. Mr. Arthur.

Mr. Ian Arthur: Thank you very much for your presentation. You were talking about the backwards nature of the tax credit as a way to approach subsidizing child care in Ontario. Would you talk about some of the other jurisdictions that have had a different approach and the success they've had with it in terms of uptake in employment for mothers and any of the other stuff that you think is relevant?

Ms. Carolyn Ferns: Absolutely. In the Canadian context, the example that's most often pointed to is that of Quebec, which brought in, first, a five-dollar-a-day child care program, and then they moved to seven dollars a day. It's a sliding scale now, but it still provides public funding to child care programs so they're able to operate and then provide low-cost fees for families.

That program has been well studied, because they started it in 1997. Economic analysis of that program has shown that the government actually gets back all of the funding that they invested in the increased tax revenues for mothers' increased labour force participation. It's actually an economic gain, as well as the economic ripple effects in communities of having a well-funded child care program.

What I would like to point out is that often we talk about Quebec as if this is the only province that's been able to do this, and that there are special reasons that nobody else could do it. But actually now more and more provinces are taking the same approach of capping child care fees, providing public funding to child care programs so that they can operate quality programs for children. British Columbia recently started a \$10-a-day child care program. That's just getting started. But already, anecdotal evidence from BC shows families talking about the amazing effects that it has on their lives to be able to have affordable child care.

Mr. Ian Arthur: Let's talk a little bit more about the economic returns of investing in affordable daycare. The inverse of that is that if you make it unaffordable, yanking money out of it, it will have a negative impact on our economy.

Ms. Carolyn Ferns: It's like leaving money on the table to have so many parents not able to go back to work, mothers not being able to go back to work after their

parental leave ends. It's like the government is just saying, "No, no, no. We don't need that increased tax revenue. We're just going to leave that money on the table." It's a ridiculous situation, especially if you're interested in creating jobs and strengthening the economy.

Mr. Ian Arthur: With the current cuts that are happening to daycare in Ontario, would you say that a likely outcome is actually less revenue for the government?

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Ms. Carolyn Ferns: I would say so, yes. If you look at Toronto, 6,000 child care subsidies lost—that's 6,000 families where a parent is not going to be able to go back to work or study, because they won't be able to get a fee subsidy, they won't be able to afford child care.

Mr. Ian Arthur: Sandy?

The Chair (Mr. Stephen Crawford): Ms. Shaw.

Ms. Sandy Shaw: In Hamilton, we're losing about \$3.5 million out of the child care budget—that has provided about 600 spaces. These are real cuts that are happening now. Really, it's a false equivalency to say that these cuts where we're losing spaces will be balanced by this credit, this rebate. Would you agree with that? Can you comment?

Ms. Carolyn Ferns: Absolutely. You're right; every municipality is actually going to be losing out when they've crunched the numbers on the impact of the cuts, like Hamilton has. Having a tax credit doesn't make up for losing child care spaces, because even if parents had some money in their pocket and wanted to access a licensed child care space, there are waiting lists almost everywhere as it stands.

The Chair (Mr. Stephen Crawford): One minute.

Ms. Carolyn Ferns: So it doesn't really address the problem.

Ms. Sandy Shaw: I can't help but go here: Can you just comment a little bit about your experience with the increase in the ratio in home care?

Ms. Carolyn Ferns: Bill 66, which made changes to home child care ratios, is really a wrong-headed way of trying to address the child care issue. The government said that they wanted to create more spaces, but doing that just by increasing the number of children one adult can look after in a private home is not the way to do it. When it comes to child care, one of the most important issues is the safety of children. We can't try to create child care spaces in ways that make it unsafe for the children in our care.

The Chair (Mr. Stephen Crawford): Thank you very much.

Ms. Carolyn Ferns: Thank you.

TMX GROUP LTD.

The Chair (Mr. Stephen Crawford): We'll call up our next presenters: TMX Group. Good afternoon. Please state your names for the record, and you can get right into your presentation.

Mr. David Clarke: I'm David Clarke, head of government affairs for TMX Group.

Ms. Deanna Dobrowsky: I'm Deanna Dobrowsky, vice-president of regulatory affairs at TMX Group.

Mr. David Clarke: Thanks, Chair Crawford and honourable members, for inviting us here today. It's a real pleasure and an honour to get the opportunity to speak to this committee and to speak in favour of Bill 100 and the impact it will have on Ontario's capital markets.

I would just like to take one minute to talk about TMX and who we are. I've been travelling the country the last few months, and this is a new role for me and a new role for the organization, in government affairs. I often make the joke when I'm meeting with politicians and their staff that when we say "TMX Group," we're lucky if people don't think we're talking about a pipeline.

We are TMX Group. We are probably best known as the owners and operators of the Toronto Stock Exchange. We also own and operate the Montreal exchange and the Venture Exchange out of western Canada, which is really a big growth engine for Canada's small and medium-sized enterprises. Something a lot of people don't know about us, as well, is that more than a third of our revenue last year came from the provision of data and analytics services. So we're really a technology company that happens to run markets.

What we came here to talk about today, very specifically, is some elements of schedule 55 of Bill 100. Those are a few of the proposed changes to the Ontario Securities Act. If you're trying to follow along, it's on page 161 of the bill. Basically, of the five proposed changes to the Securities Act, we're going to focus on two today. The first is section 2, which adds the facilitation of innovation—a term that is undefined—in Ontario's capital markets as a foundational principle of the OSC. The second is section 5, which beefs up the cost-benefit analysis that the OSC has to undergo before they would add any new rules to capital markets regulation. It's important to note now that both of those elements actually do speak to the role of the OSC and how they regulate capital markets within Ontario. So we just wanted to mention—I don't think they're appearing here today, but they're good partners of ours. Deanna works very closely with the OSC and with all our regulators across the country, and so we're looking forward to continuing to work with them on implementing these measures.

I would broadly define these two pieces of the bill as supporting innovation and reducing regulatory burden. We just wanted to mention that we think these are both great goals for the government, for the Legislature and for the OSC to be pursuing, particularly when it comes to capital markets regulation in Ontario. We're broadly supportive of that as well.

Speaking first to supporting innovation, the bill is a little bit vague here. Again, we just have that one word, but it's a great word that we like to use a lot ourselves. We thought it might be helpful to suggest a couple of ways that that innovation might take shape. One way would be through policy innovation. Another is through technological innovation. Again, we're just talking here about regulating capital markets.

We've been writing to the OSC, to the government of Ontario, to the CSA—the Canadian Securities Administrators—for years now, talking about ways in which we could modernize and really innovate in how capital markets are regulated. One of the things we really want to stress and that we hope to see through the creation of the economic development and innovation office at the OSC, which was also announced in the budget, is a focus on stakeholder input. That would be companies like our own, as well as our clients, in terms of that front-line experience of what it's like being a regulated entity trying to create wealth and jobs and prosperity within Ontario.

But it can also mean technological innovation. We really think there are efficiencies to be gained by implementing 21st-century technology in how capital markets are regulated. We're well into the 21st century now, and in a lot of cases, we're still using 19th-century technology, such as forcing folks to print out reams and reams of paper and mail it to their shareholders and everything in order to comply with securities regulation. So we think there's some low-hanging fruit there, and again we're happy to be a partner going forward, helping that to get implemented.

The Chair (Mr. Stephen Crawford): One minute.

Mr. David Clarke: Then I'll just mention in terms of—actually, I think I've blurred my two points a bit, but in terms of reducing regulatory burden, the new proposal here is to force the OSC—"force" is the wrong word—to encourage the OSC to undertake a full cost-benefit analysis before they implement any new regulations. We think that's a great move. We might suggest it could go even further in terms of using that same cost-benefit analysis to judge existing regulations. I know that they've got some efforts ongoing right now to reduce regulatory burden. They've got their own task force under way; we're participating with that as well.

Just to sum up, I suppose, we're supportive of these proposed changes in schedule 55 and happy to take any questions.

The Chair (Mr. Stephen Crawford): Thank you very much. We're going to go to questions now. We're going to start with the opposition. Ms. Shaw.

Ms. Sandy Shaw: Thank you for your presentation. TMX: You're also publicly traded, are you not?

Mr. David Clarke: Yes, we are.

Ms. Sandy Shaw: So you fall under the same rules, the OSC rules, as well? Is that correct?

Mr. David Clarke: Yes, for sure. We are absolutely a publicly traded company advocating, I think, more broadly on behalf of our clients, just because of where we sit, sort of at the centre of capital markets. But yes, without question, we are subject to these regulations ourselves as a publicly traded company.

Ms. Sandy Shaw: In schedule 55—really, I'm just asking you because I don't know—there is a provision that says, and maybe you know this, that the act would also be amended "to provide that subsection 2(2) of the Fines and Forfeitures Act does not apply to fines recovered for certain contraventions of Ontario securities law or Ontario commodity futures law." Am I mistaken or is there any

correlation between this and some of the regulatory burden that you're talking about here?

Mr. David Clarke: Have you got that?

Ms. Deanna Dobrowsky: Well, I've got that in that we don't know. That's outside our sphere.

Ms. Sandy Shaw: Okay. You're with the club now.

Interjection.

Ms. Sandy Shaw: Do you know? You can answer the question when your mic is turned on, David.

You did give an example about the relaxing of archaic rules. I do also get in the mail giant packages with prospectuses, also with quarterly reports. Then when there is any kind of a—I even have the services that want to buy my proxy vote, so I get lots of mail from my investments. You talked about maybe making those digital. That's your example. Are there other examples that you could share with us about how you would bring that into the 21st century in terms of the regulations that are now old?

Mr. David Clarke: Sure. I actually neglected to mention it because I was skating through my presentation sort of quickly.

Ms. Sandy Shaw: Yes, you were going fast. I saw that, yes.

Mr. David Clarke: We actually provided a full pre-budget submission to Minister Fedeli and his team back in February. It's a letter—I've already spoken with him—that we're happy to provide to the committee for your review. That really drills down into more detail.

Yes, there is a lot of low-hanging fruit. The way that companies are forced, in terms of their public disclosures, to fill out forms with the same information three, four or five times in different places or report information that's already available publicly in other places—really, there are just a lot of ways that this can be streamlined if we just were to use—

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Ms. Sandy Shaw: All right. So really quickly—and I know this is a terrible forum to learn and have these deep conversations—but in terms of these regulations, can you assure investors that there is nothing here that will reduce investors' protection, disclosure or the kinds of access to information that people need to know before they invest?

Ms. Deanna Dobrowsky: The words on the page—really, what they do is enhance the principles that are already there. So the principle to fulfill all the purposes that exist in the act, those are still there. Adding one principle that reminds the Ontario Securities Commission to do it in an innovative manner, to us, is kind of a 21st-century, sensible reminder for anyone, whether you are trying to protect your investors and bringing in artificial intelligence tools so that you can find fraud quicker, or whether you are learning about distributed ledger technology that could create new exchanges. All of those things are the right things for the Ontario commission to be doing.

Ms. Sandy Shaw: Okay. And big institutional investors, they know all this. That's not what I'm talking about. I'm talking about homegrown, individual investors who want to feel like the TMX or any publicly traded platform

still provides them the information and the protections that they need if they want to play in this market.

Ms. Deanna Dobrowsky: Absolutely, and—

The Chair (Mr. Stephen Crawford): One minute.

Ms. Deanna Dobrowsky: Reduction of regulatory burden: What that means is that you still maintain the balance to achieve the main purpose, and the first purpose is investor protection in Ontario's markets. This is what we would call intelligent regulation—to apply whatever tools you can to bring you up to the modern age.

Ms. Sandy Shaw: So you don't think I'm going to get a slew of emails—which I do—from homegrown investors who have concerns about this? I can assure them—really, I'm just asking; this is not a challenge—that these changes won't reduce the kinds of protection, the kinds of recourse, the kinds of disclosure that they're looking for?

Mr. David Clarke: We wouldn't advocate for that. We do have a public-interest mandate written into our articles of incorporation and all of the rules that govern us. We do take that really seriously, so we would want to take a balanced approach here in terms of reducing burden, and investor protection is always front of our minds.

Ms. Sandy Shaw: Okay. Thank you very much.

The Chair (Mr. Stephen Crawford): We'll go to the government side for questions. Mr. Piccini?

Mr. David Piccini: Thank you both for your presentation today. I really appreciate that. Thanks for skating through that, David; you must be a hockey player—very good.

I just wanted to build on that because I want to give you a little more opportunity to expand on the Office of Economic Growth and Innovation—if I could just seek both of your advice on establishing that office and just elaborate a little more.

Mr. David Clarke: Just to clarify, there is nothing in the bill on it, but it was in the budget book. That was one of the things that we were really excited to see on budget day, that this new office was being created. I'm really not sure what kind of form it would take, but we are seeing it as a specific window for us and for our clients and for other market participants, to really provide that input on how we can foster innovation in terms of regulating Ontario's capital markets. It's a lot of the ideas we've already talked about—really, just bringing things into the 21st century. We're just excited to see what kind of form it will take, and hope that it's market-participant focused, and a place for us to bring our concerns and to hopefully drive some change in a meaningful way.

Ms. Deanna Dobrowsky: I think, to us, it's Ontario's way—and some of the other provinces have started to do this with their securities commissions—to remind themselves that this is about capital formation. None of this would exist—we wouldn't exist and the commission wouldn't exist—if there weren't companies that want to grow. And an efficient way of growing is to become public and let retail investors invest in you, and then these positive cycles occur.

So to create an office that's very clearly—and it's not just the innovation; it's the development point. To us,

that's very clearly focused on where we start from, which is that there are companies that need to raise capital, and that the securities commission isn't just about protecting the investors. Again, it's that balance. These small companies that can grow to medium-sized and larger companies come on to our exchanges and give the Ontario public—and broader—access to them. That's just all a virtuous cycle that we fully support. This office can really focus on that—using innovation, but just not exclusively about innovation. It's about developing and helping capital form in Ontario.

Mr. David Piccini: Thank you.

The Chair (Mr. Stephen Crawford): Any further questions? Okay. Thank you very much.

Mr. David Clarke: Thanks, everyone.

The Chair (Mr. Stephen Crawford): We appreciate your time.

SOCIETY OF UNITED PROFESSIONALS

The Chair (Mr. Stephen Crawford): We'll call up our next presenter, the Society of United Professionals. Welcome to the finance committee. To get started, if you could just state your names for the record and you can get right into your presentation for five minutes.

Mr. Scott Travers: Scott Travers, for the record.

Ms. Dana Fisher: Dana Fisher.

Ms. Alika Hendricks: Alika Hendricks.

Mr. Scott Travers: Thank you, Mr. Chair and members of the committee. My name is Scott Travers. I'm the president of the Society of United Professionals, IFPTE Local 160. I'm joined here today by Dana Fisher and Alika Hendricks, both Legal Aid Ontario lawyers and representatives of our 375-member Legal Aid Ontario Lawyers' bargaining unit. Our union represents 8,000 members in Ontario, all of whom work in the public, private and not-for-profit sectors.

We're here today to strongly oppose the government's decision to retroactively cut \$133 million, or 30%, of Legal Aid Ontario's budget and to cut a further \$31 million by 2021-22. We urge you to reverse those cuts that are already inflicting damage on some of our province's most vulnerable people and will add further costs and delays on our already overburdened court system.

Ms. Dana Fisher: The decision to make this catastrophic legal aid cut has been premised on faulty information from the very start. In her April 12, 2019, letter to Legal Aid Ontario, Attorney General Caroline Mulroney made the misinformed claim that Legal Aid Ontario served 100,000 fewer clients since 2013-14 but was spending more money. Premier Doug Ford has made similar claims. We're here to say, again, that these are false.

In its haste to make cuts, the government made a simple mistake with devastating consequences. The government mistook Legal Aid Ontario's new reporting practices for service reductions. Today, Legal Aid Ontario's metrics try to capture the clients that are served rather than how many different ways in which a client is served. For example, as an efficiency measure, non-lawyers will help clients when

possible to avoid needing more costly lawyers. A client may be helped by both a lawyer and a non-lawyer but would now only be counted as receiving service just once rather than twice.

The Auditor General's report is where you will find the true story on legal aid services. If someone is successful in their application for legal aid, they are given a voucher, a certificate, that can be redeemed with a private lawyer. According to the Auditor General, 23% more legal aid certificates were issued in 2017-18 than in the period of 2013-14. Contrary to what the Attorney General and Premier Ford have said, that is more service and not less.

In that same time period, Legal Aid Ontario's duty counsel, who are staff lawyers, helped 2.1%, or 13,975, more people. Again, that's more service and not less. In fact, there is nothing in the Auditor General's report that indicates an actual reduction in services.

Mr. Scott Travers: Mr. Chair, the demand for legal aid is extraordinary. The only question really is to what level the service will be funded. The cut-off used today limits access so severely that, in many cases, a single person earning minimum wage for more than 20 hours per week earns too much to qualify for assistance. With just 7% of LAO's budget used for administrative overhead, it's simply impossible that such dramatic cuts could do anything but harm the service desperate Ontarians turn to when they're facing imprisonment, fleeing domestic violence or escaping persecution.

On top of the catastrophic impact these cuts are already having on vulnerable people's lives, there is a quantifiable financial cost we will all bear. The Canadian Bar Association found that for every dollar invested in legal aid, there is a \$6 return on that investment. This includes more efficient legal proceedings, fewer appeals and lower incarceration costs. In other words, these legal aid cuts are a false economy.

The Chair (Mr. Stephen Crawford): One minute.

Mr. Scott Travers: Given that this cut was based on misinformation from the start, we ask that the government reverse all legal aid cuts and commit to greater investment in access to justice that reflects the real needs of Ontarians.

Thank you for your time.

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The Chair (Mr. Stephen Crawford): Thank you very much. We're going to start with questions from the government side. Mr. Downey?

Mr. Doug Downey: Sure. I'll start with this: I'm curious about the organization. You represent legal aid clinics and duty counsel? Do you cover all areas of legal aid, or is it just part of it?

Ms. Alika Hendricks: The Society of United Professionals is the representative of a segment of legal aid lawyers. There are some who belong to the General Counsel's Office and the policy division at Legal Aid Ontario's head office who are not our members. However, duty counsel are our members. There are family lawyers in duty counsel offices. There are offices that provide criminal law services and family law services. The clinics are separate, and we do have a clinic resource office that

is part of Legal Aid Ontario, but not everything falls under the umbrella of representation by the society.

Mr. Doug Downey: Okay, and then of course, the individuals who receive their certificates—the lawyers who act wouldn't be part of the organization?

Ms. Dana Fisher: Yes. If I could also just add: We do actually represent one legal aid clinic, just to add to that previous piece. But no, the certificate lawyers are not represented by us.

Mr. Doug Downey: Okay. It just gives me a bit of a base on where we're headed.

In terms of the metrics, you're saying that the metrics have changed. When did the metrics change?

Ms. Dana Fisher: The metrics changed—sorry; are you referring to for the clinic costs or for the counting for the—

Mr. Doug Downey: The counting that you mentioned.

Ms. Dana Fisher: It was 2015-16, I believe, that was when the—sorry; just one moment.

Mr. Scott Travers: It was 2017-18, I believe.

Mr. Doug Downey: So just recently?

Mr. Scott Travers: Yes. It was the final year of reporting when they changed. It had been flagged by the Auditor General that it was a different metric in that final year for that one metric, which was “serviced by clinics,” I believe.

Ms. Dana Fisher: Yes. There's a change in the metrics with the clinics, and that's the one that's indicated in the background, that indicates that prior to 2017-18—that's the year that those numbers of changed. The other one that we've mentioned is the duty counsel services, where they counted the non-lawyer services in addition to the lawyer services. I'm not sure if that's the one that you're referring to.

Mr. Doug Downey: To do apples and apples, it's helpful to know when it changed so that I can put it into context. Do you have any insight into why it changed?

Ms. Dana Fisher: It was a way in which legal aid looked to increase the efficiencies of the services and to provide better cost savings mechanisms, is our understanding. They had legal workers who were doing other work. They had changed their system, and they had these legal workers, and they decided that a use for these legal workers would be to provide assistance to the duty counsel staff lawyers and to others and to provide assistance in ways that could save money by not relying on lawyers to do services where a lawyer is not needed.

Mr. Doug Downey: Yes, I can see the shift in service, but I don't understand why they wouldn't count it so that you would then have the data to show that you're being more efficient.

Ms. Dana Fisher: What you're seeing in the numbers is what they did. They counted the numbers in order to verify whether or not that was an efficient model, and then when they realized it wasn't an efficient model, they stopped counting them and they switched to what I think could be described as a better and more accurate metric for counting these numbers, which is, we are now counting clients served instead of every single time that client

touches the system. We're not just counting services; we're counting the substantial legal services provided. That metric was a separate metric that only looked at the non-lawyer services. They counted those, and it's a worthy statistic to keep, potentially. But that was a decision not to report and to report the actual legal services provided. So those are the numbers you're looking at.

Mr. Doug Downey: If they made the changes in 2017-18, they decided pretty quickly that they had made the right decision and stopped tracking. Is that—

Ms. Dana Fisher: The 2017-18, I believe, is in relation to the clinics, so that's a different system. That's not that it's not being counted.

The Chair (Mr. Stephen Crawford): One minute.

Ms. Dana Fisher: The system itself that was imposed counts things differently. That's a slightly different issue. What I'm referring to is an earlier change. I apologize; I don't know that I have the exact numbers, but it's much earlier in the service. It's a separate metric that's listed. In fact, had the government actually looked at the numbers more closely, they would have clearly been able to see that that number just disappears from the counting. It's not like the numbers just drop and you're like, “Oh, why did they drop? There must have been a cut in service.” It's actually very clear that it's non-lawyer services that were being counted and the non-lawyer services are just not counted in the next set of occurrences.

Mr. Doug Downey: All right. We're almost out of time, but I would be curious to line up with the budget growth within the system at the same time that we're tracking numbers. Because those two things have both been talked about in many forums since the decision. Do you have any insights on the—

The Chair (Mr. Stephen Crawford): I'm afraid we have to move over to the opposition for questioning now.

You have the floor, Ms. Shaw.

Ms. Sandy Shaw: Has Legal Aid Ontario communicated back to the Attorney General this error in accounting? What has the response been?

Ms. Dana Fisher: They continue to repeat the same numbers and the same information, and have not made any correction to the misinformation that they are providing to the public.

Ms. Sandy Shaw: Going forward, how will you be continuing? I've heard from the legal aid clinic in my community that this is a significant funding cut that impacts people very severely based on erroneous, incorrect data. You're not going to just let it slide, are you?

Ms. Dana Fisher: Absolutely not. We are here today challenging this information, and we will continue to challenge this information. We will continue to speak to the public in regard to the false information that we believe is being communicated. It was, perhaps, erroneously presented due to a mistake, but at this point in time it has been corrected and we would expect the government to correct it. There is also talk with respect to constitutional challenges and things of that nature, should it come to that.

Ms. Sandy Shaw: As it stands, you have a 30% cut to the budget, to the most vulnerable people in Ontario.

I have to say that the government side spends a lot of time in the House talking about illegal border-crossers. I know that in the Attorney General's letter to you, she said that moving forward, Ontario expects the federal government to fully fund immigration and refugee law service cases before the federal tribunals or in federal court.

My question is, can you just elaborate a little bit more on how this will impact people who are in that position?

Ms. Dana Fisher: In addition to the refugee claimants, in addition to permanent residents who have been in this country, perhaps, since they were children, in addition to individuals fleeing persecution and torture, we also have women fleeing domestic violence; we also have people who are being evicted by corporations who are their landlords. If the clinics face the cut that they are looking at, then absolutely these services will disappear and these individuals will have no one to go to.

We will also see—in terms of the cuts, in terms of our membership, and in terms of what we're seeing at legal aid itself—more crowded courtrooms, where it takes longer to get through the system; more self-represented individuals—

Ms. Sandy Shaw: Which is expensive.

Ms. Dana Fisher: Absolutely. As Scott indicated, it's \$6 on every dollar.

We already know that there are lengthy lineups. I spoke to a member earlier who saw 100 people in a single day, trying to give legal advice and guide them through the court system. We are going to see, frankly, devastating consequences.

We're going to see the cost down the road, also, with miscarriages of justice and the costs that come from having to do retrials.

Ms. Sandy Shaw: The theme of access to justice is something that we're very concerned with in many of the provisions in Bill 100—not just this cut.

The word “modernize” shows up in the letter many times, including in this statement: “I recognize that lawyers may not welcome comprehensive reform and renewed accountability at LAO as we work to modernize.” That does not sound like a statement that looks like they're looking for really good dialogue. Have you been given any information on what the word “modernize” means?

Ms. Dana Fisher: I'm going to say no. In fact, if they really wanted to modernize things, the court system itself, which largely operates on paper right now—we do not have any means by which people can appear remotely in the courtrooms who are not in prison.

The Chair (Mr. Stephen Crawford): One minute.

Ms. Dana Fisher: There are many things that could be modernized. This is not one of them.

Ms. Sandy Shaw: I'm going to ask, on behalf of all of Ontario and certainly my seatmate, Mr. Mamakwa—we are hearing a lot about concerns about access to justice, especially for people in Indigenous communities in the Far North. How are these cuts going to impact them, considering that they're overrepresented in our justice system to begin with?

Ms. Alika Hendricks: Let's be clear: The system as it stands is already broken. Certainly, the cuts that have been

proposed by the government are only going to further impair a system that is not meeting the needs of our most vulnerable clients, including those in northern communities. Access to justice needs to be invested in.

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With respect to the modernization that you also referenced, that's going to take an investment, and the cuts are certainly not going to take us in the right direction to address those concerns.

Ms. Sandy Shaw: Thank you very much.

Ms. Dana Fisher: And if there's time, to—

Ms. Sandy Shaw: Yes?

The Chair (Mr. Stephen Crawford): Ten seconds.

Ms. Dana Fisher: Certificates for Indigenous people make up 11% to 13% of the certificates issued, and visible minorities 32% to 37%.

Ms. Sandy Shaw: Wow.

The Chair (Mr. Stephen Crawford): Okay. Thank you very much.

Ms. Sandy Shaw: We know who's going to be suffering in Ontario.

Mr. Scott Travers: Thank you.

Ms. Dana Fisher: Thank you.

Ms. Alika Hendricks: Thank you.

ONTARIO HOME BUILDERS' ASSOCIATION

The Chair (Mr. Stephen Crawford): We'll call up our next presenter. It's the Ontario Home Builders' Association. Welcome to the finance committee. If you could just state your names for the record, you can get right into your presentation.

Mr. Stephen Hamilton: Great. My name is Stephen Hamilton. I work at the Ontario Home Builders' Association. Today I'm joined by Shannon Bertuzzi. Shannon is the vice-president of market development at EnerQuality Corp. EnerQuality Corp. is involved in labelling energy-efficient homes across Ontario. She'll be speaking to the bill as well.

Mr. Chairman and members of the committee, good afternoon. It is my pleasure to speak on behalf of 4,000 OHBA member companies and a network of 29 local associations across Ontario regarding the changes to Ontario's training and apprenticeship system found in schedule 40 of the legislation.

Schedule 40 represents the next step in the government's plan to modernize the apprenticeship system. Already we are seeing positive results from the fall announcement that lowered journey-person-to-apprenticeship ratios to 1 to 1 across the board in construction. Since that change was made, total apprenticeship registrations are already up 11% compared to the same time last year, and apprenticeship registrations in construction specifically are about 6% higher. It's important to put those numbers into context: This is after years of stagnant or declining rates of apprenticeship in Ontario, so this is a huge improvement.

Behind these statistics are real people who now have a pathway to a great career in the trades. I want to highlight a few of our members that have been active hiring apprentices since that announcement:

—Jamie Adam from Pioneer Craftsmen in Waterloo region has already hired an additional three carpentry apprentices;

—Gary Burtch from Haliburton county has hired an additional two apprentices;

—Peder Madsen from CCR Building and Remodeling in London has hired six additional carpentry apprentices;

—Ted Melchers, president of Melchers Construction from London, was able to hire an additional three apprentices; and

—Eric DenOuden, president of Hilden Homes from Quinte region, was able to bring on two carpentry apprentices, and he has noted that a lot of the subtrades he hires in plumbing and electrical have also been able to hire new apprentices.

OHBA was supportive of winding down the Ontario College of Trades and of new approaches to training because, quite simply, the current skilled trades and apprenticeship system was not working. The journey-person-to-apprentice ratio was failing young people from finding a career in the trades and prevented employers from growing their business and remaining competitive. The result of a 1970s-style apprenticeship system meant that Ontario was falling behind.

It is no surprise that Ontario ranks last in Canada in the number of certified tradespeople per capita. The reforms in the legislation will move away from the outdated and arbitrary scopes of practice, which provided enormous regulatory scope for enforcement to go after low-risk or no-risk work activities. In many cases, OCT enforcement was often getting involved in disputes between competing labour unions—disputes that should have been resolved at the Ontario Labour Relations Board.

Outdated scopes of practice and outdated and bureaucratic training processes will now get a refresh. We look forward to further engagement on enforcement and apprenticeship delivery so that Ontario can lead North America in skilled training outcomes.

Ms. Shannon Bertuzzi: Hi, everyone. Thank you. My name is Shannon Bertuzzi, and as Stephen said, I'm the vice-president of EnerQuality. Just to give you some information about EnerQuality, we're the number one certifier of energy-efficient homes in Ontario and, actually, Canada, and that ranges from Energy Star to Net Zero. It started with R-2000 back in the 1950s. We were founded by the Ontario Home Builders' Association and the Canadian Energy Efficiency Alliance to be the arm and advocate with the home builder industry on working with builders to get them to build above and beyond code.

What we hear when we're already a smaller segment of the universe of trying to get builders to build above and beyond code is that there's a shortage. The shortage is on a skills standpoint and also on a capacity standpoint. We don't have enough skilled labourers out there to be able to

just build normal homes, never mind trying to get them up and above and beyond.

That's just pretty much it in a nutshell for me.

The Vice-Chair (Mr. Jeremy Roberts): Perfect, thank you. We'll move to five minutes of questioning, and we'll start with the opposition. Mr. Arthur?

Mr. Ian Arthur: Thank you so much for coming in and for your presentation. We've heard from a number of people talking about the changes to the College of Trades and needing to get more people in.

I'd actually like to focus more on the potential of the building industry to have an effect on tackling climate change in Ontario. As building standards improve, there have been leaps and bounds in terms of the technologies that are developed. Now, the wide-scale uptake of those technologies on a provincial and federal level—there are interesting projects doing it. But what do you think the potential is to really make that stuff mainstream, and what are some of the obstacles?

Ms. Shannon Bertuzzi: Definitely, the way it is right now for reducing carbon, all of the programs that are in place are voluntary. Most of the builders—I'm going to say it ranges between 25% and 32% of them are labelling above and beyond codes and standards in this province.

When it comes to innovation, the technologies aren't necessarily there right now, so that goes to my earlier comment about the skilled labour and the capacity. In order for us to move the needle and transform this market, it's everything, all encompassing, within that home.

Mr. Ian Arthur: And—

Interjection.

Mr. Ian Arthur: Oh, sorry. Go ahead.

Mr. Stephen Hamilton: Ontario's building codes—if you're building a new home in Ontario, right now, I think we're basically leading North America in terms of energy efficiency for newly built homes. I think where the most impact can be had is in existing homes. Homes built before 1950 didn't have insulation—really antiquated mechanical systems. If we're going to make an impact, I think that's where government and private industry should be investing their money to lower carbon emissions, because that's where you're going to find the savings.

Mr. Ian Arthur: And what kind of help would your industry want to see from government in order to kick-start that section of buildings out there? Because they are a huge percentage. The new ones are a whole different level, and you're not even close. You're talking about incremental improvements on new builds at this point, whereas the retrofits—there's massive potential.

Mr. Stephen Hamilton: For some time, we've been advocating for a consumer-based tax credit. When a homeowner goes to retrofit their home, they upgrade mechanical systems, maybe new windows and that sort of thing within the building envelope, there could be some sort of incentive structure from government to make those changes.

There are existing programs in place through a lot of the utilities that maybe Shannon could speak to. So there is progress being made, but that's one area where we think there could be more.

Mr. Ian Arthur: The former Environmental Commissioner of Ontario released a report talking about conservation as the low-hanging fruit, the cheapest possible thing that we could do to change our emissions at 2.2 cents per kilowatt. Would you actually talk about some of the economic opportunities that you see in that area if we were to invest in those retrofits and what that would mean for your industry? If a tax credit was put in place, what would that do in terms of economic benefits?

Mr. Stephen Hamilton: The challenge on the renovation side in residential construction is always the underground economy. That is one of the biggest issues we hear from our renovation members. For them, they're competing with operators who aren't paying taxes and maybe not getting building permits. If the government were to tie incentives to making sure people have their licences, are paying taxes, are registered—if you created that kind of structure around it to safeguard customer protection, I think that would go a long way.

Ms. Shannon Bertuzzi: I think you would probably want to do meaningful upgrades and not the typical upgrades, right?

Mr. Ian Arthur: Could you just give us some examples so we have an idea?

The Vice-Chair (Mr. Jeremy Roberts): One minute remaining.

Ms. Shannon Bertuzzi: Yes, I would think that you would want to look at the house more holistically as a system versus piecemeal, to Stephen's point. That would be training. That would be training the trades. That would be training the people who actually would be putting the products within the home so that it's properly installed and there are not things happening on the back end on a later date that could backfire. But I think you should be looking at it as things that could be done together: not just replacing a furnace, but looking at it on an energy standpoint and what are the biggest uses with the home, what are the pieces that need to be replaced in that home and go with that. That's where the incentives may be.

Mr. Ian Arthur: So the tax credit would have to be flexible within a building envelope platform? Okay.

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Ms. Shannon Bertuzzi: If not, the homes could be sick, if it's not done properly, and you could have a bigger mess on your hands. You want them to be healthy homes, and you want them to be properly renovated.

The Vice-Chair (Mr. Jeremy Roberts): We'll move to the government side. Ms. Skelly.

Ms. Donna Skelly: Thank you for your presentation.

I'm going to ask you a question that's a little different than what we've been hearing today. It's about affordability and affordable housing. Where is the industry headed? Are you thinking outside the box? Are we going to see more of the same—more townhouses, more stacked—or is there any sort of effort to really think outside the box and come up with a solution to this problem?

Mr. Stephen Hamilton: The one great thing about residential construction is, there are a lot of entrepreneurs and it's very responsive to consumer demand within a

regulatory framework that's sometimes very complicated and onerous. So I think you are seeing a lot more innovative housing types come on to the market. We talk a lot about the missing middle—stacked townhomes, townhomes, mid-rise development, as opposed to just single detached homes and high-rise. There needs to be a middle ground. Builders want to do that, but there are obviously regulatory challenges. I think the government's announcement last week or two weeks ago on the Housing Supply Action Plan goes a long way in terms of streamlining approvals, so I think you are going to see some headway in terms of affordability and making sure that first-time homebuyers and others can get into the market.

Ms. Donna Skelly: I was a city councillor in Hamilton prior to running provincially. The red tape in the construction industry is unbelievable. Is there anything that you need in terms of a municipal push to expedite some of these projects, and does that make a difference? Is that a big problem? I've heard that slowing a project down really affects the bottom line and contributes to the unaffordability of a home.

Mr. Stephen Hamilton: The province could be directing more growth towards areas where there's public transit. If the government is going to make an investment of \$7 billion into a new subway line, does it really make sense for that corridor to still be filled with single detached homes? Probably not. If there was some kind of as-of-right zoning, where the developer would have the assurance that if they build to whatever the specs are they can get the permit in an expedited manner—enough to appeal an appeal—I think that would go a long way to building the types of communities that I think we're all looking for, where it's accessible for transit. Those are the places people want to live.

Ms. Donna Skelly: You're not an urban planner, but I'll still ask you: What would you say is the biggest mistake we've made in terms of moving forward with trying to address affordable housing?

Mr. Stephen Hamilton: In years past, there was a real focus on addressing affordability from "let's limit demand." It was really a demand side—so you saw the foreign buyers tax and certain initiatives around that. Our argument was always that it should be about supply and increasing housing supply. I think that's why we really welcomed this government's approach, which is focused on supply. It's really simple economics at the end of the day. I think that's where previous governments probably didn't get it right. They focused too much on the demand side.

The Vice-Chair (Mr. Jeremy Roberts): Mr. Downey.

Mr. Doug Downey: I'd just ask you to repeat the stats you started with in terms of the apprenticeship growth—you had 11% of something and then 6% of something else.

Mr. Stephen Hamilton: Compared to this time last year, where you had a very high ratio—for some trades it's 4 to 1, four journeypersons to one apprentice—it's 11% higher, the total apprenticeship registrations—

The Vice-Chair (Mr. Jeremy Roberts): One minute remaining.

Mr. Stephen Hamilton: —and it's 6% higher in construction specifically.

Ms. Donna Skelly: Just recently?

Mr. Stephen Hamilton: Just in one year, yes.

Ms. Donna Skelly: Wow.

The Vice-Chair (Mr. Jeremy Roberts): Thank you so much.

Mr. Stephen Hamilton: Thank you.

CANADIAN ENVIRONMENTAL LAW ASSOCIATION

The Vice-Chair (Mr. Jeremy Roberts): We'll now call up our next witness, the Canadian Environmental Law Association. You will have five minutes for your presentation. We'll give you a one-minute notice near the end. Please start with your name and your organization.

Mr. Richard Lindgren: My name is Richard Lindgren. I'm a staff lawyer at the Canadian Environmental Law Association, or CELA. Let me start off by saying that CELA appreciates this opportunity to speak to schedule 17 of Bill 100.

CELA is a public-interest law group. We represent low-income individuals and vulnerable communities in the courts and before tribunals. CELA strongly opposes schedule 17, which would repeal the current Proceedings Against the Crown Act and replace it with a new and much more restrictive law.

The reasons for CELA's position are set out in the written brief that I provided to the Clerk earlier today. In our view, the current Proceedings Against the Crown Act is an important access-to-justice law, and that is because it allows the people of Ontario to sue the Ontario government where they have suffered loss or harm resulting from negligent conduct by provincial officials in the exercise of their regulatory powers or duties. However, schedule 17, if enacted, would bar people from bringing those kinds of regulatory negligent cases against the crown. That proposal is alarming to CELA and to our client communities for three main reasons.

First, the proposal is unnecessary because the Ontario government has provided no evidence-based justification for this change and has overlooked the fact that the tort of negligence and the rules of civil procedure already have built-in safeguards to weed out unmeritorious lawsuits.

Second, the proposal is unprecedented because, quite frankly, no other jurisdiction in Canada has attempted to bar its own citizens from going to court where they have been impacted by regulatory negligence.

Third, the proposal unduly impairs access to justice because section 11 of the new law extinguishes all current and future causes of action against the crown in regulatory negligence.

In my brief, I provided some real-life environmental examples where the health and property or business interests of real Ontarians have been impacted by the negligent conduct of Ontario officials and where the courts have awarded compensation. However, if schedule 17 is passed, Ontario residents will be precluded from bringing those kinds of regulatory negligence cases.

One real-life example is, of course, the Walkerton drinking water tragedy, which saw seven people die and thousands of people get sick from drinking tap water from a system that was approved and inspected and regulated by the Ministry of the Environment. CELA represented Walkerton citizens at the public inquiry, and we agree with Mr. Justice O'Connor's finding that provincial regulatory failures were among the main causes of this public health disaster.

In light of these regulatory failures, the Ontario government was named as a co-defendant in a class action brought by the Walkerton residents. Thankfully, this class action was settled without trial, and Walkerton residents received compensation for their pain and suffering, for their loss of loved ones, and for other harm and other damages. In our opinion, the Walkerton litigation is precisely the type of case that would be barred by the new law in schedule 17.

The Vice-Chair (Mr. Jeremy Roberts): One minute remaining.

Mr. Richard Lindgren: Frankly, Mr. Chair, that is unconscionable. It's unacceptable.

In conclusion, CELA recommends that schedule 17 be withdrawn in its entirety from Bill 100. If the government really wants to change the existing crown liability statute of this province, then let's have meaningful consultation with all interested stakeholders. Let's not bury the new law in a 200-page omnibus bill containing 60 other statutes.

In the alternative, if schedule 17 is going to be remaining in Bill 100, then at the very least, section 11 needs to be deleted so as to ensure continued access to justice in this province.

Subject to any questions, those are my comments.

The Vice-Chair (Mr. Jeremy Roberts): Thank you. We'll start with five minutes of questioning from the government side. Mr. Downey.

Mr. Doug Downey: I'm just reading the paper. There's a lot in it, so I haven't been able to go through it entirely—

Mr. Richard Lindgren: I won't cross-examine you.

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Mr. Doug Downey: Well, you might. Stick around.

I would be curious about your thoughts in terms of how this schedule aligns with the federal legislation, if you're familiar with the federal legislation.

Mr. Richard Lindgren: I'm very familiar. I have to report to you, sir, that I spent the weekend looking at every crown liability statute in Canada, including the federal regime. The current federal regime looks a lot like the existing Proceedings Against the Crown Act in many ways. That's not surprising, because a lot of the provinces passed crown liability statutes at about the same time, about 50 years ago, and they all look the same.

The one difference is that schedule 17 now proposes this bar on regulatory negligence lawsuits. That does not exist in the federal statute. This new statute being proposed in schedule 17 is an outlier.

Mr. Doug Downey: That's where I was headed in terms of your paper. You specifically talk about section 11. But otherwise, it looks like it aligns with the federal?

Mr. Richard Lindgren: No, there are other significant differences, but the one of most concern to CELA is section 11. I'd also point out—I think it's subsection 8(3) which, again, puts on further and more stringent rights of Ontarians to bring a lawsuit against the Ontario government. There's a new provision in schedule 17 that requires people to seek the leave of the court in order to get permission to even start an action based on misfeasance of public office. That doesn't exist at the federal level either. So I don't know where these ideas came from and I don't know what the justification is, but they need to be removed.

The Vice-Chair (Mr. Jeremy Roberts): Further questions? Okay.

We'll move to questioning from the opposition. We'll start with Ms. Shaw.

Ms. Sandy Shaw: Thank you for your presentation today.

I just want to get you to comment quickly, because I have a lot of questions.

This is buried in a budget bill. I don't know if the word "inappropriateness" even comes close to describing how egregious—there's a word that this is.

Mr. Richard Lindgren: Well, "egregious" is a word that I like, and I would probably apply it to an attempt to strip away people's rights to sue in a budget bill. If the government really is interested in revising or perhaps modernizing the crown liability provisions that are now in place, then let's pursue that as a stand-alone statute. Let's have good, informed, up-front consultation with lawyers, non-governmental organizations, the bar association—people who use these tools and know what works and what doesn't, what needs to be fixed. But to bury it in a budget bill with little or no public scrutiny is not the way to go, in my respectful opinion.

Ms. Sandy Shaw: We are perplexed as to who asked for this or where it came from. Again, you mentioned those people who take access to justice to the grave as something that is tantamount to a civilized society. The only thing that we could find from our side is something that the Premier had to say. It's about the notion that there are frivolous lawsuits. He said, "You even look sideways and some special-interest groups out there are trying to sue you, you know. It's ridiculous. I've never seen anything like it. It's tying up the courts. I want to clear up the courts until real lawsuits can go through, for real people, for things that really matter. There's a lot of frivolous nonsense going on right now in the courts."

Can you speak to the notion that there are frivolous lawsuits against the crown?

Mr. Richard Lindgren: Well, I do address that issue in my briefing. I commend that portion of my brief to the committee.

Frankly, there's no merit to the Premier's comments—I say that with all due respect. There already are existing rules of court that allow unmeritorious lawsuits to get screened out at the very earliest opportunity. These include motions for summary judgment. They include motions to strike out pleadings. They include motions to determine an

issue before a trial etc. So to my mind, there is no evidence of frivolous and vexatious lawsuits against the crown going to court.

I would hasten to add that I certainly would not count a case like the Walkerton situation as frivolous or vexatious. I think most people in Ontario would agree that it's precisely the case that should go forward but would now be barred by schedule 17.

Ms. Sandy Shaw: If we could just spend some time talking about the retroactivity of this schedule—we know that there's currently a lawsuit that is the wards of the crown, that there's a class action lawsuit. There are some concerns with First Nations and Indigenous communities that land claims and also proceedings before the courts could impact their rights. It just seems unprecedented and, I have to say, sort of authoritarian or some description, that you can retroactively give yourself immunity.

Mr. Richard Lindgren: Well, I see that aspect of the bill as being fundamentally unfair to people who have filed claims and are going through the court system in good faith, only to be told now, if this bill passes, "Your claims are automatically extinguished and dismissed without costs." A lot of times when the law is changed substantively, those changes take effect prospectively so as to maybe affect future proceedings. But I'm not aware of too many instances where you go back in time and completely abolish pre-existing claims that are before the courts and waiting to be heard—and maybe have been heard and the decision is under reserve. I think it's fundamentally unfair to extinguish those causes of action.

Ms. Sandy Shaw: Also, just so we can connect this to the idea that this government has—there are duly signed, lawful contracts this government has ripped up—

The Chair (Mr. Stephen Crawford): One minute.

Ms. Sandy Shaw: —and has immunized themselves against legislation. We're looking at trying to have corporations come and invest in this province. With this kind of inoculation against any kind of responsibility, how is that going to impact people who want to invest in this province?

Mr. Richard Lindgren: I can't speak to that; that's outside of my area of expertise. I sue polluters. I don't rip up contracts or work for people who have contracts ripped up.

Ms. Sandy Shaw: White Pines is an example.

Mr. Richard Lindgren: I think, more fundamentally, it's a little bit unusual and highly inappropriate, for a tort fee, for a person who has committed a negligent act or omission to be given the power to draw their own immunity, their own deflector shield, so they don't get held liable. I think there is something fundamentally off about that whole process.

The Chair (Mr. Stephen Crawford): Thank you very much.

Mr. Richard Lindgren: Thank you, everybody.

ADVOCIS

The Chair (Mr. Stephen Crawford): We'll call up our next presenter: Advocis, the Financial Advisors

Association of Canada. Good afternoon. Welcome to the finance committee. Please just state your names for the record, and you can get right into your presentation.

Mr. Greg Pollock: Thank you Mr. Chair. My name is Greg Pollock. I'm the president and CEO of Advocis, the Financial Advisors Association of Canada. Joining me today is Julie Martini, our vice-president of public affairs and marketing.

Advocis is the association of choice for financial advisers and planners, with more than 13,000 members across the country and 6,000 here in Ontario. Advocis is the definitive voice of the profession, advocating for professionalism and consumer protection.

Advocis members are typically small businesses who operate in every community across Ontario, with a greater GDP than each of the pharmaceutical, automotive manufacturing and aerospace industries. Advocis members are uniquely positioned to provide advice to Main Street Ontarians who need help in understanding the combination of financial products that will assist them in dealing with life events and their preparation for well-funded retirements.

Studies have demonstrated that Ontarians who use a financial adviser have almost four times the wealth accumulation than those who do not use professional financial advisers.

Steps must be taken to not only ensure the continued access to financial advice, but also to ensure that Ontarians have access to high-quality, professional financial advice.

Ms. Julie Martini: If you'll allow me, I'd like to try to paint a picture of Ontario's reality when it comes to professional advice. Today, a young family turns to their physician, who they know is regulated in the province, for their family's medical needs. They are confident because they know the title of "medical doctor" is a protected title and not just anyone can use it. They turn to their lawyer, who they know is regulated in this province, to help close the deal on their first home. They are confident because they know that the title of "lawyer" is a protected title and not just anyone can use it. They then turn to their financial adviser, who they assume is regulated in this province, to help them build a plan for their child's education. However, unlike those other two professionals, anyone can call themselves a financial adviser, regardless of their qualifications. This leaves consumers like that young family at risk.

In fact, nearly six in 10 Ontarians believe that the title "financial adviser" is already protected in the province of Ontario. When confronted with the reality that this is not the case, eight in 10 believe that a professional code of conduct for financial advisers should be mandatory in this province.

Further, and most importantly, nearly nine in 10 Ontarians would support legislation protecting the title of "financial adviser."

These are the results of a poll of 1,500 Ontarians conducted on our behalf in October 2018.

Mr. Greg Pollock: For over a decade, Advocis has made it clear to governments and regulators across the

country that a lack of title protection for both financial advisers and financial planners presents a serious risk to the financial health of hard-working families seeking financial advice. Advocis has proposed that financial advisers belong to a recognized profession adhering to professional standards. We were pleased that in Bill 100 the government of Ontario committed to moving forward with legislation—namely, schedule 25, the Financial Professionals Title Protection Act—that would require individuals using the title of "financial adviser" or "financial planner" to have an appropriate credential overseen by a credentialing-granting body.

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The government states that this change presents a significant opportunity to strengthen professionalism, and we would agree. The restriction of key titles to individuals with qualifying credentials will go a long way to elevating the trust and stature of financial advisers and planners as true professionals.

More importantly, it ensures that families can be confident in their choice of financial adviser or planner, as not just anyone will be permitted to use these titles.

The Chair (Mr. Stephen Crawford): One minute.

Mr. Greg Pollock: As we meet with governments and regulators across the country, we are encouraging them to mirror this action taken here in Ontario.

We thank the government for taking this concrete step towards recognizing the provision of financial advice as a true profession, and look forward to working with you and other stakeholders on these next steps.

The Chair (Mr. Stephen Crawford): Thank you very much. We're going to start now with the opposition side. Ms. Shaw?

Ms. Sandy Shaw: Thank you for your presentation. We've met before. I agree that this is an important protection for average retail investors. I agree with you. My experience also is that people assume that it's regulated. You would just think that it was. So this is a good move.

I just have a few questions. I guess my question would be about the certification body, and who would be in charge of that and how that would be influenced. What would the metrics be around certification, and the costs of that? Where are the costs of that going to be absorbed?

Mr. Greg Pollock: Right. Okay. In reading the legislation, as we read the legislation, the government is going to delegate authority to the Financial Services Regulatory Authority to oversee credentialing bodies. They're going to put factors into place, standards into place.

Our sense is, as we read the legislation—we see things like educational requirements; examination requirements; appropriate disciplinary processes—I presume that's for people who have been found to be or seem to be offside—proper governance, when it comes to the oversight of the credentialing body; ongoing continuing education requirements; professional standards; and ethical standards. All of those are typically the hallmarks of a profession, and so we support all of those. I think all of the details, the nuts and bolts, still have to be discussed.

We've been an association for over 100 years. We were founded in 1906. We've developed a lot of standards, a lot

of courses, over the years. We're confident that we'll be able to contribute to this and, hopefully, become a credentialing body, as seen in this legislation.

Ms. Sandy Shaw: So that's your hope, that you will play a role in being the credentialing body, essentially? Be modest.

Mr. Greg Pollock: No, but in fairness, the way it's written, I think there could be more than one credentialing body.

Ms. Sandy Shaw: Okay.

Mr. Greg Pollock: It's conceivable that we could have two or three credentialing bodies out there, recognized by FSRA. I think all that remains to be seen until they're convinced that this body or that body actually meets these standards.

Ms. Sandy Shaw: Thank you for that. We've had a number of presentations. We had someone from the private capital market, talking about the exempt market. We also had a presentation from TMX about lifting some of what they called the regulatory burden on capital formation.

My theme today is all about investor protection. So can you talk a little bit about what—those weren't your presentations, but in the context that there seems to be a push to remove these burdens, which essentially were put in place primarily for investor protection, how can you assure, given these many changes that are happening with investment products and advice, that there will continue to be robust protection for individual home grown investors?

Mr. Greg Pollock: Right. My sense is—in fact, it goes to your other question earlier about costs—that there will still be very adequate regulatory oversight in place, but it will now be delegated, and it will be delegated to the credentialing bodies.

So how will the credentialing bodies pay for their costs? They will charge the licensees a fee. It's not going to be paid by the public; it will be paid by the individual registrants. Those individuals will be subject to the standards of the credentialing body. Then, I would imagine that FSRA will have an audit process in place so there will be some costs involved there. But if you read the legislation, in there FSRA can actually charge fees back to the credentialing body.

The Chair (Mr. Stephen Crawford): One minute.

Ms. Sandy Shaw: So you'll be issuing the licences to your members; is that how it was going to work?

Mr. Greg Pollock: In effect, that's correct, yes.

Ms. Sandy Shaw: Okay. I'm sorry, maybe I mixed two things together. But the investor protection piece, did you have anything to say about that?

Mr. Greg Pollock: Right. Again, it seems to me that in terms of governance on the credentialing body, there should be members of the public there to represent the public, if you want. I don't see it as being just the licensees making up the governance structure of that credentialing body. Those details have to be discussed with FSRA moving forward.

Ms. Sandy Shaw: At the end of the day, for the credibility of what you're moving forward—you want to have consumers feel they have a say in this as well.

Mr. Greg Pollock: Absolutely.

Ms. Sandy Shaw: Thank you very much.

The Chair (Mr. Stephen Crawford): Okay. Thank you very much. We're going to go now to the government side. Mr. Rasheed.

Mr. Kaleed Rasheed: Thank you very much for the presentation.

During your presentation you mentioned challenges. Can you kindly just give us some of the challenges that currently the professional financial advisers and consumers are facing without the title protection?

Mr. Greg Pollock: Very clearly today, individuals—anyone in this room—can simply hang up a shingle and call themselves a financial adviser or call themselves a financial planner. There are no qualifications required: no college education, no university education, no professional education. There are no standards at all with respect to who can call themselves a financial adviser or financial planner.

The public, at the end of the day, don't really know who they're dealing with. By putting some standards in place, perhaps certain credentials being recognized by the credentialing body, then at least the public will then know that this individual or these individuals have met these standards.

Mr. Kaleed Rasheed: So other than the credentials, are there any other challenges?

Mr. Greg Pollock: Certainly in terms of complaints, if you want, that members of the public might have, at the present time, there's no real, clear path for some of these complaints. It will be required that these credentialing bodies have those paths in place so that individuals who have bona fide complaints can take them forward. Advisers will be required to carry appropriate errors and omissions insurance—in effect, professional liability insurance—to protect those investors or consumers who have purchased products through those advisers. I think that's going to be very helpful as well.

Mr. Kaleed Rasheed: Awesome. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

The Chair (Mr. Stephen Crawford): Mr. Downey.

Mr. Doug Downey: Just one thing that I know you're trying to promote is financial literacy, so if I could just have you touch on the importance of financial advisers in that space.

Mr. Greg Pollock: Absolutely. I'm proud to say that, for the last couple of years, I've been on the national steering committee—you may not know this—on financial literacy for Canada. Why? Because we see this as critical. We want our consumers and Canadians to be financially literate in terms of how to ask good questions, how to identify red flags when perhaps I'm getting the wrong advice or poor advice from the adviser that I'm thinking of maybe engaging.

We say to consumers all along that there are lots of questions that you need to ask in order to determine if this is the right adviser for me. Fit is often very, very important. Just things like that: management, a saving strategy.

There's a lot to financial literacy. We need to begin that very, very early. We believe, in fact, that there should be

financial literacy programs in schools. That's going to help with some of the basic needs of students.

It has to be appropriate in terms of time, as well. You don't speak to a 12-year-old about amortization schedules, but you might want to speak to them about a cellphone contract, because mom and dad are paying for this, and maybe they should be contributing to that.

These kinds of things are all part of raising awareness around financial literacy.

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Mr. Doug Downey: Thank you for the work you do in that space.

The Chair (Mr. Stephen Crawford): Any further questions? Okay. Thank you very much.

Mr. Greg Pollock: Great. Thank you.

The Chair (Mr. Stephen Crawford): We appreciate your time.

SOUTH ASIAN LEGAL CLINIC OF ONTARIO

The Chair (Mr. Stephen Crawford): I'll call up our next witness. It's the South Asian Legal Clinic of Ontario. Good afternoon and welcome to the finance committee.

Ms. Shalini Konanur: Thank you.

The Chair (Mr. Stephen Crawford): If you could just state your name for the record, and you can get right into your presentation.

Ms. Shalini Konanur: My name is Shalini Konanur. I'm the executive director and a lawyer at the South Asian Legal Clinic. I want to thank the committee for the opportunity to appear before you today. I'm going to plan to tell you a little bit about our clinic, and then also give you some comments on the budget bill, Bill 100, and some larger comments on the financial and budgetary decisions that impact the clients that we serve.

The South Asian Legal Clinic, which I'll now refer to as SALCO as a matter of expediency, is a not-for-profit legal clinic that's funded by Legal Aid Ontario with a mandate to improve access to justice for low-income South Asian communities. We were established in 1999, and we provide direct front-line legal services for our clients. That means providing legal advice, brief services and legal representation in individual cases. We also do a significant volume of public legal education in an attempt to have preventive information for our clients about their legal rights.

The work that we do is in the area of poverty law. That includes, for most who don't really know what that large term means, work in income maintenance, which includes Ontario Works, Ontario disability, Canada Pension Plan disability, Old Age Security and employment insurance. We do work in housing—eviction prevention, maintenance and repair issues, illegal entry and harassment claims—and we do a significant amount of work in employment. In employment we do cases on wage loss, termination, wrongful termination, harassment and discrimination.

Our clinic also does work in immigration. I want to be clear that we do not do refugee work as legal clinics, but we do work in immigration. Primarily at SALCO we work with women fleeing domestic violence/intimate-partner-violence situations who have precarious immigration status, to help them either secure temporary or permanent status while they leave those situations of violence.

We work in gender-based violence in a number of areas. One that some of you may have heard of is enforced marriage, where SALCO is a national leader on the issue of working with forced-marriage clients. We do a volume of work—unfortunately, a growing volume of work—in human trafficking. We work on issues of elder abuse, particularly financial fraud, intimate partner violence and other family violence.

Our clinic was specifically created to address a gap in access to justice for low-income South Asians who are not, for whatever reason, being able to access the traditional legal aid model. If you don't already know, South Asians are the largest visible minority community in Ontario, at 8.7%, and 18% of that population remains in low income in Ontario. South Asians, unfortunately, are continuing to fall into poverty at disproportionate rates. The issues that contribute to that poverty are largely structural. They include discrimination in employment, a growing race wage gap, lack of access to government supports—sometimes because of immigration status—and often a push for overqualified workers to work precarious and low-wage jobs.

I know that this committee's mandate today is of course to review Bill 100, but also to consider and report to the House its own observations, opinions and recommendations on the fiscal and economic policies of the province. I would ask you to look at my comments today on Bill 100 and my comments on the broader financial decisions made by the province within that framework. It is our position, very clearly put, that many of the cuts and changes that I'm going to speak about today to criminal injuries compensation, to legal aid funding, to social assistance and to employment law will have a disproportionately negative impact on the racialized communities in Ontario that we serve.

The Chair (Mr. Stephen Crawford): One minute.

Ms. Shalini Konanur: I'd like to first comment on the Compensation for Victims of Crime Act, and really quickly would like to say that I myself have conducted hundreds of criminal injuries compensation claims. The changes seek to get rid of the Criminal Injuries Compensation Board. What I want this committee to understand is that the clients that I've had go to hearings at this board have had a very real and strong reaction after those hearings of feeling that they have been heard, feeling that their stories of violence had been acknowledged—and being awarded pain and suffering for that violence. All of those clients are low-income. A loss of that board will mean a loss of that critical opportunity.

I want to speak very quickly in the remaining time on the cuts to legal aid. I work for a legal clinic that has almost no administrative funding. We have been told that the

current cut from the province to legal aid will mean a 16% cut to the global budget for legal clinics. This will definitely impact our front-line services.

The Chair (Mr. Stephen Crawford): Thank you very much. We've run out of time. But we will go to questions now. We'll start with the government side. Ms. Skelly.

Ms. Donna Skelly: Thank you for your presentation.

Do you work at a legal aid community clinic?

Ms. Shalini Konanur: I do. The way that our clinic is set up—I have worked in the legal clinic system my entire life. I worked for a city community legal clinic for Renfrew county, then at the clinic in Mississauga, and then I took on the role of setting up the South Asian Legal Clinic. There are a small number of ethno-specific legal clinics that work specifically in communities, and our mandate is province-wide. We do not do the work that the local legal clinic does. That would be inefficient. We take on those cases that the local legal clinics cannot do: the particularly difficult gender-based violence work, the mental health work, and some of the more complex employment law work.

Ms. Donna Skelly: You said that it's province-wide. You represent—

Ms. Shalini Konanur: We are province-wide, yes.

Ms. Donna Skelly: How do you work in Sudbury, for example, or up north? Is it video conference?

Ms. Shalini Konanur: I will be frank and say that we work with low-income South Asian communities. Really, they're situated in particular areas, primarily the greater Toronto area, with growing populations in Brantford, London, Ottawa and Windsor. Those are the areas that we work most in.

We do most of our work with clients over the phone. We use the local legal clinic if we need to get information to clients who don't have access to Internet or email. We do most of our hearings by video conference.

Ms. Donna Skelly: As a community clinic, I understand that you do not represent clients in a criminal matter or in family law. Is that accurate?

Ms. Shalini Konanur: We do not do criminal and family, although our clinic does give family advice with the sanction of legal aid in multiple South Asian languages. We are the starting point for advice, particularly in situations of violence, for our clients to understand what their opportunities are and then to link them with legal aid.

Ms. Donna Skelly: So if somebody was facing a criminal matter, how would they access the court system if they didn't have the funds? How do they find a lawyer, then?

Ms. Shalini Konanur: If they don't have the funds? If they are low-income, they would contact legal aid and see if they qualify for a certificate. If they are not eligible to contact legal aid, generally we find that the vast majority of our clients who fall in that area, because they don't face jail time, end up being self-represented. They simply cannot afford to pay private bar lawyers.

Ms. Donna Skelly: If they make over a certain amount of money, or if they—

Ms. Shalini Konanur: Even if they make under a certain amount of money, you still cannot get a certificate

unless the consequence of what you've been charged with could lead to jail time. That's many, many—

Ms. Donna Skelly: Could you give me an example?

Ms. Shalini Konanur: For example, we have clients who will call in on a domestic violence case, that they've faced an assault. When the police get there, they often have these mandatory charging rules where, if the other partner says, "Well, she hit me as well," she will be charged. Because the charge doesn't carry with it jail time, she will not qualify for legal aid even if she is low-income, so she has to go into the courts by herself.

Ms. Donna Skelly: Okay. All right.

The Chair (Mr. Stephen Crawford): Mr. Downey.

Mr. Doug Downey: Sometimes, I look up the presenters' bios. I have to say, it's quite impressive.

Ms. Shalini Konanur: Oh, thank you.

Mr. Doug Downey: Congratulations on lawyer of the year with SABA and the OBA award and whatnot. That's impressive.

Ms. Shalini Konanur: Oh, thank you.

Mr. Doug Downey: I'm a lawyer. I voted in the bench election. You did quite well for a Toronto candidate, quite frankly.

Ms. Shalini Konanur: Thank you.

Mr. Doug Downey: My question on SALCO is more on logistics. The website says, "Please contact us or complete the 'Request for Legal Education...'" Do you effectively do house calls with people?

Ms. Shalini Konanur: No; our legal education is limited to larger sessions. Normally, what we do is—if we see clients asking the same question over and over again, obviously it triggers that you need to do some education in a community.

The Chair (Mr. Stephen Crawford): One minute.

Ms. Shalini Konanur: By example, we had a number of people from Scarborough from the Tamil community who were asking about housing. What we do is we partner with organizations that serve that community and we create town halls where we do that legal education large-scale. We go into agencies and we work with governments—that kind of thing.

1630

Mr. Doug Downey: Interesting. Thank you.

The Chair (Mr. Stephen Crawford): Any further questions? No?

Okay, we'll go to the opposition side. Mr. Mamakwa.

Mr. Sol Mamakwa: Thank you for your presentation. When you spoke about the housing issues that you help out with—harassment, employment, immigration, domestic violence, human trafficking, elder abuse—it just sounded so real to me as a First Nations person. In the communities that I represent, it's the same things that we deal with. Would you be able to provide some examples of some of the issues that you deal with when you're trying to deal with the system that's there? I know it seems to be, almost, that the most impacted within these cuts are racialized people.

I always know that the system that we have, this building, whether it's the structures that are there, whether

it's the child welfare system or health, it impacts—I understand. I've said it here before that, as a First Nations person, as an Indigenous person, these are colonial systems. I'm a colonized person. I'm speaking my second language right now because of that, because I can't speak my language in this place.

Can you provide some examples?

Ms. Shalini Konanur: Absolutely, and I think you raise a really good point. Quickly, I would just encourage you, if the committee has time, to look at something called the Colour of Poverty—Colour of Change website. It's an organization that I'm part of. There is a group of fact sheets there that pulled from all of the census data from 2016 to show the disproportionate life outcomes for racialized communities, including those in Ontario. It's very focused on Ontario.

The things that come to mind and strike me as examples of the clients we work with—I can talk about the past three weeks. We recently worked with a group of about 15 clients, all who are here legally actually on temporary status, working to get permanent status, who are all making, at a factory in Mississauga, \$3 an hour. Our work was not even about that we think the minimum wage is too low, which you'll see in my submission, but trying to get people to be paid at the current minimum wage. The truth is that those clients are vulnerable because of their immigration status, and without any kind of representation they would not assert their basic employment rights. Sometimes when I see those cases, to be frank, it's kind of unbelievable to me, as well. I think, "This is not really happening here"—that naïveté.

I worked last week with a client who was trafficked to Canada from Pakistan. I'm not trying to be grand about what happened, but what literally happened with her was that she was caged in somebody's basement and working in their store. She was found wandering the street because she had escaped and she didn't know where she was.

Unfortunately, we see the worst part of what happens to those vulnerable communities in our province. There are great things, there are great supports, there are great people in the province, but we see the vulnerable communities.

The key message that I want to leave with you today is that I recognize that fiscal responsibility is important. I run a legal clinic. We have a set budget. We're not allowed to operate a deficit. We're not allowed to operate a surplus. I've lived that life for 20 years. I understand all of that.

The Chair (Mr. Stephen Crawford): One minute.

Ms. Shalini Konanur: I just want to say to this committee to think about that we cannot do it on the backs of vulnerable Ontarians—that those decisions are myopic if we don't think about what the long-term impact is going to be for these clients. We know from the Canadian Bar Association's study on access to justice that for every \$1 put into legal aid, we save \$6 in the justice system. So if you want to look at it from a cost perspective as well, you need to take that into account. We simply cannot make these decisions on the backs of the clients who I see in my head every day.

Mr. Sol Mamakwa: Thank you. I don't have any more.

The Chair (Mr. Stephen Crawford): Thank you very much. We appreciate your presentation.

Ms. Shalini Konanur: Thank you.

POLICE ASSOCIATION OF ONTARIO

The Chair (Mr. Stephen Crawford): We'll call up our next presenter: the Police Association of Ontario. Good afternoon. Welcome to the finance committee. If you could just state your names for the record and you can get right into your presentation.

Mr. Bruce Chapman: I'm Bruce Chapman, president of the Police Association of Ontario. With me is Mark Baxter, chair of the board.

The Police Association of Ontario represents over 18,000 members, both sworn and civilian, including 48 local associations. We recently brought aboard Akwesasne as our First Nations police service and association under the umbrella of the PAO.

Thank you for having us here today to speak to Bill 100 and specifically to schedule 52 of that bill, the PTSD Awareness Day Act, 2019.

Post-traumatic stress affects every member of a police service. Every officer has faced a situation that stays with them and affects them in some way. A number of years ago, an Ontario police officer responded to reports of a vehicular accident. Arriving at the scene, the officer found an 18-year-old female in critical condition. While waiting for the ambulance to arrive, the officer stayed by her side, holding her in his arms. She died before they could make it to the hospital.

That officer will never forget having to walk into her parents' office and tell them about the accident and that their daughter had died while driving to meet them for lunch. That officer will never forget the sweater that she wore on her last breaths or the comfort that he was able to give to her while she was trapped inside the car and they waited for other first responders to arrive.

I was, and I am, that officer, and I am just one of the over 73,000 first responders in Ontario who are at risk of developing PTSD at two times the rate of the general population. One in five responders will develop PTSD in their lifetime, and 28% of first responders will have suicidal thoughts in their lifetime. Too often, those thoughts are suppressed and ignored with fatal consequences. Every week in Ontario, at least one first responder takes their own life. This is unacceptable, especially when we know that having the tools, services and support when they are needed most can make a difference.

By bringing more awareness to the prevalence of PTSD among police and first responders, hopefully we can continue to chip away at the stigma that continues to surround mental illness of all types. We've learned that suffering from PTSD isn't a sign of weakness; it's an injury, sustained like any other in the line of duty, except it's not always visible and doesn't heal so easily.

But even though this knowledge is out there, I continue to hear from my members that their employers are

sometimes skeptical when a member of their service informs them of a diagnosis of PTSD. This is hopefully one of the things that will change after the proclamation of PTSD Awareness Day. By shining a light on this serious condition, hopefully more first responders and more employers take the matter seriously and work together to make sure that everyone who needs help gets it.

With all of that being said, we must also pay attention to prevention as we continue to make progress. Across Ontario, police services are asking personnel to do more and more, sometimes with less and less. Extending shifts beyond scheduled end times is common, and so are call-ins on days off that are meant to be dedicated to rest. The endless queue of calls for service creates immense pressure to resolve matters quickly so that other members of the community can receive the service they deserve from the local police. The result is unprecedented levels of burnout, occupational stress and an increased vulnerability to conditions such as PTSD.

The government has indicated time and time again that it supports first responders. I'd like to read a brief passage from the 2019 budget:

"The people of Ontario owe a debt of gratitude to the heroes on the front lines—including police, firefighters and correctional service staff. Their efforts protect" the province's "families and keep communities safe. These heroes have" the backs of the people of Ontario, "and the government has theirs."

The Chair (Mr. Stephen Crawford): One minute.

Mr. Bruce Chapman: Encouraging words, and I know our members were happy to have received that recognition in a document as important as the provincial budget. I am looking forward to hearing more about how the government intends to demonstrate that they have the backs of our members and first responders, because it cannot include cutbacks in police grants for policing under the community and safety grants, it cannot decrease public health funding, and we cannot put the burden on police to pick up the pieces. We can't artificially suppress wage levels of public employees via legislation to undermine collective bargaining rights.

We hold our AGM next week. Our motto is, "Protecting Ontario, Protecting Each Other." I invite everyone to turn their minds to how we can protect police and other first responders. We look forward to continuing conversations and opportunities like this to ensure that Ontario never loses sight of the importance of protecting first responders and protecting the jobs they do in our communities across Ontario.

1640

The Chair (Mr. Stephen Crawford): Thank you very much. We're going to start now with questions from the opposition side. Ms. Shaw?

Ms. Sandy Shaw: Thank you very much for sharing that story. I can't think of a better place than a budget bill for this to be there.

I'm so sorry. I had a good friend who was a firefighter. We had plans to watch a World Juniors together, and he didn't make it. He had seen the same kinds of things that

you're talking about. Sorry, it's so emotional. You caught me by surprise.

So, absolutely, when this government says we're protecting what we value most, this is one area where I can agree with them on. Anyway, that's for Muncie.

But what I would like to say is that, absolutely, we just had the 20th anniversary talking about the fallen heroes. We had all those people who came out. But we have these one day a year. But we forget that we have 364 other days of the year where we need to address the kinds of situations where there are lifelong internal injuries. This is something that I take very personally.

Sorry, these guys have never seen me cry. I'm always really very miserable with them, so this is a surprise.

Ms. Donna Skelly: Sandy, do you want us to go?

Ms. Sandy Shaw: No, no. I'm going to finish.

Really, I just want to tell you that there are so many of us who understand this, from all walks of life. I think that this is an important thing, an important awareness.

Also, we all probably have difficult uncles or difficult grandparents where we didn't understand why they drank so much or why they were so crotchety. It was because they also were suffering from undiagnosed PTSD. It's well overdue that we acknowledge this, so thank you for that.

And thank you for making me blubber; I really appreciate that. Thank you very much.

But what I would like to say is that, in addition, it's about the working conditions. I appreciate that you're talking about the resources and the working conditions. There are so many things we can't do to change the environment in which you work and where first responders work. You can't change that, but there are things that we can do in the workplace to make you able to respond better, or for there to be supports. Can you talk a little bit about what we can do, in terms of your working conditions, to make it a little bit more humane for you?

Mr. Bruce Chapman: Thank you, and I apologize for the story.

Ms. Sandy Shaw: It's okay.

Mr. Bruce Chapman: It's the real-life situations that we deal with, and we've each had members of our own service—friends and colleagues—who have lost their lives, who have died by suicide. Our job as professionals is to ensure that no one else does. That's why it was so important to recognize it on Sunday at the Ontario Police Memorial Foundation, which we do every year, and which we do in the fall in Ottawa, across the country. It's so important to do that.

Having this in this bill is a good start. It's going to be the recognition of a day of awareness that will be used by employers and employees to bring more awareness, and remove the stigma that we still see by the employers within our workplaces. It's so important for us to remove that stigma; so that we have our members come forward to get the help that they need; so that we don't lose another life of a firefighter, police officers or a corrections officer; so that the suicide in Thunder Bay from a couple of weeks ago is the last one that we have. That's how important this is. Whether it's in the budget bill or any other bill, it's

vitality important to recognize awareness for our profession and first responders.

Ms. Sandy Shaw: Thank you for that.

We've had a lot of presentations today from people who are health care workers. They are concerned about the conditions that they work in. They also are subject to the kind of PTSD—the things that would create that kind of traumatic experience for them, particularly when, again, it's an environment where people are sick. People will die in hospitals. But when they are in a position where they are overworked or strained, they can't tend to their patients the way they want to, or mistakes could happen because of how—

The Chair (Mr. Stephen Crawford): One minute.

Ms. Sandy Shaw: Can you just talk a little bit about around bargaining, right?

Mr. Bruce Chapman: Yes, absolutely. The police association was very active on Bill 163 with the previous government, on presumptive legislation for first responders. We believe the previous government didn't go far enough in the recognition of our health care workers and our nurses and our emergency services workers, who should have been included in that bill as well, because they suffer and they see it every day as well. I believe at some point there will be further recognition of what they suffer in the field as well, their members, under presumptive legislation towards PTSD.

Ms. Sandy Shaw: Thank you very much.

The Chair (Mr. Stephen Crawford): Okay, we'll go to the government side. Mr. Rasheed?

Mr. Kaleed Rasheed: Thank you so much for sharing your story, your personal experience. Every day, the officers, our men and women in uniform, just do incredible work. We can't even thank them enough for all of what they do. My question is actually in regard to PTSD and the investment. As you know, our government is committed to making an historic investment in mental health and addictions services. How might we ensure that these investments can be used for individuals suffering from PTSD?

Mr. Bruce Chapman: While we welcome the investment of any and all funding towards PTSD for first responders, I think there's a bigger picture, and that is: We have to look at public health in general. What starts as a community problem—cuts to other areas end up affecting policing, because we're the only ones who work 24/7, and we're the ones who go to calls because social services is not available or health care professionals are not available in certain areas. It's important to continue the conversation around the funding in health care, in the policing sector and in first responders, surrounding PTSD, so we can invest. Every dollar invested saves \$10.

The object and the goal is to get our first responders back on the road. They're highly trained, they're highly skilled and they're highly educated members of society. The profession that they do—we don't want them sitting at home being sick. And the issue of the underlying drinking, drugs, gambling, domestic violence issues or others: Nobody wants that in the policing profession or first

responders. What we need to do is invest in PTSD to make our members healthy and keep them healthy. When they need help early, we get them the help, we keep them on the road and we keep them active in our communities. We keep our communities safe.

Mr. Kaleed Rasheed: Okay. Thank you.

The Chair (Mr. Stephen Crawford): Mr. Piccini?

Mr. David Piccini: Hi. Thank you both for coming today. This is a really, really serious and important issue.

I just have to say, on a personal note, I have three services in my riding: Port Hope, Cobourg and OPP. Major respect—not that I didn't have that before, but doing ride-alongs: I've done six now and gone back. They do a situation table, and that's the subject of my question. But I just have to say that the effective communication and the work that's done, above and beyond—nothing but absolute respect. So thank you very much for what you do.

With that, I really, really enjoyed, and it was a big eye-opener for me, going to the situation table, which all three forces are at. That engages all other aspects of health that you just touched on. Can you just touch on what role you think we in government can do? That's just a local example of what has happened. I know that others do a situation table too, but if you could just touch on where you think we can play the role as a convener.

Mr. Bruce Chapman: Situation tables are hubs. They are vital and important. What we found in the past is that you would have 10 different agencies in a community or a group of communities, all having files on the same family or group of people or individuals, but the left hand wasn't working with the right hand. Nobody was working together.

When you have a situation table, what you do is, you put everything on the table with that, whether it be education, social services or the police sector, and someone takes the lead on that file. It allows the resources to be shared in the community, especially in small communities like Port Hope and Cobourg. There's great value to that. I think government and our MPPs should be promoting the value of situation tables.

I also thank you for the ride-alongs.

The Chair (Mr. Stephen Crawford): One minute.

Mr. Bruce Chapman: I encourage every MPP that's sitting there to do those ride-alongs.

The Chair (Mr. Stephen Crawford): Ms. Skelly.

Ms. Donna Skelly: Mine is on Saturday night.

I'll keep this quick, and I'll echo the sentiments of my colleagues. We really, truly appreciate the work you do, and that is sincere.

In your preamble, you mentioned many years ago a situation that you described. Today we're talking about PTSD, and we have a group of people around the table. But 20 or 30 years ago, you were alone. How has it changed in the course of your career and in the course of the years?

Mr. Bruce Chapman: We're talking about it. We're trying to remove that stigma. We've identified it as an issue. We're making it easier for our members, with presumptive legislation, to get the help they need and to get

the resources so that they're not sitting at home or they're not covering up or they're not doing it.

I'll tell you that my situation was more than 23 years ago, but you sleep with the lights on for the first three nights, and then you don't tell anybody because you don't want to share that because you were afraid of the stigma that surrounded it. Are they going to take your gun, or are they going to take it away from you so you're not able to do your job? You live with it and you move on.

1650

The Chair (Mr. Stephen Crawford): Thank you for your presentation. We appreciate it.

TTCRIDERS

The Chair (Mr. Stephen Crawford): Okay. We're going to move on to our next presenter. It's the TTCriders. Welcome to the finance committee. If you could just state your name for the record, you can get right into your presentation.

Ms. Shelagh Pizey-Allen: My name is Shelagh Pizey-Allen. Thank you so much for having me here this afternoon. I'm the executive director of TTCriders. We're a membership-based organization of transit riders. Our vision is for a world-class, accessible, affordable public transit system in the city of Toronto.

I'm here to speak about Bill 100, specifically schedule 54. But more broadly, the bill in front of us cuts \$1.1 billion to Toronto's transit system over the next 10 years. These funds were promised last summer and had already been allocated to some very important items in Toronto's transit budget: state of good repair and accessibility upgrades. The TTC is in dire need of approximately \$1 billion a year just to maintain the current subway system, and this funding cut will only mean more delays and worse service.

This budget bill also tears up years of our transit planning. It sends us back to square one, and we can't start from scratch on transit plans. It will only mean more delays.

But specifically, I wanted to speak to schedule 54 in this bill. It amends the Public Transportation and Highway Improvement Act to give powers to the Minister of Transportation that will allow this government to carry out its plan to take over our transit system, the TTC.

Schedule 54 empowers the Minister of Transportation to appoint special transit inspectors to do the following without a warrant:

- to enter any premises of the city of Toronto or the Toronto Transit Commission;
- to remove for examination, testing, review or copying a transit infrastructure asset, which is very broadly defined;
- to observe any activities of an employee of the city of Toronto or the Toronto Transit Commission;
- to question a person;
- to take photographs or make other recordings;
- to access data storage;

—to require that a workplace not be disturbed for a reasonable period of time; and

—to require that any equipment, machine, device, article, process, system or procedure be carried out.

This gives broad powers to the Minister of Transportation to do a variety of activities without a warrant, and it's clearly designed to go hand in hand with Bill 107. Together, they give the Minister of Transportation total control of Toronto's transit system.

When we first read this schedule 54 in the budget bill, we thought this was somewhat odd. Why would the Minister of Transportation need to have special powers to search TTC properties or premises without a warrant and seize data, information and assets? Well, now we know why, because Bill 107 was just announced. It's because this government wants to ensure that they can prohibit the TTC from moving forward on transit plans that are already in motion and prescribe exactly what happens to Toronto's transit system: plans like the relief line that are already in motion and ready to build; plans like the Eglinton East LRT, which this government promised to build that's now off the table and off the map—it would have connected the University of Toronto Scarborough and Malvern to our system, and it is now completely off the map; and plans like the waterfront LRT, which would connect people in Etobicoke–Lakeshore and communities like Humber Bay Shores that are so desperately in need of rapid transit.

We really see this schedule as deeply concerning not just to Toronto residents, but it should be concerning to other municipalities too, because it gives special powers to the Minister of Transportation to seize data without a warrant in order to carry out plans and prescribe transit projects.

We urge this government to keep the promise to increase funding to municipalities all across Ontario. This was a promise made, and over 100 municipalities were counting on this funding to move ahead with really important upgrades—and also to keep the promise to build the Eglinton East LRT. Thank you very much for having me.

The Chair (Mr. Stephen Crawford): Thank you very much. We're going to start questions from the government side. Mr. Downey.

Mr. Doug Downey: Thank you. I'd invite comments on the \$28-billion investment. We've seen transit in Toronto—I can't remember how many elections we've talked about it, and I'm not even in Toronto; my riding is north of Toronto. But I came down on the GO train—actually I took a GO bus and a GO train and then the subway from my riding on Sunday. So I use Toronto transit. It's fairly limiting the way that we are, and if you try to drive down, certainly as you go through Eglinton and that, you have to avoid it, quite frankly.

We've got to get things going. We're investing \$28 billion, so I don't truly understand why we're getting opposition to that.

Ms. Shelagh Pizey-Allen: First of all, I think it's important to note that the \$28 billion is assuming contributions from the municipality and the federal government. Those haven't been secured.

But the new map that's been proposed is just a map. The city of Toronto's manager wrote to the Minister of Transportation with 61 questions about the plan and those haven't been answered. They're very basic questions, such as, "Who prepared and verified these cost estimates?" People don't have confidence that this is anything more than a map, but it's a map that leaves a lot out. It leaves out eastern Scarborough. It leaves out the waterfront LRT, and it brings the relief line, a plan that's almost ready to build, back to square one. It brings it back to the drawing board. That's why there is opposition to the plan.

Mr. Doug Downey: Would you have us just put everything on hold and revisit everything? We have to get shovels in the ground at some point.

In terms of the three Scarborough stops, that's significant. I can tell you our members from Scarborough—not just from our party but any of the members from Scarborough—are pretty excited about that.

Ms. Shelagh Pizey-Allen: I can speak specifically to that line, but as to your question, I think everybody agrees that we need to get moving on transit. But there is a transit plan that's in motion. The relief line has actually gone through an environmental assessment process. It is almost ready to build, and so to change plans now sends things back to the drawing board.

Specifically about the additional subway stops, the city has been very clear—and the Minister of Transportation has been very clear—that this will delay the opening of the subway until 2030. But the Scarborough RT is going to fail in 2026, and that's going to leave Scarborough transit riders on the bus for up to five years. So this plan only means more delays.

What we need to do is move ahead with the plans that are already on the books. They simply need to be funded, and that's all we need to do to move ahead with the plans. We don't need more delays by ripping up plans that are already in motion and going back to the drawing board.

Mr. Doug Downey: Thank you.

The Chair (Mr. Stephen Crawford): Any further questions? No? Okay.

We'll go to the opposition side. Mr. Arthur.

Mr. Ian Arthur: Thank you so much for coming in and for your presentation. We share a lot of your concerns, and our transportation critic right now is doing her one-hour lead on Bill 107. I'm very happy to hear that those questions were submitted, and I would love to know if and when you get an answer because, frankly, at this point it looks like the Premier took crayons to a drawing board. There's very little substance behind that.

This isn't the first time plans for transportation have been ripped up, and I find it quite shocking that this government thinks that somehow it's different because they're the ones ripping them up and proposing the new plan. Would you just talk a little bit about the history, how many starts and stops we've actually had, our inability to get things done, and if you actually do buy that this one is different and is going to go ahead and get shovels in the ground?

Ms. Shelagh Pizey-Allen: I think everyone in this room and every resident in Toronto shares the frustration

with the lack of advancement of Toronto's plans. The reality is, just thinking of one line in particular, the relief line, it has been on the books as an idea for over a hundred years.

There have been a number of changes and setbacks and resets to Toronto's transit plans. I think a classic example, one that we mention in terms of the Scarborough extension, is the Scarborough LRT network that was proposed and ready to build. It was cancelled in part thanks to Mayor Rob Ford when he was the city councillor. But there have also been projects cancelled by the provincial government: the Eglinton subway.

I think that what really needs to be the takeaway is that we can't afford to go backwards and rip up plans that are not just plans and a map, but projects that are almost ready to build. I think people who travel on the Yonge subway line urgently understand the need for a relief line. It's past capacity and it's dangerous. Especially when there's an emergency or delays, the stations become truly dangerously overcrowded. That's a project we cannot afford to go backwards on.

1700

A new line on a map is not going to move us forward. We are almost ready to build it, and we just need to proceed with funding the plans that the city of Toronto has on the books that are in motion.

Mr. Ian Arthur: Okay. Thank you.

In terms of the powers that are being awarded to the minister, this is, to say the least, an extremely confrontational approach to building transit. Would you just talk a little bit more about—those kinds of powers are shocking in and of themselves, quite frankly. Do you think there was any attempt to work with stakeholders moving forward on this to come up with a collaborative plan, or is it truly going at this with a sledgehammer?

Ms. Shelagh Pizey-Allen: I think it was quite shocking to see this amendment to the transportation act in the budget bill because the terms of reference that were agreed to by the provincial government and the city included an acknowledgement that public consultation needed to happen. In fact, the city of Toronto is planning to move forward with public consultation this month. For this amendment in schedule 54 to move forward without that consultation is quite shocking. It gives the Minister of Transportation total power to do a variety of things without a warrant. It really works hand in hand with Bill 107, which will allow the province to take control of a whole variety of assets of the TTC—it's a very broad definition—without compensation; literally taking away infrastructure that residents in Toronto have paid for at the fare box and through property taxes without any compensation.

The Chair (Mr. Stephen Crawford): One minute.

Ms. Shelagh Pizey-Allen: This is a huge shift, and very different than what has been agreed to, I think, by the city of Toronto and the province.

Mr. Ian Arthur: Who stands to benefit?

Ms. Shelagh Pizey-Allen: The Minister of Transportation has stated very clearly that the biggest beneficiaries

will be developers; that one of the intentions behind this move is to sell off public lands to developers. We think that transit-oriented development is great. We should be making sure we do planning in concert with transit plans so that we live close to where transit is, but this is very different. This is about selling off lands that belong to the city of Toronto, to the benefit of private developers.

One of our questions is, is this why the Eglinton East has been left off the map? Public transit is a public good. We need to invest in it. We need to build it where it's needed the most, not where developers stand to make the most profit. In underserved neighbourhoods like eastern Scarborough and Malvern, their line has been cancelled.

The Chair (Mr. Stephen Crawford): Thank you. I appreciate your presentation.

Ms. Shelagh Pizey-Allen: Thank you.

DESJARDINS

The Chair (Mr. Stephen Crawford): We'll move on to our next presenter, Desjardins.

Good afternoon, and welcome to the finance committee. If you could just state your name for the record, you can get right into your presentation.

Mr. Sam Palmerio: Good afternoon. My name is Sam Palmerio, government relations manager at Desjardins. It's my pleasure to share our comments related to Bill 100.

Desjardins Group is the leading co-operative financial group in Canada, serving over seven million members and clients. We provide Canadians with a wide range of financial services, including banking through our credit unions, wealth management, life and health insurance, and home and auto insurance.

When we visited with you on January 15 at the pre-budget consultations, we encouraged efforts to improve the auto insurance system for drivers and to modernize the Credit Unions and Caisses Populaires Act. We were glad to see that this budget addresses both.

If designed and implemented effectively, this budget's Blueprint for Ontario's Auto Insurance System can increase competition, choice and affordability for consumers. The importance of insurance to our economy should not be underestimated. The availability of affordable insurance coverage allows people and organizations to take risks and grow, which ultimately creates greater economic value. The blueprint includes the goal of lowering costs and fighting fraud. We support the plan's objectives to reduce the regulatory burden on treatment providers, reduce the level of fraud and lower treatment fees for auto insurance consumers.

Increasing the credibility and accountability of the current medical assessment process will decrease the cost of claim benefit disputes and strengthen consumer trust. Independent studies for government suggest that the annual cost of fraud in the auto insurance system is \$1.6 billion. We agree that the newly introduced Serious Fraud Office can assist by prosecuting leaders of organized fraud rings. We also believe that enabling enhanced data analytics can reduce fraud.

The blueprint calls for increasing accessibility and affordability. We are encouraged by the desire to simplify and modernize the forms and the process to submit an accident benefit claim. It makes things easier for people who are injured in vehicle collisions. Allowing insurers to offer more choices to consumers so that they can better tailor their coverage to their needs and save money is welcomed.

This plan also paves the way for finally allowing auto insurance consumers to benefit from electronic communications that are allowed in other industries. For example, with these changes, consumers can choose to receive their proof of auto insurance in an electronic versus a paper format, and can choose to go entirely paperless when receiving their auto insurance provider's communications.

The blueprint calls for a driver care plan, a "care not cash" default clause that will focus claim payments of reimbursing treatments completed to encourage better health outcomes and minimize legal fee costs related to the current cash settlement claim resolution approach.

Speaking of better health outcomes, they are to be achieved by an improved early treatment system for common injuries, including mental health treatment. The most severely injured who are assessed as having catastrophic injuries will see their accident benefit coverage levels increase from \$1 million to \$2 million. We are supportive of these changes.

The blueprint calls for increased competition. The government intends to work with the new Financial Services Regulatory Authority to support the innovative business models, pricing structures and technologies. For example, if we begin to allow insurers to allow more innovative usage-based insurance pricing programs, it will provide consumers with pay-when-you-use flexibility as opposed to having to commit to in advance for an annual policy and price.

As an added benefit, drivers who participate in these telematics programs also report that the driving feedback provided increases their awareness of safe driving habits and positively influences their driving behaviour, creating safer roads.

The budget also seeks to modernize the Credit Unions and Caisses Populaires Act, 1994. We see this as an opportunity to create a modern and innovative legal framework that will allow credit unions to remain relevant, sustainable and competitive with banks into the future. As part of this review, we hope that the government will consider the opportunity to offer members insurance products, as many credit unions are in smaller and more remote communities that are underserved by financial services firms, and the recognition of capital adequacy based on Basel III standards available to credit unions through formal agreements with co-operatives in other jurisdictions.

Thank you again for the opportunity to share our thoughts.

The Vice-Chair (Mr. Jeremy Roberts): Thank you. We'll start with five minutes of questioning on the opposition side. Ms. Shaw.

Ms. Sandy Shaw: You assumed?

The Vice-Chair (Mr. Jeremy Roberts): You looked like you were ready to dive in.

Ms. Sandy Shaw: I was leaning in.

Thank you for your presentation. We have heard a lot from the credit union sector and from insurance people talking about the changes to auto insurance. I just have a couple of question left. We heard that insurers will now possibly be able to use people's credit scores to assess risk. Do you know anything about that?

Mr. Sam Palmerio: Only what was in the budget statement, as we heard in the budget. Are you asking about our position on that?

Ms. Sandy Shaw: Yes, sure.

Mr. Sam Palmerio: I would say that we're supportive of allowing consumers to have choice to lower their auto insurance by allowing their insurers to review their credit history. That would be our position at this point. We're looking for more details from the government as to how that will be implemented, but it is something that has been done in property insurance for many years and, in a lot of other jurisdictions, in auto insurance to benefit consumers, to lower prices.

Ms. Sandy Shaw: But I guess the flip side of that would be concern that people would be denied access to auto insurance based on a credit score. Is that a concern?

Mr. Sam Palmerio: That would be a concern that would be addressed. Obviously, it would depend upon how the public policy positions are developed. Typically, in most jurisdictions, one is not denied access to insurance as a result of credit scores. That's something that can be resolved through public policy decisions.

Ms. Sandy Shaw: As the government moves forward, you mean? Through regulations; as they move forward with the regulations as they apply to this schedule?

Mr. Sam Palmerio: They could set parameters around how credit would be used, yes.

Ms. Sandy Shaw: And would you have any input into that that, the sector that you represent, or Desjardins? Would you be able to weigh in on that?

Mr. Sam Palmerio: We would certainly be happy to participate in that dialogue, as we've got experience in other jurisdictions with that.

Ms. Sandy Shaw: Okay, thank you. We've also been hearing about the changes to make sure that we're regulating the titles of "financial adviser" and "financial planner." Is that something that would impact Desjardins at all?

Mr. Sam Palmerio: In some cases, but it's not an area that we have a tremendous amount of insight into.

Ms. Sandy Shaw: So you wouldn't use financial planners that would be regulated by the province?

Mr. Sam Palmerio: Not to my knowledge, no.

Ms. Sandy Shaw: Okay. I want to know whether Desjardins—you're still a deposit-taking institution. You're still lending as well.

Mr. Sam Palmerio: Through our credit unions, yes.

Ms. Sandy Shaw: Through the credit unions? Could you just describe so that I understand? Because you're a little different than most credit unions in the province.

Could you just describe the ways in which Desjardins is different than some of the credit union sector in Ontario?

Mr. Sam Palmerio: That's a great question. It is somewhat unique. I will also tell you that we're in the midst of transformation. As of January 1 of next year, all of our credit unions in Ontario will be amalgamated into one credit union. But you're right, our *caisses populaires'* structure can be a little bit different. Most credit unions are very membership-based and democratic, but ours to probably a heightened level in many respects. At a high level, those are some of the aspects of it.

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Ms. Sandy Shaw: Okay. Thank you. One last question—I don't mean to put you on the spot here, but one of the values of the credit unions is they are sometimes the only financial institution in some of the far, remote, rural areas of the province. Is Desjardins in that position where they are the financial institution of choice in some communities in Ontario?

Mr. Sam Palmerio: We are. I would say we're probably best known for that in Quebec, but we are growing in Ontario. Certainly in the northern part of the province, we are servicing an underserved francophone community in the province as well.

Ms. Sandy Shaw: Aren't you named after the founder of credit unions? Wasn't his name Desjardins, or have I got this mixed up?

Mr. Sam Palmerio: I'm sorry?

Ms. Sandy Shaw: Okay. But I think that the name of the person who founded credit unions in Quebec was—

Mr. Sam Palmerio: It was Alphonse Desjardins.

Ms. Donna Skelly: Yes, that's what I thought.

Mr. Sam Palmerio: He's known as sort of the father of the credit union system in North America.

The Chair (Mr. Stephen Crawford): One minute.

Ms. Donna Skelly: Interesting. Look at you.

Laughter.

Ms. Sandy Shaw: Okay. Crying, laughing, tidbits of information.

Mr. Sam Palmerio: I didn't know this would be a trivia game. This is awesome.

Ms. Sandy Shaw: Thank you so much.

Mr. Sam Palmerio: Thank you for recognizing our history.

The Chair (Mr. Stephen Crawford): Okay. Now, we'll move over to the government side for questions, Ms. Skelly.

Ms. Donna Skelly: Thank you for your presentation. I want to get your input on the electronic communications and turning to a digital reference for ownership—or not ownership, rather—

Mr. Sam Palmerio: Proof of auto insurance?

Ms. Donna Skelly: Proof of insurance. Any concerns at all with that?

Mr. Sam Palmerio: No, not at all. It exists throughout most of North America. In essence, instead of carrying a piece of paper, which would actually look a lot like this, if props are allowed—

Ms. Sandy Shaw: Here, they are.

Mr. Sam Palmerio: Thank you.

I can, on my smartphone, carry it and not worry about leaving it at home, if presumably I'm carrying my smartphone around, and share that with law enforcement or whomever may need me to do that.

Now there are some possible practicalities that we work through—for example, law enforcement having my phone dropping and who's liable and that sort of thing, which we're working through. But by and large, everyone is very supportive of that. It has worked well. Nova Scotia actually introduced that about a year ago.

Ms. Donna Skelly: And, of course, until we see probably at least another generation, we would still allow the paper copy as well.

Mr. Sam Palmerio: My understanding is that we'll likely have—well, the paper copy I think will always be available for someone to choose. I should make that a point: That would be a customer option. We're not suggesting that it needs to be mandated across, but if people prefer that, they would have that, and if they prefer paper, I think we would continue to provide that for many years.

Ms. Donna Skelly: Hopefully, introducing digitization of this record-keeping could possibly result in savings for consumers. Is that at all something that we could pass on to consumers?

Mr. Sam Palmerio: Well, keeping in mind that we're also investing into systems to allow that sort of technology—there is a bit of a balance piece to that, but we're doing that anyway. But what I didn't mention is that—and I'm sure you'll all experience it; it's probably a pain. But when you get your renewal through your insurance, you probably get a lot of paperwork in the mail. So we can go with what the government has planned in the budget with a paperless option. We can give customers the option to simply have that in a secured site, electronic, so I wouldn't get a big stack of paper every year, which I think would probably be a cost savings and it's environmentally positive.

In the big picture, as we're investing in IT and so forth, it's hard to say whether it's an overall offset in that, but it's the way people want to interact with insurance providers, and it's the way to go.

Ms. Donna Skelly: I have two sons, and so when we talk insurance, you're pretty much working to pay for car insurance. Is there something that we can start to do to look at helping especially young boys who still probably have the highest insurance premiums in the province? What can we do? Is there something other than what we're proposing now? Is there something else that we can do to perhaps tackle that?

Mr. Sam Palmerio: That's a multi-faceted question. One of the things I did mention was usage-based insurance. Essentially, with telematics, it is evaluating my actual driving behaviours as the driver of the calculation of premiums.

Ms. Donna Skelly: Is that on the car?

Mr. Sam Palmerio: Well, it can happen a number of different ways, but typically—for example, with Desjardins, I would download it. I have downloaded it on

my Desjardins app. It's on my smartphone that I take with me in my vehicle. It measures my speed, my braking ability, my turning and so forth and creates a score and offers a discount to me. So if I am in the greater Toronto area or I am a young male driver and there are predictive factors that would suggest that I would be at a higher risk for an insurance claim and therefore my premiums are higher, a great way to mitigate that is through responsible driving through these telematics approaches.

Ms. Donna Skelly: And are insurance companies recognizing them?

Mr. Sam Palmerio: Yes, they exist already. My understanding and our hope is—

The Chair (Mr. Stephen Crawford): One minute.

Mr. Sam Palmerio: —that, with new rules coming forward, there would be greater opportunity for us to have even more enhanced discounts and enhanced programs that allow people, essentially, to use and get insurance based on how they use it versus, say, setting up an annual policy term and we try to determine what your risk will be, and that you can use it on more of a pay-as-you-go basis. This would be particularly helpful to people with higher insurance rates. It's certainly something we're always talking about with our customers as a way to mitigate that.

Then, of course, there's having a strong driving record and there's education. We've talked about having insurance education as part of getting a driver's licence. It should be a component of that learning process—that I understand what insurance is about and why I might need it and the things that I can do.

Ms. Donna Skelly: Thank you.

The Chair (Mr. Stephen Crawford): Okay. Thank you very much. We appreciate your time.

Mr. Sam Palmerio: Thank you.

ASSOCIATION DES CONSEILS SCOLAIRES DES ÉCOLES PUBLIQUES DE L'ONTARIO

The Chair (Mr. Stephen Crawford): We'll call up our next group; it's ACÉPO.

Welcome to the finance committee. If you could just state your names for the record, you can proceed with your presentation.

M. Denis Chartrand: Merci. Je suis Denis Chartrand, président de l'Association des conseils scolaires des écoles publiques de l'Ontario. L'ACÉPO représente les quatre conseils scolaires publics de langue française de l'Ontario. Son mandat consiste à appuyer ses membres afin d'assurer la vitalité de notre système d'éducation.

Les 129 écoles publiques de langue française de l'Ontario sont inclusives et offrent une éducation de haute qualité. Avec une croissance impressionnante de 73 % depuis sa création il y a 20 ans par un parti conservateur, le système d'éducation publique de langue française connaît, de loin, la plus forte croissance du nombre d'élèves de la province.

Notre système répond parfaitement aux besoins d'une population multiculturelle vivant dans une société moderne, comme en font foi les résultats académiques

enviables de nos élèves. Par exemple, en mathématiques, 80 % de nos élèves de sixième année ont atteint ou dépassé la norme provinciale. Aussi, nos taux de diplomation sont les plus haut de la province, à 88 %. Le succès de l'éducation publique de langue française est d'autant plus remarquable que seuls quatre conseils scolaires couvrent l'ensemble de la province de l'Ontario, ce qui fait de notre système le plus efficace au niveau de l'utilisation des ressources que vous nous donnez.

Au nom de l'ACÉPO, j'aimerais vous présenter notre recommandation principale, soit celle de prendre en considération les spécificités du système d'éducation publique francophone lorsque le gouvernement prend des décisions budgétaires touchant l'éducation, bien sûr, et lorsque le gouvernement les met en oeuvre, parce que, vous savez, les décisions prises pour la majorité peuvent avoir des effets négatifs sur la minorité. C'est pourquoi il est primordial pour le gouvernement de bien comprendre le fonctionnement des écoles de langue française et de ne pas oublier leur double vocation : celle, évidemment, de l'éducation, mais aussi celle de la transmission de la langue et de la culture française.

Parlons de la taille des classes. La hausse du nombre d'élèves par classe proposée met à risque nos accomplissements. Si le nombre d'enseignants diminue, c'est la pérennité de nos écoles qui est en danger. C'est que nos quatre conseils scolaires sont composés de petites—à l'occasion, de très petites—écoles ou moyennes écoles, éparpillées sur un vaste territoire. Ils ne peuvent pas faire des économies d'échelle et, contrairement aux conseils anglais, qui ont beaucoup d'élèves dans un territoire plus petit, on n'aura pas la capacité de créer des classes de 40 élèves dans une grande école pour permettre aux petites écoles de maintenir le nombre d'enseignants nécessaire pour offrir une gamme de cours diversifiée.

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Selon nos estimations, les changements proposés entraîneront la perte d'environ 21 % de notre personnel enseignant au secondaire. Cette diminution réduira les choix d'options de cours, entraînant la migration de nos élèves vers le système d'éducation anglophone, de nombreuses fermetures d'écoles francophones à travers la province, et une hausse de l'assimilation des jeunes francophones.

Nous demandons donc aux membres du comité de tenir compte de cette menace bien réelle dans leurs délibérations.

The Chair (Mr. Stephen Crawford): One minute.

M. Denis Chartrand: Ce défi de taille, celui de notre forte croissance, par le fait que notre système est en pleine expansion—l'ACÉPO est fière d'être le seul système d'éducation ontarien dont tous les conseils scolaires sont en croissance. En 2019, nous allons ouvrir sept écoles. On vous demande d'assurer que les décisions budgétaires ne soient pas un frein à cette expansion.

Parlons de pénurie d'enseignants : les écoles de langue française de l'Ontario ont de la difficulté à trouver du personnel qualifié. Ce manque est encore accentué par le succès des programmes d'immersion dans les écoles anglophones. Presque 110 000 élèves sont touchés par le

manque de personnel qualifié. L'insécurité créée par certaines décisions budgétaires pourrait avoir un effet négatif sur la mise en oeuvre de solutions pour contrer cette pénurie.

En conclusion, nous voulons vous remercier, membres du comité, de nous avoir accordé ce temps. Nous réitérons notre volonté de collaborer avec le gouvernement pour ensemble trouver des solutions. Je termine en vous invitant tous le 29 mai prochain à notre journée de sensibilisation.

The Chair (Mr. Stephen Crawford): Thank you very much. We're going to start questions with the government side. Mr. Roberts.

M. Jeremy Roberts: Merci, monsieur Chartrand et mademoiselle Girard. Je m'excuse en avance pour mon français. Un de mes plus grands regrets dans ma vie c'est que j'ai pris un programme d'immersion, et je pense que j'aurais été mieux servi par un programme francophone à une école publique dans votre système. Mais c'est trop tard maintenant.

M. Denis Chartrand: Vous êtes toujours les bienvenus.

M. Jeremy Roberts: Merci beaucoup.

Aussi, j'ai un projet très intéressant dans ma circonscription maintenant—

M. Denis Chartrand: La Maison de la francophonie.

M. Jeremy Roberts: Oui, exactement. Donc, je vais avoir la chance d'avoir une réunion avec eux ce vendredi. J'espère que ça va être un très bon projet pour—

M. Denis Chartrand: Le projet avance très bien, monsieur Roberts, je vous l'assure.

M. Jeremy Roberts: Excellent. C'est fantastique.

J'ai deux questions pour toi. Une, quand j'ai eu la chance d'avoir une réunion avec le Conseil des écoles publiques de l'Est de l'Ontario, ils m'ont dit cette statistique que vous avez énumérée : que les niveaux en mathématiques dans les écoles publiques francophones sont beaucoup mieux que dans les autres conseils. Donc, je suis curieux : est-ce qu'il y a des leçons que votre conseil pourrait donner aux autres conseils pour améliorer leurs niveaux dans les mathématiques?

M. Denis Chartrand: Une chose que je ne ferai pas, c'est de donner des conseils aux autres systèmes d'éducation. Mais je pense que le fait d'être petit a aussi un avantage au niveau de ce qu'on peut faire dans les salles de classe. Les élèves ont une éducation très personnalisée parce qu'ils sont moins dans la classe—les écoles sont plus petites—et aussi par le fait que, comme je l'ai mentionné, notre deuxième mandat, celui de protéger et promouvoir la culture française, fait de nos écoles des centres communautaires. Ce n'est pas juste une école où on va et on quitte; toute la communauté francophone s'y rencontre. Donc, il y a un élément communautaire de bien vouloir tous participer à l'éducation de nos jeunes.

M. Jeremy Roberts: Merci beaucoup. Ma deuxième question est à propos de la mesure pour avoir plus de cours en ligne pour les étudiants. Moi, je pense que cela, c'est un moyen raisonnable pour trouver des économies dans notre système d'éducation, mais je sais qu'il y aura des défis, particulièrement pour les élèves francophones. Donc, je voulais vous demander quelles sortes de

ressources est-ce que tu prévois avoir besoin pour assurer cette initiative d'avoir plus de cours en ligne pour les élèves dans le système public français en Ontario?

M. Denis Chartrand: Merci pour la question. Parce que nous avons des petites écoles éparpillées partout dans le nord de l'Ontario ou dans l'est de l'Ontario ou dans le sud de l'Ontario, nous avons déjà mis, il y a environ 10 ou 12 ans, un système qui s'appelle le CAVLFO. C'est un système d'enseignement en ligne, parce que dans plusieurs petites localités, il n'y a pas d'enseignants de mathématiques, disons, ou de géographie. Alors, il y a déjà un système en ligne qui fonctionne. Maintenant, ce n'est pas le choix des élèves de prendre des cours en ligne. Les élèves aiment mieux avoir un professeur en avant d'eux.

The Chair (Mr. Stephen Crawford): One minute.

M. Denis Chartrand: Mais c'est un système qui fonctionne et, afin de l'agrandir, bien, ça nous prendrait plus de ressources.

Merci pour les questions, monsieur Roberts.

M. Jeremy Roberts: Je vous remercie d'être ici aujourd'hui.

M. Denis Chartrand: Je vous revois à Ottawa.

M. Jeremy Roberts: Excellent. Fantastique.

The Chair (Mr. Stephen Crawford): Any further questions?

M. Jeremy Roberts: J'ai tout fini. That's it for me.

The Chair (Mr. Stephen Crawford): Okay. We'll go to the opposition side. Ms. Shaw?

M^{me} Sandy Shaw: Merci beaucoup. Je peux comprendre presque tout ce que vous avez dit, mais je ne peux pas parler français.

M. Denis Chartrand: Pas de problème.

M^{me} Sandy Shaw: Après ce moment, anglais.

M. Denis Chartrand: Absolument.

Ms. Sandy Shaw: We have many members of our caucus who are Franco-Ontarians from northern parts of Ontario. So we understand very clearly some of the challenges that Franco-Ontarians face in all of Ontario, but particularly in northern and rural communities.

Before I get to ask you a question specifically about the challenges that you're facing in schools—we were quite disturbed by this government getting rid of the French-language commissioner. Could you just say, did that have any reaction or any impact on how you see being able to continue to provide for your students?

Mr. Denis Chartrand: Yes. On a day-to-day basis, it does not have an effect, but the reaction was, obviously, very strong. We believe that the French-language commissioner should be there. That was our position, and we mentioned it to the Minister of Education when we met her and the Minister of Francophone Affairs. So, yes, there was a reaction. I'm sure you've—

Ms. Sandy Shaw: Certainly.

Mr. Denis Chartrand: All across the province, there was a reaction. Our students felt very strongly about that. They also felt—comment dis-tu ça, l'autre?

Interjection.

Mr. Denis Chartrand: Also, the child advocate—

Ms. Sandy Shaw: Yes. That was a terrible decision.

Mr. Denis Chartrand: Because, in one fell swoop, we and our students lost two people—

Ms. Sandy Shaw: Two advocates for them.

Mr. Denis Chartrand: —who were advocates for them.

Ms. Sandy Shaw: Yes, I do think that was a terrible decision. We mention it quite regularly.

The second decision that I think impacted—and thank you for telling me and making it clear that the child and youth advocate also had an impact for kids in school, particularly vulnerable kids in minority populations, like you described.

Mr. Denis Chartrand: Absolutely.

Ms. Sandy Shaw: The second decision that we were opposed to, which was a surprise and probably a shock, was cancelling the French-language university. My sense is that a lot of your students were looking forward to continuing their studies in their own official language of Canada. How was that received by your students and what are the options for them now?

Mr. Denis Chartrand: The students, specifically of southern Ontario and southwestern Ontario, were shocked. Studies show that, presently, there are about 225,000 francophones in eastern Ontario and 180,000 in central-southwest Ontario and Toronto, but by 2025, it will have changed; there will be more francophones in southern Ontario than there will be in eastern Ontario.

Ms. Sandy Shaw: Really?

Mr. Denis Chartrand: All these young people will have no university close by to go to. Of course, there's Glendon College, but they won't have their own university.

Ms. Sandy Shaw: I should have said “Vraiment?” because I didn't know that. That's a remarkable statistic, and we should all know that as we prepare for not just education in French but as we prepare for all the kinds of other services that Franco-Ontarians deserve.

You mentioned specifically the fact that the changes in increased class sizes will be a burden because you do not have the ability to have economies of scale.

M. Denis Chartrand: Exactly.

Ms. Sandy Shaw: Can you just talk very specifically about some of those impacts that you're seeing directly right now in your schools?

M. Denis Chartrand: Right now, no, but we're talking about next year. Right now, school principals are planning for next year's workload for teachers etc., and what they're planning on is 28 students. If you're in—

The Chair (Mr. Stephen Crawford): One minute.

M. Denis Chartrand: —a very small school where—we have one school in northern Ontario that has 26 students. That's a high school, not one class—a whole high school. So we can't take more teachers out of there; there are only four teachers.

Ms. Sandy Shaw: Yes, you're done. You're done at that point.

Then the other thing we hear about—and it's rural and northern schools that are small, not just schools that are in your association. They have kids who are already spending hours a day going on buses to other communities to go to

school. To me, if they're spending two hours a day, three hours a day on a bus, that's another hit that they're taking to the quality of their education, never mind the wisdom of putting kids on highways when they don't need to be.

M. Denis Chartrand: Absolutely, and thank you for saying that. I'm here representing French public education, but it's not just French public education; it is any English-language or French-language board that has few students on a very large territory. We will all be affected.

Ms. Sandy Shaw: Thank you very much for your presentation. Merci beaucoup pour votre présentation.

The Chair (Mr. Stephen Crawford): Thank you very much for your presentation.

M. Denis Chartrand: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Merci.

The Chair (Mr. Stephen Crawford): Okay. We're a little ahead of schedule and we're waiting for our next group, so we're going to just take a five-minute recess.

The committee recessed from 1732 to 1741.

The Chair (Mr. Stephen Crawford): Good afternoon. Welcome to the finance committee.

SOCIÉTÉ ÉCONOMIQUE DE L'ONTARIO

The Chair (Mr. Stephen Crawford): We're just going to have our last presentation right now. I'll invite the Société Économique de l'Ontario to come up and present. You have five minutes to present, and then we'll go to questions. If you could just state your names for the record, and you can get right into your presentation.

Mr. Denis Laframboise: Pardon?

The Chair (Mr. Stephen Crawford): Just state your names for the record, and you can get right into your presentation.

M. Denis Laframboise: Okay. Hi, there. Thank you very much for inviting us to your committee. My name is Denis Laframboise. I'm president of the Société Économique de l'Ontario. I'll do the presentation in French, and Luc will do it in English.

La Société Économique de l'Ontario travaille en collaboration avec les entreprises et les entrepreneurs de l'Ontario au niveau du développement économique. Nous sommes ici aujourd'hui en relation avec nos entreprises, les caisses populaires de l'Ontario. Nous avons été conviés pour discuter de la loi 100, spécialement l'annexe 16 qui est la Loi de 1994 sur les caisses populaires et les credit unions.

J'aimerais juste mentionner que quand la loi de 1994 avait été changée, j'étais à la Fédération des caisses populaires. J'avais travaillé sur le projet de loi, sur le comité des caisses populaires, qui a fait une présentation au ministère à ce moment-là.

Je demanderais à Luc de parler des projets de la Société Économique de l'Ontario. Puis, par la suite, on pourrait répondre à vos questions. Ça va?

Mr. Luc Morin: Good evening. My name is Luc Morin. I'm the executive director of la Société Économique de l'Ontario. Translated, that would be the Ontario economic society.

As my president was stating, the last time that the caisses populaires and credit unions law was reviewed, he was still kicking around and he was a member of the caisses populaires and credit unions back then in 1994 and also part of the committee to review that particular law.

What I would like to speak to you about are the advantages of putting forward Bill 100 for caisses populaires. In our type of work, economic development throughout all of Ontario for francophones and bilingual people—and we are talking from Thunder Bay to Windsor and from London to Hawkesbury. We kick-start new enterprises. With this change of law, it will make it much easier for us to deal with les caisses populaires and to have microloans and that sort of thing.

We are presently negotiating with les caisses populaires for a microloan project, which I have presented to your government at this time and am meeting again with them at the end of the month. We have a new entrepreneurship committee, a women's committee, where we have two ladies with doctorates in economy on that particular committee. This will come in very handy for them too as we are negotiating with a federal think tank to put some new entrepreneurship programs forward for these ladies.

We are also working very closely with big enterprises that are looking at layoffs, and we're dealing with the unions to see the qualified employees that would want to convert into—

The Chair (Mr. Stephen Crawford): One minute.

Mr. Luc Morin:—entrepreneurships. Again, these are all advantages that we're seeing with the change in this particular bill.

Once again, as mentioned, we thank you very much for having us here today. We're wishing we had a lot more time because we have a lot of beautiful stories to share with you.

The Chair (Mr. Stephen Crawford): Okay. I appreciate that. We'll start questions from the opposition side. Ms. Shaw?

Ms. Sandy Shaw: We'll get right into this. I just want to say that when I was with the credit union sector, I'm proud to say that I helped create—it pretty much was my baby—a microloan program specifically to address low-income women in Hamilton who had small-business ideas. It was a small seed grant that helped them to get ideas off the ground. We vetted their ideas. It also helped them to establish a credit rating so that they could build on that. We were able to partner with a local foundation who provided us a small amount of money so that—prior loan loss provision. We did have to make some changes to our lending policy, but it was quite clear for us to scale that up. There were concerns with some of the regulations, some of the way the caisses populaires act was. Can you tell me, very specifically, some of your beautiful stories about your microloan program and what specifically around scaling up microloans for entrepreneurs you would like to see that is or is not in the current changes?

Mr. Luc Morin: The microloan program is a pilot project. It was initiated four years ago through the social enterprise sector, and that particular program does not

exist anymore. We have partnered with CCO, Conseil de la coopération de l'Ontario. We have also approached la caisse populaire Desjardins and also la caisse populaire Alliance, who service northern Ontario.

We want to create a partnership, and this partnership will open the door for this new microloan program. We are in discussion as well with the francophone ministry to see how we can also partner with the government. Previously the program had micro-grants, accompanied by microloans, and it was up to \$40,000 of microloan accompanied by 40% in micro-grants, which was a kick-start of \$56,000, which helped a great deal. We were able to put forward over 400 jobs with an investment of \$750,000 from the government.

Ms. Sandy Shaw: I think that on both sides of the table we should be listening to this because I think that this kind of financing for investment is very niche, but it really fills a vacuum that exists in northern Ontario or other communities that are dealing with problems of low income, but there really is a vacuum there, is what I'm trying to say, in terms of lending. We really need to be hearing more ideas about micro-lending as part of the continuum to support entrepreneurs in Ontario.

Mr. Denis Laframboise: Yes, I agree with you. There's a vacuum there. Not all financial institutions will lend to women.

Ms. Sandy Shaw: No.

Mr. Denis Laframboise: We heard a lot of ladies telling us they went to the bank. They couldn't get any lending from the bank. But I've been working in the credit union sector and caisses populaires for 40 years, and credit unions and caisses populaires were the first to do micro-lending to women.

Ms. Sandy Shaw: That's right, in their own name.

Mr. Denis Laframboise: They were the first to do micro-lending, and this is what we're supporting. This is what we're aiming at doing with the caisses populaires and the credit—we're talking about caisses populaires, but we'll do it with the credit unions too.

Ms. Sandy Shaw: Yes. I don't know how much time we have, but another option—I mean, the credit unions and the co-operatives are sort of cousins, really, if you will, and so sometimes the business structure of a co-operative makes it easier to lend because of the way it's financed and the share of capital and so forth. Do you have any ideas that you could talk about—

The Chair (Mr. Stephen Crawford): One minute.

Ms. Sandy Shaw: Yes—how micro-lending and the co-operative, as a business structure, could help fill this vacuum?

Mr. Luc Morin: Yes, most definitely. I come from a co-operative world as well. I spent 10 years as the executive director of Conseil de la coopération de l'Ontario, CCO, and they are our primary partner in this particular project. On the SAO side, we will take care of primarily your business-type ventures and the Conseil de la coopération will take care of the co-operative business model.

Ms. Sandy Shaw: Yes. It's very fascinating. I think it's an untapped resource. When people talk about struggles that they have with raising capital or providing services, I always say, "What you want is a co-operative; you just don't know it." So I think that's the case here.

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Mr. Denis Laframboise: Yes. We're working on a provincial program right now, and maybe we'll extend that nationally eventually. That's what we're thinking—

Ms. Sandy Shaw: Fantastic.

The Chair (Mr. Stephen Crawford): Okay. Thank you very much. We're now going to go to the government side for questions. Mr. Roberts?

M. Jeremy Roberts: Excellent. Merci beaucoup d'être ici. Vous êtes notre dernière présentation après nos deux journées. Il faut garder le meilleur pour la fin, comme on dit.

M. Denis Laframboise: Merci.

M. Luc Morin: Merci.

M. Jeremy Roberts: J'ai deux questions pour vous. La première est à propos d'un sujet dont on avait déjà discuté. Nous avons eu une présentation plus tôt aujourd'hui de l'Association canadienne des coopératives financières. Je leur ai demandé quelques idées sur ce que nous pouvons faire pour avoir une situation plus équitable entre les banques et les coopératives financières ou les caisses populaires, parce qu'on fait la revue de la législation, la loi sur les caisses populaires. Donc, quelles sortes d'idées est-ce que vos membres ont pour essayer d'avoir un terrain plus équitable?

M. Denis Laframboise: Je pense qu'il faudrait peut-être que les banques commencent à penser qu'il existe d'autre modèles à ce moment-là. Les banques ont des modèles, elles ont des politiques, puis des politiques très rigides comparativement aux « credit unions » ou aux caisses populaires, où nos politiques sont plus souples. On peut davantage fonctionner à l'intérieur des organisations, à l'intérieur de la communauté, mais les banques, elles, sont vraiment rigides au niveau de leurs politiques. C'est ça que les dames nous disent : « On va aux banques, on veut emprunter, mais on ne peut pas emprunter parce qu'on est une dame et on n'a pas nécessairement le crédit. » Il faudrait peut-être que les banques regardent notre modèle à ce moment-là, s'inspirent de notre modèle pour pouvoir l'étendre à toutes les autres institutions financières.

M. Luc Morin: Si je peux ajouter à ceci : je reviens de l'assemblée générale annuelle de la caisse Alliance dans le nord de l'Ontario, et on parle du nord de l'Ontario où ils ont un chiffre d'affaires de 1,7 milliard de dollars, ce qui n'est pas énorme—il est quand même impressionnant dans le nord de l'Ontario. Dans les « credit unions » et caisses populaires, ils ont un système de ristournes. Pour la caisse Alliance, ils ont eu 5 millions de dollars de ristournes à leurs membres. En plus, ils ont réinvesti 1 million de dollars pour des associations et pour des projets communautaires. C'est un peu la différence qu'on voit entre les caisses populaires et les banques traditionnelles. Les caisses populaires sont gouvernées par leurs membres;

les banques traditionnelles sont gouvernées par un conseil d'administration. Alors, on peut presque dire que les caisses populaires sont là pour et avec le peuple.

M. Jeremy Roberts: Excellent. L'autre question que j'ai pour vous : notre gouvernement essaye d'avoir des programmes dans les écoles et partout pour améliorer la compréhension financière, « financial literacy » comme on dit en anglais. Je sais qu'au Québec les caisses populaires ont joué un rôle historique dans les études financières et ont eu des chances de rentrer dans les écoles et de faire des petits programmes pour les étudiants. Est-ce que ceci est un rôle que vous voyez que vos membres pourraient jouer ici pour assurer que le secteur privé peut assister, particulièrement, dans les communautés francophones en Ontario?

M. Denis Laframboise: Juste pour vous dire que quand j'ai commencé avec les caisses populaires, on avait la Caisse école, où l'enfant amenait son 10 sous ou ses 20 sous, peu importe. On a eu la Caisse scolaire.

The Chair (Mr. Stephen Crawford): One minute.

M. Denis Laframboise: Ce sont des programmes qui ont déjà existé, mais avec les changements qui sont survenus à la loi et puis la question de la capitalisation et tout ça, ces programmes-là ont été abandonnés. Mais sûrement, il y a des programmes qu'on pourrait adopter, puis Luc va vous en parler. On veut adopter, nous, un programme au niveau des écoles du primaire et du

secondaire pour l'entrepreneuriat aussi, mais la question d'économies, c'est une chose qu'on veut regarder. Luc?

M. Luc Morin: Je pourrais ajouter qu'effectivement c'est un très beau programme qui a débuté, il y a quatre années passées, au Québec. Deux ans passés, lorsque j'étais au conseil d'administration du Conseil de la coopération de l'Ontario, nous avons signé une entente avec Desjardins pour livrer ce même programme dans le nord de l'Ontario. Alors, ça fait deux ans que le programme est livré dans le nord de l'Ontario avec succès. Cette année, le Conseil de la coopération est en négociations pour livrer ce même programme ici à Toronto.

The Chair (Mr. Stephen Crawford): Thank you very much. Our time has expired.

M. Jeremy Roberts: Et merci beaucoup.

The Chair (Mr. Stephen Crawford): We appreciate your presentation.

We've now concluded today's presentations. As a reminder, the deadline to file amendments to the bill with the Clerk of the Committee is 10 a.m. on Friday, May 10, 2019. Amendments must be filed in hard copy. The committee will meet for clause-by-clause consideration of the bill at 9 a.m. on Monday, May 13, in committee room 151.

This meeting is now adjourned.

The committee adjourned at 1756.

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