

Legislative  
Assembly  
of Ontario



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(Hansard)**

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Lundi  
15 avril 2019

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Clerk: Todd Decker

Président : L'honorable Ted Arnott  
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LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY  
OF ONTARIO

Monday 15 April 2019

ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE  
DE L'ONTARIO

Lundi 15 avril 2019

*The House met at 1030.*

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

INTRODUCTION OF VISITORS

**Ms. Judith Monteith-Farrell:** I would like to welcome two women from my riding here today: Audrey Debruyne, who will receive l'Ordre de la Pléiade today, and Jennifer Nielsen, who is attending the women's forum at Queen's Park.

**Mr. Sam Oosterhoff:** I have the great privilege of welcoming today to the Legislature a constituent of mine, Courtney Aucoin, who is here today with the Remarkable Assembly and is a very good friend. Welcome to the Legislature.

**Ms. Teresa J. Armstrong:** This morning I had the pleasure of meeting four strong women that are here today along with the other 84 women from the Remarkable Assembly women's forum. I would like to introduce Chloe Craig, Sandra Holmberg, Krysta-lee Woodcock and Paige Paton. Welcome to the Legislature.

**Hon. Lisa M. Thompson:** It's very much a pleasure to welcome Emma Bartz here. She's participating in the Remarkable Assembly this year. Emma hails from Goderich, Ontario, in Huron-Bruce.

**Mr. Percy Hatfield:** Good morning. I'd like to recognize Natasha Elizabeth Feghali from Windsor. She's an educator, a journalist and a poet who is here for the remarkable women's forum. Welcome to your provincial Parliament, Natasha.

**M<sup>me</sup> Marie-France Lalonde:** Il me fait un immense plaisir, moi aussi, d'accueillir Angelica Kalubiaka, qui est ici pour représenter la circonscription d'Orléans et qui est aussi sur le conseil provincial d'Orléans. Merci et bienvenue à Queen's Park.

**Ms. Lindsey Park:** I'd like to welcome to the Legislature Hannah Jensen, who's from my riding of Durham and participating in the 2019 women's forum, A Remarkable Assembly. Enjoy your day, Hannah.

**Ms. Andrea Horwath:** I'm very proud to welcome Madi Fuller and Bianca Caramento, two women from Hamilton Centre who are here for the Remarkable Assembly women's forum. And congratulations to you, Speaker. This morning showed that you put together a fantastic event.

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

Member for Mississauga—Erin Mills.

**Mr. Sheref Sabawy:** I would like to welcome Denis Wills, sales and channel director at Zebra Technologies, who is here with us in the gallery, as well as Mai Nguyen, senior consultant. Welcome to the people's House.

**Ms. Christine Hogarth:** It is my pleasure to introduce my husband, Paul Demers, who is here today. If it wasn't for him I wouldn't have dinner every night. He's a strong man, and he takes care of our house, so thank you very much.

**Mr. Chris Glover:** It's my pleasure to welcome Katie Zeppieri, one of the many remarkable women in the House today.

**Mr. Robert Bailey:** I would like to introduce two young women from my riding of Sarnia-Lambton, Lauren Armstrong and Elleke Belet, here for the Remarkable Assembly of women forum.

**Ms. Catherine Fife:** I'm pleased to welcome Fiqir Worku from the riding of Waterloo for the remarkable women assembly. Welcome to Queen's Park.

**M<sup>me</sup> Jill Dunlop:** J'ai l'honneur de vous présenter un résident extraordinaire de Simcoe-Nord, qui est un récipiendaire de l'Ordre de la Pléiade grâce à ses contributions à la communauté franco-ontarienne. Je vous présente M. Martin Lalonde.

**Ms. Andrea Khanjin:** I wanted to welcome all of the students here from Goodfellow Public School as well as the teachers and all of the volunteers.

**Ms. Peggy Sattler:** I am delighted to welcome four remarkable women from London West, who are here for the Remarkable Assembly: Sam Puchala, Skylar Franke, Tara Webber and Vanessa Dolishny. Welcome to Queen's Park.

**Ms. Natalia Kusendova:** I'd like to welcome this morning Paige Paton, who is participating in the Remarkable Assembly and who will be shadowing me tomorrow to learn more about what a day in the life of a female parliamentarian looks like. Thank you, and welcome.

**Mr. Michael Mantha:** I want to welcome Sandra Holmberg from Echo Bay, with the women's remarkable forum.

**Hon. Monte McNaughton:** I'm proud to welcome my sister-in-law to Queen's Park today, Emma Bartz, who resides in the riding of Huron-Bruce. Welcome to Queen's Park.

**Mr. Roman Baber:** I'm happy to welcome the Diller teens. This is a leadership training program organized by the UJA for high school students. Diller empowers teens to be active, effective leaders with a strong Jewish identity and respect for pluralism. Diller teens, welcome to Queen's Park.

**Hon. Todd Smith:** I'd like to welcome Resi Walt, who is from Bay of Quinte, seated right behind me in the public gallery. She's here for the Remarkable Assembly as well. Welcome, Resi.

**The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott):** Minister of Infrastructure, one more time.

**Hon. Monte McNaughton:** Thank you again, Mr. Speaker. I'd like to welcome Patricia Nagle, who is here for the Remarkable Assembly. She's from the riding of Lambton-Kent-Middlesex. Welcome.

**Mr. Taras Natyshak:** I'd like to welcome Natasha Feghali from Windsor and Elleke Belet from Sarnia to the remarkable women's forum here today at Queen's Park.

**Mr. Stephen Lecce:** I'd like to welcome Eunice Kays and Deborah Nimoh, who are with us today as part of the women's forum, Remarkable Assembly. Welcome to the people's House.

**The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott):** I know that many of them have already been individually introduced, but on behalf of the Legislature, I, too, wish to welcome all of the young women who are here from across the province for the first women's forum, A Remarkable Assembly. Once again, welcome to the Ontario Legislature. We're delighted to have you here today.

## ORAL QUESTIONS

### EDUCATION FUNDING

**Ms. Andrea Horwath:** Speaker, my first question is to the Premier. Parents and students looking for a vision for education in last week's budget were sorely disappointed. While the Premier focused on the colour of licence plates and easy access to booze, Ontario's children got cuts in the classroom. The chair of Ontario school boards was clear about what this meant. She said, "There is absolutely really not any increase here."

School boards everywhere are warning of jam-packed classes, fewer course choices and fewer teachers and education workers. Why is the Premier cutting support to our schools and our kids, Speaker?

**Hon. Doug Ford:** Through you, Mr. Speaker: What an amazing week for the people of Ontario, for the businesses of Ontario. Our team and our incredible finance minister—the best finance minister I've ever seen—delivered an amazing budget. It was a responsible budget, Mr. Speaker. It was a reasonable budget. But most importantly, it was a thoughtful budget. I'll tell you, it was a thoughtful budget because we increased education by \$700 million—\$700 million to be put back into the classroom to make sure that half of our grade 6 students aren't failing math. Not one single teacher in this province is going to lose their job.

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I think it caught the opposition totally flat-footed. They didn't know which way to turn, because we're investing in education. We're going to continue to invest in education until our students can be prepared when they get out in the work world.

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

**Ms. Andrea Horwath:** Well, Speaker, no matter how much the Premier wants to polish this budget, the facts remain the same: The Ford government is making cuts in the classroom. Just on Friday, we learned from school boards in Hamilton, Windsor, Guelph and Waterloo that have sent out 300 redundancy notices to teachers, and the school board in the education minister's own riding says—

*Interjections.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott):** Government side, come to order.

**Ms. Andrea Horwath:** Maybe she doesn't want to hear what the school board in her own riding says. What that school board says is that smaller schools will struggle to provide not only specialized classes but "even the core curriculum required to graduate."

Is the Ford government ready to admit that these changes will leave students with fewer teachers, larger classes and fewer courses, and put students' ability to graduate at risk?

**Hon. Doug Ford:** Through you, Mr. Speaker: I can tell you, the scare tactics aren't working anymore. The people of Ontario saw the figures: very simply, \$700 million more into education—taking care of the students, taking care of the teachers, listening to the parents. That's what happens when you consult with over 72,000 people in Ontario.

It was a great budget because we're taking care of health care. Our great, great Minister of Health has put together an incredible program. We increased health by \$1.3 billion—with a B—to make sure we end hallway health care.

Mr. Speaker, we're taking caring of seniors. We're putting over \$90 million into the dental program for seniors.

We're taking care of education, we're taking care of health, and we're taking care of people in Ontario so they can thrive and they can prosper—

*Interjections.*

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

Restart the clock. Final supplementary?

**Ms. Andrea Horwath:** What the Premier probably should do is go back to school to learn that when you're funding below the rate of inflation, that, in fact, means a cut. That means a cut.

The sad fact is, however, that we have seen this before. We saw it the last time the Conservatives were in power. We saw cuts and chaos in classrooms. We saw it when the Liberals attacked educators with Bill 115. And now the government is launching a task force into school boards—the same school boards that have been raising concerns about the Premier's plan for larger class sizes, fired teachers and fewer courses.

This government has already made it very, very clear, Speaker, that they will attack and threaten critics who challenge them. Is the Ford government planning to launch its next attack on school boards?

*Interjections.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott):** Before I recognize the Premier, member for King-Vaughan, come to order.

Minister of Economic Development, come to order. Member for Sault Ste. Marie, come to order.

Premier to reply.

**Hon. Doug Ford:** I'm not too sure about the math with the Leader of the Opposition. We know we have some math issues here in the Legislature, but I just want to refresh the Leader of the Opposition's memory. We increased spending on education last year by 6.6%, a lot higher than the rate of inflation. This year, we increased it another 2.2%. That's 8.8%, Mr. Speaker. That's putting hundreds of millions—to be exact, \$700 million—more back into the classroom, supporting the teachers and supporting the students. We want our students to thrive. We want them to be the best in the country. We don't want them to be at the lowest tier in the country—where they were at before we took over—when it comes to math scores. We want to make sure we support our teachers.

Mr. Speaker, I've talked to hundreds and hundreds of teachers over the last few weeks. They were so happy to hear our budget. They were so happy that we actually are supporting the classroom—

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

*Interjections.*

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

**Mr. Paul Miller:** That's why 30,000 were in front of the building.

**The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott):** The member for Hamilton East–Stoney Creek will come to order.

Restart the clock. Next question.

#### HEALTH CARE FUNDING

**Ms. Andrea Horwath:** Speaker, my next question is also to the Premier, but I've got to tell you, there are teachers in the assembly this morning—the Remarkable Assembly—and they certainly weren't saying the same thing as what the Premier is saying about the attacks on education in our province.

To the Premier, Speaker: In a report in March, Ontario's independent Financial Accountability Office reported that health care costs would be increasing by 4% in the coming year. Hospitals in their budget submission said their costs would be increasing by 3.4%. Both said that anything below that level of funding would lead to layoffs of front-line staff, cuts to care and longer waits for patients.

Can the Premier tell us why he failed to meet either of these targets in his budget?

**Hon. Doug Ford:** Again, we have a little math problem here, but I'll watch what I say, for you, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, again, our budget was incredible. We took care of child care. If you have a child up to seven years old, you'll get a \$6,000 credit. From seven to 16, you'll have \$3,750. And if you have a child with special needs, you'll get an \$8,000 credit.

Even the Toronto Sun was shocked, saying we're spending too much. You know, when the Toronto Sun is saying we're spending too much and the Toronto Star is saying absolutely nothing, I think we hit it bang on—absolutely bang on.

I said during the election we would find four cents on the dollar and we were mocked by the opposition, because they've never found a penny in their entire lives for driving efficiencies, Mr. Speaker. We found 8% efficiencies, putting that money back into education, back into health care, back into daycare, back into—

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

*Interjections.*

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

*Interjection.*

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

Start the clock. Supplementary question.

**Ms. Andrea Horwath:** I just have to remind the Premier that the average child care rip-off rebate is going to be about 1,250 bucks. So, for a family that's got expenses of \$20,000 for child care, it's not going to make a hill of beans of difference.

*Interjections.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott):** Stop the clock. The government side will come to order and allow the Leader of the Opposition to ask her questions.

*Interjections.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott):** And you don't heckle the Chair.

I apologize to the Leader of the Opposition. Start the clock.

**Ms. Andrea Horwath:** Thank you, Speaker. The bottom line is that the facts are clear. The Premier's budget bill will mean cuts to our health care system notwithstanding that he promised during the campaign that he wasn't going to touch the health care system.

We are already seeing the impact, Speaker, of the government's cuts. The Grand River Hospital now says more layoffs may be coming after cutting 40 nursing positions earlier this year, and communities are reeling from the news that the government plans to shutter over two thirds of public health units and cut \$200 million from their budgets.

Does the Premier understand that his budget will, in fact, lead to health care cuts?

**Hon. Doug Ford:** Mr. Speaker, the finance minister.

**Hon. Victor Fedeli:** Mr. Speaker, the people of Ontario should be absolutely insulted by that last comment. Our CARE program is one of the most flexible child care programs in the history of the province, providing up to 75% of child care for 300,000 families in Ontario. It's designed, Speaker. It builds on the existing benefits while it puts more money in the pockets of families, especially families in need. I think you should be absolutely ashamed of that comment, and I hope you're going to stand up and retract that. I think you've done a disservice to the families of Ontario with that rudeness and that comment.

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

**Ms. Andrea Horwath:** Well, here's what people are saying about the Premier's cuts. The chair of the Toronto Board of Health says—

*Interjections.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott):** Government side, come to order.

**Ms. Andrea Horwath:** The chair of the Toronto Board of Health says, “These cuts are deeply concerning ... and they are dangerous.” The medical officer of health for Simcoe says it means “huge, disruptive change.”

The people of Ontario want schools and hospitals they can count on. That’s what they’ve told me for years now. And instead, they have a Premier who is selling them on a new colour of licence plate while he fires nurses and teachers. How can the Premier justify the cuts to hospitals and public health?

*Interjection.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott):** Stop the clock. Once again, the member for Sault Ste. Marie must come to order.

**Mr. Wayne Gates:** He’s not even in his seat.

**The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott):** Some members are not always in their seats. I don’t think I need to explain that, either.

Start the clock. The question has been referred to the Minister of Finance.

**Hon. Victor Fedeli:** The province is building a sustainable future. We’re fighting for Ontario workers, and we’re protecting front-line services. Every single corner of the province of Ontario will receive economic benefits. Speaker, we are adding \$17 billion in infrastructure into the health care sector and \$13 billion of infrastructure into the education sector. We are adding \$384 million into hospitals this year, \$267 million into home-care facilities this year and \$1.75 billion to build 15,000 home care units and upgrade another 15,000.

Speaker, these are reasonable, responsible and incredible investments by this party, all while protecting front-line health care, front-line education and front-line critical social services.

#### SERVICES FOR PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES

**Ms. Andrea Horwath:** The government’s fantasy is going to hit people hard, and they’re going to see it pretty soon.

This is to the Premier, Speaker. Families have a lot of questions about the Conservative government’s first budget, and rightfully so. Questions like, what programs are going to be cut as a result of the \$1 billion being taken out of the Ministry of Children, Community and Social Services?

Families are still being left in the dark about whether they can rely on Special Services at Home. Notwithstanding the fact that the government promised them that they would have an answer in the budget, there wasn’t anything there to give them that answer. That’s a program which supports families who are caring for children with disabilities. They don’t even know if the wait-list for funding is still frozen, Speaker.

My question is, why is the Premier cutting \$1 billion from the programs that support the most vulnerable children and families in Ontario while cruelly leaving families in the dark about what will happen to them?

*Interjections.*

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

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

**Hon. Lisa MacLeod:** I completely reject the premise of that question. It is irresponsible and, once again, base-line fearmongering from the official opposition.

Let me be perfectly clear: The Ministry of Children, Community and Social Services is now the third-largest spend in the province of Ontario. It was the fourth-largest spend under the previous Liberal administration. Funding has gone up by \$300 million in this ministry.

The Special Services at Home—as I told the members opposite last week, the week before and the week before that—is going to continue to be funded. People are getting their letters and their allocation is happening now.

But let me also be perfectly clear: After 15 years of reckless mismanagement by that Liberal government, their mismanaging the funds of this ministry—that is why we’re dealing with a patchwork, disjointed system where more kids are languishing on the wait-list, just as they did with autism.

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

**Ms. Andrea Horwath:** The sad thing is now the families in Ontario are ricocheting into reckless cuts, and that is something that nobody told me they wanted to see.

You know, parents were repeatedly told by this government that they would know more about funding for supports like Special Services at Home after the budget. But the budget has been released, and families are still in the dark.

Since the Premier can’t assure families that Special Services at Home wait-lists are no longer frozen, perhaps he can ease the anxiety of adults with disabilities who are feeling very, very worried about potential cuts to the Passport Program. Is the government cutting the Passport Program, yes or no?

*Interjection.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott):** The member for Ottawa South, come to order.  
Minister?

**Hon. Lisa MacLeod:** No, we are not.

This is the problem. The previous government left 5,700 kids languishing on a wait-list which began in January 2018 after a three-year funding commitment ended in March 2017, well before we took office. Our government for the people is protecting what matters most through the 2019-20 budget, including Special Services at Home.

Again, this is a ministry that has increased its spending, for \$300 million this fiscal year. But we’re reforming social assistance. We believe in giving people a hand up. We believe that people should be working when they can.

This is where the previous Liberal government and the current official opposition vehemently disagree with us.

They would rather hold people down; we would rather lift them up. That's what this government is doing. That's what this budget did.

*Interjection.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott):** Stop the clock. I'm going to ask the member for Waterloo to come to order.

Start the clock. Next question.

#### ONTARIO BUDGET

**Mr. Stan Cho:** My question is for the Premier. Last week, we were all very excited to wear yellow and to support our incredible Minister of Finance as he delivered our government's first budget.

Mr. Speaker, we knew when we came into government that we had our work cut out for us. The Liberals left behind a \$15-billion deficit and a 15-year legacy of tax-and-spend policies with nothing to show for it. Thankfully, on Thursday, we laid out our plan to show the people of Ontario exactly how we will clean up the mess the Liberals left us and protect what matters most to the people of Ontario, like our world-class health care and education systems.

Could the Premier please explain to this House our government's responsible plan to return our province to balance while providing much-needed relief to families, individuals and businesses?

**Hon. Doug Ford:** I want to thank our incredible MPP from Willowdale. I'm sure the folks in Willowdale are happy. They're happy about the transit. They're actually going to have transit now in Willowdale that they would never have had under the previous government. They're happy with the health care and the education—making sure we're taking care of seniors, making sure we have daycare. Most importantly, Mr. Speaker, they're happy that we're putting \$26 billion back into their pockets and businesses over the next six years to stimulate the economy, to get the economy moving.

Right now, our economy is on fire. Everywhere we're going, people are saying, "We need to hire more people." There are not enough people out there to fill the jobs because we have given business owners—small, medium and large—certainty that we have a government that's going to make sure that we lower taxes, not only on individuals but on businesses, until they can reinvest into equipment, into their people and make Ontario—

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

*Interjections.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott):** I'm going to stop the clock.

I'll remind the members: When the Speaker stands up, your microphone goes dead and you need to conclude your remarks.

Start the clock again. Supplementary?

**Mr. Stan Cho:** Thank you to the Premier for his response. It is really exciting to see the progress that our government is making for the people of Ontario. I'm confident that our government will deliver on our promises and bring relief to families and businesses after far too

long. Just look at what we've already accomplished in 312 days.

Our budget builds off of our early success and lays out our plan for the years to come. After 15 years of Liberal inaction and broken promises, the people of Ontario finally have a government that will keep its word. Could the Premier please inform the House about the types of changes the people of Ontario will see through budget 2019?

*Interjection.*

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

The Premier to reply.

**Hon. Doug Ford:** Again, thank you to the MPP from Willowdale.

My friends, when we came into office, there was a financial mess, a financial disaster that the Liberals and the NDP created. The NDP supported the Liberals 98% of the time. They believed in big spending and big taxes. We're turning the ship around, but we're turning it around responsibly. We're turning it around thoughtfully.

I can tell you that the Leader of the Opposition and the Liberals were caught, as I said earlier on, flat-footed, along with the Prime Minister; he was caught flat-footed. There was nothing more that they wanted to see than the cuts.

**1100**

But you know, Mr. Speaker, I said over and over and over again: We are not going to be cutting. We're not going to be slashing. What we're going to be doing is investing. We're going to be investing into the great people here in Ontario. We have the smartest, brightest people in Ontario right here.

We've turned the corner on jobs. We've created well over 100,000 new private sector jobs, because, again, the companies feel confident because—

**The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott):** Stop the clock. I would ask the Premier to take his seat.

*Interjections.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott):** I'm going to ask, once again, the member for Don Valley East to come to order, and I'm going to ask the member for Essex to come to order.

Start the clock. The member for Essex has the floor.

#### GOVERNMENT ADVERTISING

**Mr. Taras Natyshak:** Thank you very much, Speaker. My question is to the Premier. The Premier's love of self-promoting and self-promotion is not a really big surprise to any of us in this House. He slapped signs with his campaign slogan on them at border crossings; he slapped his party colours on licence plates and billed it all to the taxpayer. Now we learn that not only has the Premier produced partisan stickers to slap on every gas pump in the province, but he plans to punish any business that refuses to go along with this plan with fines of up to \$10,000 a day. Speaker, can the Premier tell us how he and his team arrived at a \$10,000-a-day fine as an appropriate punishment for failing to post campaign advertisements for Andrew Scheer?

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

**Hon. Greg Rickford:** In this budget, Mr. Speaker, we were protecting what matters most, including the right for the people of Ontario to understand how this job-killing, regressive carbon tax is going to impact them.

I was speaking to an Indigenous leader in my riding this weekend. He owns a grocery store—a couple of stores. One of his employees was increasing the price of everything in the store to reflect the additional costs of getting those goods to those stores out in northwestern Ontario.

Mr. Speaker, let's make no mistake about it: This is a tax on everything. That \$377 postcard from the federal government doesn't tell the whole story. It's going to cost school buses more to operate. It's going to cost ambulances more money to operate. It's going to cost small businesses more to operate. We're going to let the people of Ontario know about it at every turn, stickers included.

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

**Mr. Taras Natyshak:** I'd say that this is the sort of thing you'd see in a dictatorship, but I think even dictators would be embarrassed—

*Interjections.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott):** Order. The member will withdraw.

**Mr. Taras Natyshak:** I withdraw, Speaker.

**The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott):** Place your question.

**Mr. Taras Natyshak:** Not only is the Premier spending millions of public dollars on partisan advertisements for his federal counterparts; he's ready to fine people as much as \$10,000 a day if they dare to tell him no. Even this Premier has to know that this is completely wrong. Will he end his infatuation with stickers and withdraw this legislation today?

**Hon. Greg Rickford:** Well, Mr. Speaker, we can hardly wait for those stickers to pop up in Essex and see that member explain that one of the members in his caucus wants one of the highest carbon taxes—or was it the highest carbon tax?—in the world.

I have heard from people from one end of the province to the other since we introduced this sticker, Mr. Speaker. The right to know: The people of Ontario are going to be paying a price on everything—those buses that take sports teams from Dryden to Thunder Bay, those hospitals that will be making choices as to what programs and services they may have to cut as more than \$27 million is compromised by paying this additional tax.

A sticker is our effort to ensure that the people of Ontario know what this job-killing, regressive carbon tax is going to cost.

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

**Hon. Greg Rickford:** It's a top priority for our government, and we're going to—

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

*Interjections.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott):** The member for Carleton will come to order. The member for Sault Ste. Marie will come to order and stop pulling up props to taunt the other side.

## TAXATION

**Mr. Rudy Cuzzetto:** My question is for the great Minister of the Environment, Conservation and Parks. Last week, the Minister of Finance tabled our budget. Our government's plan focused on affordability and protecting what matters most.

It has now been two weeks since the federal carbon tax came into effect and it is already clear that the tax threatens affordability for families and impacts institutions and services for the people of the province of Ontario. Over the last several weeks, the Minister of the Environment has demonstrated clearly the true cost of the federal carbon tax on nursing homes, colleges and hospitals. None are exempt from this tax.

The people of my riding of Mississauga–Lakeshore have made it quite clear that this extra cost is simply unaffordable for them. Can the minister tell this House what the next steps are in fighting for affordability in this province?

**Hon. Rod Phillips:** Thank you to the member for Mississauga–Lakeshore. He's doing a fantastic job representing his constituents.

Mr. Speaker, as my learned colleague the Minister of Energy, Mines and Indigenous Affairs said, we have been pointing out \$27 million of charges for hospitals, \$20 million for colleges and universities; the cost for those on fixed incomes, the cost for businesses, the cost to families—\$648 for the average family in 2022.

Again, as my learned colleague said, as we promised in the campaign, we will be using all the tools at our disposal including, today, beginning our court challenge to the unconstitutional federal carbon tax. We are joined in this by Saskatchewan, we are supported by New Brunswick, and we learned last week we will also be joined by Manitoba—four provinces that stand against this unconstitutional tax. We'll use every tool at our disposal to stop this job-killing, regressive carbon tax.

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

**Mr. Rudy Cuzzetto:** I thank that great minister for being a huge part of this fight to make Ontario an affordable place to live and raise our families.

The people of my riding have been clear: They cannot afford any new tax. They look forward to a time when they are no longer worried about how far they have to drive their car, how much it will cost them to keep their families warm or how they will put food on their table.

For too long, the people of my riding of Mississauga–Lakeshore went unheard. While they asked for lower costs and less taxes, they were met with opposition. It is time that the voices of the people of Ontario are heard and action is taken. Can the minister tell this House what actions our government has taken to make life affordable?

**Hon. Rod Phillips:** Mr. Speaker, through you to the member: As this House knows, one of the first things we did—a commitment by our leader and now Premier Doug Ford—was to get rid of the job-killing cap-and-trade carbon tax. That put \$268 back in the pockets of Ontarians.

The opposition and the former government are out of touch with affordability, as is the federal Liberal government. They continue along with the programs and the

policies of the previous Liberal government, adding costs to a program that's not necessary to fight climate change.

We know you don't need a carbon tax to fight climate change. Our made-in-Ontario plan is building on the progress Ontario has made. We will hit the targets set by the Prime Minister. We will hit the targets set by the global community—a 30% reduction by 2030—but we will do it without a job-killing, regressive carbon tax.

#### GOVERNMENT ACCOUNTABILITY

**Ms. Catherine Fife:** My question is to the Premier. Businesses making investment decisions are anxiously watching this Ford government's actions. They see a volatile Premier, and it does not instill confidence.

The Premier is threatening businesses with fines of up to \$10,000 a day for failure to participate in his partisan ad campaigns, and now buried in his omnibus budget bill are sweeping changes that will make it next to impossible to sue the government.

The Ford government has already been taken to court by businesses, by citizens, by children. Can the Premier tell us why he is seeking legal immunity for the actions of his government?

**Hon. Doug Ford:** Mr. Speaker, I can't believe what I just heard, that businesses don't like this government. Businesses love this government. They love it. Businesses with one employee, two employees, absolutely love it.

What they don't love is the socialist mentality that we've heard in here many a time. They don't believe in socialism. Socialism does not work. Empower the businesses, empower the people, put more money into people's pockets: They're going to go out and spend it and stimulate the economy, stimulate jobs. The last thing I need is a lesson from the NDP about businesses.

*Interjections.*

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

*Interjections.*

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

Restart the clock. Supplementary?

1110

**Ms. Catherine Fife:** Well, this Premier certainly is putting the lawyers in this province to work, Mr. Speaker.

Businesses making investment decisions are looking for reliable infrastructure, a talented workforce and a predictable business environment. This government cut funding for infrastructure, they cut support for post-secondary education, and now they are saying that they don't want to be liable for their decisions that affect the people. Certainly the autism—

*Interjections.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott):** I apologize to the member. Stop the clock.

*Interjections.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott):** Order. The government side has to come to order and allow the questions to be asked in the Legislature. That's what we do during question period. The Speaker has to hear the questions.

Restart the clock. I apologize to the member for Waterloo.

**Ms. Catherine Fife:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

After these cuts, the people of this province are seeking justice, and they look to the court system. But what does this government do? This government is saying that they do not want to be liable for the decisions they're making in this Legislature. They have a majority government. They are overriding the rights of the people of this province.

This government will do what it wants, when it wants, and you won't even get your day in court. Does this government believe that you're above the law?

*Interjections.*

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

The Premier to reply.

**Hon. Doug Ford:** Minister of Economic Development. Go get 'em, Smitty.

**Hon. Todd Smith:** I thought the Premier had a pretty good answer on the first question from the member from Waterloo, but I'll build on that, Mr. Speaker. We're doing everything that we can in Ontario to make it more affordable, so that businesses in Ontario can be more competitive than other jurisdictions across North America which we are competing with. That's why we have eliminated the Wynne cap-and-trade carbon tax. That's why we have lowered business taxes. That's why the Minister of Finance brought in a great step last week: depreciation for capital investments. That's what businesses wanted, Mr. Speaker.

The NDP governments of the past—the current NDP government in Alberta has seen \$75 billion in losses to the economy there. That's exactly what we don't want in Ontario. We want an Ontario government that is going to make this the most competitive place in North America to do business. We're well on our way to do that—123,000 jobs created under our watch.

#### ONTARIO BUDGET

**Mr. Stephen Lecce:** My question is for the Minister of Finance. Last Thursday was an exciting day for the people of this province. The Minister of Finance stood in this House and presented our government's first budget—a plan to protect what matters most; a plan to get these young people working; a plan to turn the page and turn the corner after a decade of Liberal mismanagement; a plan to deliver relief for families and seniors; and a plan that instills confidence and hope in the future prosperity of this province.

To the minister: Could you outline how our government will protect jobs, protect the pocketbooks of families and protect what matters most for the people of Ontario?

**Hon. Victor Fedeli:** Thank you to the member from King-Vaughan for the question and for having us up at the chamber of commerce there this morning.

Speaker, our government has developed a responsible path back to balance while creating jobs and protecting what is valued most: health care and education. We are

ensuring value for money and putting people first in every decision that we make. This has allowed us to find savings of approximately eight cents for every dollar spent. In doing so, we are able to provide \$26 billion in much-needed relief to individuals, families, businesses, seniors and students through our LIFT credit, our CARE credit and, as the Minister of Job Creation said, the Ontario Job Creation Investment Incentive. Speaker, we are balancing the budget in a responsible manner without introducing any new tax increases.

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

**Mr. Stephen Lecce:** Thank you to the minister for his leadership and for sharing our plan in Vaughan this morning with the Vaughan Chamber of Commerce.

Speaker, accountability is at the centre and at the heart of this budget. That is why budget 2019 proposes the Fiscal Sustainability, Transparency and Accountability Act to ensure political leaders follow through on their word to the people. This act penalizes politicians who break their word to the people. It would require the Premier and the Minister of Finance to pay 10% of their ministerial salaries for each missed public reporting deadline, as required by law.

Minister, accountability has been absent in Ontario's government for too long. Had such a requirement existed, the previous government would have been forced to pay tens of thousands of dollars for missing these deadlines. Our government is ensuring transparency and accountability is for all Ontarians.

To the minister: Could you affirm our sombre commitment to keep our word and deliver on our promises by restoring accountability and trust back in government?

**Hon. Victor Fedeli:** The Premier is offering an iron-clad guarantee. As part of the proposed legislation, the act would include a Premier and a ministerial accountability guarantee. The guarantee would require the Premier and the Minister of Finance to pay 10% of their Premier and ministerial salaries for each missed public reporting deadline, and the minister would also need to publicly explain why the deadline was missed and when the report would be released.

Now, this accountability has been missing for far too long. In fact, had such a guarantee been in place in the previous Liberal government, the previous Premier and the Minister of Finance would have been required to pay a combined \$115,000 in fines for their missed deadlines. Our government is committed to putting people first and restoring transparency and accountability in how we spend every single taxpayer dollar.

#### POST-SECONDARY EDUCATION

**Mr. Chris Glover:** My question is to the Premier. Last Thursday, the Premier made it clear that students pursuing post-secondary education are not a priority for this government by cutting over \$700 million from colleges and universities. The majority of these cuts were to non-repayable OSAP grants, leaving low- and middle-income students to struggle to afford post-secondary education

and forcing them to seek more private loans. The Liberal government doubled tuition fees and flatlined per-student funding for more than a decade, but this government can't even manage that.

Why does the Premier think students should be saddled with even more student debt?

**Hon. Doug Ford:** Minister of Municipal Affairs.

**Hon. Steve Clark:** I want to thank the honourable member for the question.

Students and their families make great sacrifices to attend university and college. They make those sacrifices because for years they've been told that if they work hard and apply themselves and invest in a university or college degree, they're going to find a high-paying job. Increasingly and unfortunately, in our province, that hasn't been the case. Students and their families know that many young people are graduating with great degrees, but either they don't have a job or they're underemployed.

Quite frankly, there are a number of industries that are starved. They desperately need skilled workers. Our current system is clearly not working for Ontario students or for our economy. We're embracing changes to our post-secondary system based on outcomes. I would be pleased to provide more detail—

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

**Mr. Chris Glover:** So what I heard was the minister saying that the families should make even more sacrifices and take on even more debts.

**1120**

The \$700-million cut to colleges and universities will have a devastating effect on student affordability, but to make matters worse, this government intends to tie as much as 60% of college or university funding to meeting some unspecified and undisclosed performance targets, up from 1% now. Having 60% of funding determined by the Premier's whims creates instability and makes long-term planning impossible. Taking money away from institutions that don't meet targets makes it more difficult to achieve those targets in the following year, creating a downward spiral.

Is the Premier trying to create a crisis in our colleges and universities, just as he is with our elementary and secondary schools?

**Hon. Steve Clark:** The member opposite from Spadina-Fort York called our plan "frightening." I think the NDP need to clarify what's so scary about ensuring that students have high-quality jobs in Ontario after they graduate.

Frankly, what's frightening is the fact that the NDP are opposed to ensuring that tax dollars are actually delivering the results for students and their families. We're embracing changes to our post-secondary education system that are modern, that are forward-thinking and that actually lead to an outcome of a well-paying job. What we're trying to do is shift the funding to universities and colleges that are more dependent on student outcomes. It's clear right from the start that what's frightening in this province is the fact that the NDP continue to speak for the status quo and

don't embrace actually trying to connect that student with that—

**The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott):** Thank you. The next question is to the member for Cambridge.

## ONTARIO BUDGET

**Mrs. Belinda Karahalios:** My question is for the Minister of Finance. Our government's first budget takes clear action to protect what matters most for years to come while providing relief to families and individuals today. We're also balancing the budget in a responsible manner without introducing any new taxes. This budget puts people first, Mr. Speaker. After 15 years of Liberal waste and mismanagement, we have put forward a plan to restore trust in government and put more money in people's pockets.

An example of our government's commitment to spending money responsibly and bringing relief to those who need it most is the Childcare Access and Relief from Expenses tax credit. Could the minister please explain the importance of the CARE tax credit and how our government is supporting parents in Ontario?

**Hon. Victor Fedeli:** Thank you to the member from Cambridge for the question. We believe that parents, not government, should make the decisions that are best for their children. That is why we are proposing the Childcare Access and Relief from Expenses tax credit—or, thankfully, CARE for short. The CARE tax credit would be one of the most flexible child care initiatives ever introduced. Families could receive up to \$6,000 per child under seven, up to \$3,750 for children between seven and 16, and up to \$8,250 per child with severe disability, regardless of age. CARE would provide about 300,000 families with 75% of their eligible child care expenses.

Choosing appropriate child care is among the most important decisions a parent will ever make. Our plan puts parents—not bureaucrats, not politicians—at the centre of that decision.

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

**Mrs. Belinda Karahalios:** Thank you to the minister for his response. We are so excited to see our government proposing thoughtful solutions that respect parents and provide them the support they need. Under the previous government, parents were too often forgotten, suffering under the weight of increasing taxes and increasing expenses with no relief in sight. Thankfully, our government is reversing this trend and bringing relief to the people of Ontario. We are supporting parents and putting them in charge of making important decisions for their children, and we're helping those who need it most.

Could the minister please explain how the CARE tax credit will bring the greatest relief to those in most need?

**Hon. Victor Fedeli:** Minister of Education.

**Hon. Lisa M. Thompson:** Thank you to the member for Cambridge for her question. Speaker, I'm pleased to share with you today that the CARE tax credit will build on the Child Care Expense Deduction, which will continue

to provide provincial and federal tax relief towards eligible child care expenses. While the CCED provides greater relief on average to higher-income families, I'm so pleased to share with everyone today that our CARE tax credit will provide a higher credit rate to families with lower incomes, filling the gap in support for these families.

We cannot understate how important this support for lower-income families needs to be. In some cases, the CARE tax credit might mean a parent will join the workforce or decide to work more hours. By proposing this flexible support, we're empowering parents to make the decisions that are the best for their children and best for their families.

## PUBLIC HEALTH

**Ms. Sara Singh:** My question is to the Minister of Health and Long-Term Care. Last Thursday, the Conservatives revealed their scheme to cut \$200 million in health care funding by dropping from 35 public health units to just 10. Public health units protect us and our communities in a very cost-effective way. They administer vaccines that help keep us from getting sick and can help us avoid expensive stays in the hospital. They inspect restaurants to ensure hygienic practices are being followed and they make sure that our water is safe to drink. Public health's bottom line is to keep us safe, and that's a hard job to do when more than 25% of their funding is cut.

Does the minister know that her cuts to public health will make us all less safe?

**Hon. Christine Elliott:** We can certainly agree that the role of public health is very important, and that's what we're trying to do with modernizing our entire system of health care, our public health care system, to make sure that people can receive access to better, more connected services. That's what we're doing with public health, allowing it to be more responsive by having a smaller number of units being able to mobilize in case there's a public health emergency.

That's the goal here, and we have had lots of support for that. Dr. Rob Cushman, a former medical officer of health in Ottawa, is certainly in favour of our plan and points out that smaller health units have long had problems with recruiting staff. We want to make sure that our health units are going to be appropriately staffed and are going to be ready to respond quickly in cases of emergency.

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

**Ms. Sara Singh:** Back to the minister: We've been here before under the last Conservative government, and the results aren't good. We know what happens when public health is not funded properly.

Even worse, Mr. Speaker, it is this government's plan to cut the number of public health laboratories as well. Ontario has 11 public health laboratories all over this province. The labs test for infectious diseases and help public health officials identify disease outbreaks in our province. Our public health laboratory system is one of the best systems in the world. We should be investing in the system, not cutting it.

Can the minister tell us if her government is planning to hand over the keys to our public health laboratories to for-profit companies?

**Hon. Christine Elliott:** Our public health units and public laboratories will continue to be well-funded and will continue to do the great work that we're doing. We want to modernize the system so that we can be responsible and responsive to any public health emergencies that come forward. As the member will know, there are situations in Ontario where we're having outbreaks of things like tuberculosis, measles—people not getting their children vaccinated. That is an important role that public health will continue to play.

As we develop our local public health teams, public health is going to be a key component of that. We greatly value the work that they're going to do and we want them to continue into our modernized, transformed system of health care. That's what we're working on and that's where we will end up with public health: in the forefront, as it should be.

#### DENTAL CARE

**Mr. Daryl Kramp:** My question today is to our truly compassionate, capable and caring Minister of Health and Long-Term Care. Last week, Minister Fedeli delivered our government's first budget and confirmed our commitment to building a connected and sustainable public health care system for the people of Ontario. It's imperative that our budget protects the core services that matter the most, like health care, while restoring, of course, fiscal sustainability to the people of Ontario.

This budget also acknowledges the importance of supports for low-income seniors. Can the minister please inform the House as to what our government is doing to help low-income seniors with their dental care?

1130

**Hon. Christine Elliott:** Thank you very much to the member from Hastings–Lennox and Addington for this important question. No senior in Ontario should go without quality dental care.

We know what the figures are, Mr. Speaker. Preventable dental issues lead to more than 60,000 emergency visits per year in our hospitals, a significant portion of which are led by seniors. That's why we're going to be investing nearly \$100 million per year in dental care for low-income seniors, so that they can receive the high-quality dental care they deserve.

This new program will assist Ontario seniors by increasing funding for dental services in our public health units, in our community health centres and Aboriginal health access centres, and investing in new dental services in underserved areas with mobile dental buses.

Mr. Speaker, we are building a coordinated, connected public health care system that puts the needs of Ontario's patients first.

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

**Mr. Daryl Kramp:** Oral health is vital for everyone—and I thank you for recognizing that, Minister—because

poor oral health can make day-to-day tasks like speaking and chewing very, very difficult, especially for our seniors.

Mr. Speaker, two thirds of low-income seniors in Ontario do not have access to dental insurance. That's two thirds of seniors who cannot even properly digest their food. This is totally and simply unacceptable.

Can the minister explain how our government's dental program will enhance the lives of Ontario seniors?

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

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

As the member stated, two thirds of low-income seniors in Ontario do not have dental insurance. I just cannot believe that the Liberals, supported by the NDP, were in government for the last 15 years, created a huge debt and incredible deficits, and yet they did not allow our low-income seniors on fixed incomes to get the proper dental care that they needed.

During the campaign, our leader, now our Premier, Doug Ford, promised dental care for low-income seniors. This government introduced the program in our first—

*Interjections.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott):** Stop the clock. Once again, I had to stop the clock. I could not hear the minister who had the floor because of the ovation from the government side. I had to stand up and interrupt him and cut him off.

Start the clock. Next question.

#### PUBLIC TRANSIT

**Ms. Jessica Bell:** This is a question to the Minister of Transportation. Before the election, the Premier promised to double the transit transfer to municipalities. On Thursday, the Premier gave himself a standing ovation for breaking this promise.

This cut to planned transit funding means the city of Toronto will lose \$1.1 billion over 10 years that was going to be spent on investments like repairing buses, making stations accessible, ensuring the subway air conditioning works, and reducing delays and breakdowns on our transit system. Now the city will either have to raise fares, raise taxes, cut service or allow the system to crumble.

Why did the Premier break his promise to Toronto transit riders?

**Hon. Jeff Yurek:** Thanks, member opposite, for that question. This government has come out with some great transportation announcements throughout this province. We are investing \$28.5 billion on four expansions throughout the Toronto area, the GTA. We have expended over \$1.2 billion on the Ottawa LRT. We've promised \$1 billion to Hamilton. We are promising to rebuild the 401 between Tilbury and Elgin county. We are making the investments necessary.

Just last year, with regard to the gas tax program, we gave out over \$364 million in gas tax funding to 107

municipalities, to provide public transit service to 104 communities across Ontario.

Mr. Speaker, the member opposite made reference to the TTC. I'm glad she did, because we're in the middle of a terms-of-reference agreement to create a new partnership with the city of Toronto that would upload the maintenance costs of the subway system to the province. I'd hope she would be supportive as we move forward with this upload.

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

**Ms. Jessica Bell:** Back to the Minister of Transportation: The Premier cut over \$3 billion in planned funding that was promised for municipal transit systems over the next 10 years. Over 100 municipalities lost transit funding they were promised, money that these municipalities were counting on. They were counting on this additional funding to begin flowing this year: not years down the road—this year. People will feel the impact of this cut immediately.

If the Premier can applaud himself for breaking this transit promise, why should anyone believe that he will keep his other transit promises?

**Hon. Jeff Yurek:** Thank you again for that question from the member opposite. Our government has invested heavily throughout the entire province with regard to transit and infrastructure, Mr. Speaker. I just announced the \$28.5-billion investment in subways, but on top of that, we just recently announced a \$1.3-billion investment in the upgrade of highways and provincial bridges throughout the entire province. The Minister of Infrastructure has a number of funds out there that are going to help small municipalities with their infrastructure needs and possibly create new transit opportunities.

Mr. Speaker, we maintained and gave \$364 million to 107 municipalities. I don't know why that's bad news to the members on the opposite side. We're committed to the gas tax program, and we're going to continue to support all the municipalities throughout this province, including Toronto.

#### EDUCATION FUNDING

**Mrs. Nina Tangri:** Good morning, Mr. Speaker. My question is for the Minister of Education. Last week, it was great to see a budget that invests in our education system in a responsible and measured manner. I know many parents in my riding of Mississauga–Streetsville were relieved to hear about how we're building on our plans for education and to hear about the investments we're making.

Can the Minister of Education tell us about what she's heard since the government rolled out a path towards responsible and impactful spending in our education system?

**Hon. Lisa M. Thompson:** I appreciate the question very much from the member from Mississauga–Streetsville, because I was actually in Mississauga on Saturday seeing what we're embracing come to fruition first-hand with excitement that absolutely filled the arena as I attended the FIRST Robotics provincial championship.

I'm so pleased to see that our investment in this type of initiative is paying dividends. Again, the FIRST Robotics provincial championship was held this past weekend. Schools from across Ontario participated, and I'm so pleased to say that we're going to have great representation in the world competition in Detroit.

While I was at the provincial competition, I saw so many amazing things happening, Speaker. The students were working hand in hand. Professionalism and grace were two founding principles that the teams were evaluated on. Holland Bloorview had a team there. This type of initiative does not discriminate. Children of all ages in high school—

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

**Mrs. Nina Tangri:** Through you, Mr. Speaker: Thank you to the minister for that response. It is refreshing to hear that we finally have a government that will put our students first and focus our dollars directly on benefits to students.

I know the previous Liberal government left our schools in a state of disrepair while at the same time failing to support our students. I know the minister has taken steps towards modernizing our classrooms. But can the minister tell us more about what the government will do to invest in our schools and ensure our students are successful?

**Hon. Lisa M. Thompson:** Absolutely. Thank you so much. This budget that we shared on Thursday is great news for the education system in Ontario. We're talking about modernizing our education system in order to update curriculum to better utilize technology and give students the skills they need to succeed. You know, with the budget and our plan for Education that Works for You, we're introducing new measures that will help make Ontario students leaders in education around the world once again. By investing more in education every year, we're going to be focusing on key pieces to improve our schools.

Due to the previous government's extreme mismanagement of this file, far too many schools in Ontario were, frankly, left in a state of disrepair. That's why, over the next year, we are going to be committing another \$1.4 billion in renewal, repair and maintenance. This is good news for schools that have been left to crumble under the previous Liberal government. We want to make—

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

1140

#### NORTHERN ONTARIO

**Mr. Michael Mantha:** My question is to the Premier. The Conservative government's first budget is bad news for the north, to say the least. Ministries that are dedicated to the development of the northern economy, like the Ministries of Natural Resources and Forestry and Northern Development and Mines, have been cut by hundreds of millions of dollars. There wasn't even lip service to the billion dollars in funding needed to build the roads for the Ring of Fire. Even the government announced their own

intentions to interfere with the successful Northern Ontario Heritage Fund.

Instead of investing in the north, why is the Premier choosing to cut funding for northern Ontario economic development?

**Hon. Doug Ford:** Through you, Mr. Speaker, I'll pass this, after I answer this question, over to the great minister of northern affairs. As he told me this weekend, he travelled in the car 840 kilometres all over the north. He's an absolute champion.

Mr. Speaker, today, this morning, I went to the prayer breakfast with everyone from all different parties. There are no political stripes, as I said, when it comes to prayer. We're all of the same stripe, so, Mr. Speaker, I thought I'd do the right thing. It wasn't the Leader of the Opposition's fault. She had another event and I respect that, so I did the right thing. I did a prayer for her. I did a prayer, considering the leadership review is coming up in a month. I prayed for the leader that she would be able to be voted in and she stays on for the next three years.

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

**Mr. Michael Mantha:** Again to the Premier: Quite frankly, I was there this morning and, yes, we need prayers, but with this Premier, we need a miracle.

Speaker, to make matters worse, this government made deep cuts to infrastructure spending, which will mean less funding to improve northern roads, bridges, schools and hospitals. The government once again refused to commit to reinstating the Northlander passenger rail service—the short line between Sault Ste. Marie and Sudbury, the line in regard to the connector between Hearst and Sault Ste. Marie. As we all know, the cuts to education will hit rural and northern schools the hardest.

Premier, why are you making life harder for those who live in northern Ontario?

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

**Hon. Greg Rickford:** Mr. Speaker, in a marked, if not complete, departure from the truth, the member opposite has chosen to mislead and misguide the people of northern—

*Interjections.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott):** The member will withdraw.

**Hon. Greg Rickford:** I'll withdraw.

**The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott):** Stand up and audibly say "Withdraw."

**Hon. Greg Rickford:** Withdraw.

**The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott):** Please respond.

**Hon. Greg Rickford:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

As I have heard from folks across northern Ontario over the past several days, they appreciate the fact that it was actually a Minister of Finance from northern Ontario who authored this plan, supported of course by our entire caucus, creating new opportunities through the Northern Ontario Internship Program, creating new transit opportunities for all of northern Ontario and encouraging the forestry and mining sector with new incentives so that northern Ontario can flourish. I'm pretty sure they got the message loud and clear. It was good feedback, and I appreciate that.

## HEALTH CARE

**Ms. Jill Dunlop:** My question is to the Minister of Health and Long-Term Care. Mr. Speaker, our first budget takes a responsible approach to balancing the budget. It restores confidence in Ontario's finances while protecting what matters most: our health care and education systems. Every part of our government's plan to end hallway health care and build a modern, sustainable and integrated health care system starts and ends with the patient. I am proud to be part of a government that is investing in the front lines of our health care system.

Can the minister please inform the members of this House what our government is doing to support Ontario's hospitals and front-line workers?

**Hon. Christine Elliott:** Thank you, first of all, to the member from Simcoe North for your great question. We are building a health care system for the people, a public health care system. We are taking a comprehensive approach to modernizing. By relentlessly focusing on the patient experience and on better connected care, we will end wait times and end hallway medicine.

That's why we are investing in the front lines of our health care system with an extra \$422 million for Ontario hospitals, which will receive, on average, a 2% increase in funding, including \$384 million as new investments.

We are building a connected and sustainable health care system that will meet the needs of all Ontarians for now and well into the future. Thank you for the question.

## VISITOR

**Mr. Daryl Kramp:** Point of order.

**The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott):** Member for Hastings on a point of order.

**Mr. Daryl Kramp:** A number of years ago I got engaged in politics. At that particular time, one of my first staff—he's here today on behalf of the snowmobile organization of Ontario, Andrew Walasek Welcome, Andrew.

## NOTICE OF REASONED AMENDMENT

**The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott):** I beg to inform the House that, pursuant to standing order 71(b), the member for Hamilton West–Ancaster–Dundas has notified the Clerk of her intention to file notice of a reasoned amendment to the motion for second reading of Bill 100, An Act to implement Budget measures and to enact, amend and repeal various statutes. The order for second reading of Bill 100 may therefore not be called today.

This House is in recess until 1 p.m.

*The House recessed from 1146 to 1300.*

## INTRODUCTION OF VISITORS

**Mr. Jamie West:** I'd like to welcome Casey Lalonde from Sudbury to the Legislature. She's here for the women's forum, A Remarkable Assembly. Welcome to Queen's Park, Casey.

**Ms. Jill Dunlop:** I would like to once again welcome my guest Martin Lalonde, who is receiving l'Ordre de la Pléiade this afternoon. Martin is also accompanied by his wife, Patsy Lalonde; his daughter Céleste Lalonde; son-in-law Rob Burston; son Jean-Marc Lalonde; and daughter-in-law Sarah Koch. Thank you for being here this afternoon.

## MEMBERS' STATEMENTS

### WELLAND HARM REDUCTION SOCIETY

**Mr. Jeff Burch:** A newly formed volunteer group in Welland is focusing its efforts on a discarded needle clean-up in hopes of making the city safer for everyone. Katherine Sullivan and her friends have formed the Welland Harm Reduction Society. These residents walk the streets of Welland, the parks, underneath bridges and everywhere in between collecting used syringes and drug paraphernalia. I want to commend them for their efforts.

They are reaching out to the city, Niagara Region Public Health, and other community partners like Overdose Prevention and Education Network of Niagara and Positive Living Niagara, whose executive director is Glen Walker, who I know very well. He spearheaded the safe injection site in St. Catharines, and there are ongoing discussions, with the possibility of similar sites in Welland and Niagara Falls.

As this government reduces the number of much-needed safe injection sites, in Niagara we at least have community groups and people taking ownership. They have feet on the ground and are doing outreach work and education, and I say thank you for all that you are doing.

### MARTIN LALONDE

**M<sup>me</sup> Jill Dunlop:** J'ai l'honneur de vous présenter un résident extraordinaire de Simcoe-Nord qui est un récipiendaire de l'Ordre de la Pléiade grâce à ses contributions à la communauté franco-ontarienne. Je vous présente M. Martin Lalonde.

This afternoon, Monsieur Martin Lalonde, who is in attendance with us today, will be presented with the award during an investiture ceremony hosted by the Honourable Lieutenant Governor. L'Ordre de la Pléiade is awarded by l'Assemblée parlementaire de la Francophonie to those who have distinguished themselves in the service of co-operation and friendship, and promoted the French language in their community. It is an appropriate recognition of Monsieur Lalonde's decades-long career teaching, advocating and sharing the French language in Simcoe North.

Martin is a pillar of the francophone community in Simcoe North. In the early 2000s, Monsieur Lalonde was integral in founding the living museum and the Festival du loup, both in the community of Lafontaine. As the president of the festival, he organized, led and partook in the

annual howling contest in this amazing three-day event—owoooo. Martin is also very active in Club Richelieu and seniors' residences in Lafontaine and Penetang, and has written for the community newspaper *Le Goût de vivre* under the alias Igene Arbert.

As an educator and community leader, Monsieur Lalonde has dedicated his life to the continued vitality of our region's 400-year-old French heritage.

Nous, les résidents de Simcoe-Nord, vous remercions pour vos contributions et aimerions vous féliciter pour vos accomplissements. Veuillez me joindre en félicitant M. Martin Lalonde.

### ANNIVERSARY OF THE GREAT FIRE OF WINDSOR

**Mr. Percy Hatfield:** Tomorrow, firefighters in Windsor and Detroit will hold a special ceremony on the international boundary line of the Ambassador Bridge. This is all connected to the anniversary of Windsor's great fire in 1849.

A warehouse situated on the site—now the home of the St. Clair College Centre for the Arts—caught fire just after midnight. Strong northwest winds whipped the flames, and in no time, much of the downtown business core was ablaze. Windsor's volunteer fire brigade couldn't keep up.

The flames were seen from across the river, and Detroit engine number 5, a hand pumper, two hose carts and the men of engine companies 4 and 5 hopped aboard the ferry Hastings and rushed to Windsor. They saved the Windsor Castle Hotel and other buildings even as their helmets burned to cinders and their hair and beards were singed.

The following morning, most of Windsor's business district lay in ashes, but the village was saved thanks to the aid of the firemen from Detroit. In appreciation, Windsor citizens gave the Detroit firemen an elegant silver ceremonial speaking trumpet. Speaker, long before electronic bullhorns and PA systems, fire chiefs used speaking trumpets to exhort their men to greater effort. They remain an iconic symbol of command on fire service uniform badges.

The historic silver speaking trumpet will be front and centre at the mid-bridge ceremony tomorrow. It's a lasting symbol of friendship and co-operation between our two city fire departments. Over the years, firefighters from Windsor provided mutual aid in Detroit as well.

Speaker, what a fitting way for today's heroes to celebrate 170 years of a shared legacy.

### ANTI-SEMITISM

**Mrs. Gila Martow:** Just over the last couple of days, I was shocked to learn from the Centre for Israel and Jewish Affairs that a program at Stephen Lewis Secondary School in Mississauga promoted the libel that Israelis harvest Palestinian organs and conduct human testing of pharmaceuticals on Palestinians. These are more than offensive lies; they are contemporary manifestations of a vicious anti-Semitic trope used to justify persecution and violence against Jews for centuries.

The International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance definition of anti-Semitism, the most widely used around the world right now, is clear: It is anti-Semitic to use the symbols and images associated with classic anti-Semitism, like blood libel, to characterize Israel or Israelis. That this has reportedly happened in a school in our province, where impressionable minds are being shaped, makes it more distressing.

According to Statistics Canada, an anti-Semitic hate crime occurred, on average, once every 24 hours in 2017. That is up 60% from 2016. When it comes to hate crimes, Jewish Canadians remain the most frequently targeted group.

Mr. Speaker, how we respond to incidents of this kind defines us as a society. The Peel District School Board is investigating; the Centre for Israel and Jewish Affairs has offered to provide training; and an entire community is waiting for answers. We look forward to hearing what concrete action will be taken to hold those responsible to account and to ensure that this shameful episode is turned into an impactful learning opportunity about anti-Semitic hate.

#### BURGOYNE BRIDGE

**Mrs. Jennifer (Jennie) Stevens:** Once again, I am bringing attention to the highly important issue of the suicide prevention barriers that should be installed on the Burgoyne Bridge in my riding of St. Catharines. Since October 2018, six individuals have tragically taken their own lives on the Burgoyne Bridge in St. Catharines—a regional bridge, might I add. Last week, the Minister of Transportation referred to it as a municipal city responsibility.

Expert testimony acquired through the Niagara region states that these barriers will make a difference, just as they have right here in Toronto at the Bloor viaduct. Not only do the barriers prevent further tragedies for the families of St. Catharines; they act as protection for vehicle operators driving directly below the bridge. These barriers will save lives.

**1310**

The very busy provincial Highway 406 runs directly under the Burgoyne Bridge in St. Catharines, Speaker. I'd like to remind the Minister of Transportation that the ministry absolutely does have a responsibility to protect any driver on the 406 highway. Therefore, the ministry needs to contribute to the barriers and become closely involved in discussions with the region of Niagara surrounding the implementation of these life-saving barriers.

I look forward to discussing this matter further with the minister.

#### ONTARIO BUDGET

**Ms. Mitzie Hunter:** It's my pleasure to rise in the House today and speak on behalf of my residents of Scarborough–Guildwood. This weekend, the Rotary Club of Scarborough held their annual budget breakfast to talk about what the budget means for Scarborough. Sadly, no

PC members bothered to show up for this annual breakfast. Nonetheless, we had a great breakfast with great discussion. What was made clear is that Doug Ford's austerity budget that was ushered in last week is bringing another era—

**The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott):** I want to remind the member to refer to ministers by their riding name, or the Premier by “the Premier,” and members by their riding names.

**Ms. Mitzie Hunter:** —in Ontario not seen since 1996 to 1999.

It actually puts forward the most conservative budget despite a growing economy here in Ontario—cuts to post-secondary education of \$700 million, cuts to social services of \$1 billion, cuts to justice, cuts to education by raising class sizes and giving students less on a per-funding basis, and cuts to Indigenous affairs of 49%.

Speaker, this budget shows where the PC government's priorities lie based on what they focused on: alcohol, beer and gambling. They didn't mention poverty—not even one time in this budget. Nothing speaks louder than this about the Ford government's priorities.

#### CHILDREN'S TREATMENT CENTRE OF CHATHAM-KENT

**Mr. Rick Nicholls:** I rise today to commend the excellent work being done in my riding of Chatham-Kent–Leamington by the Children's Treatment Centre of Chatham-Kent. Mr. Speaker, the life of every child has value, and the programs offered by the Children's Treatment Centre work wonders in helping children from birth to age 18 actualize their value and potential. They help our communities know and realize that a child with special needs gives far more to their family and community than they take.

When a family has a child diagnosed with a disability, it can seem like there is a mountain ahead of them. Without proper information and supports, they can easily fall into despair. This problem is exacerbated when the supports that are out there do not complement each other, turning life into a long to-do list, chasing down disparate and unconnected services.

That's where the Children's Treatment Centre of Chatham-Kent and similar groups step in. They ensure that all services and supports that a family with a disabled child needs are in one location, locally administered for differing local needs and emphasizing a community experience.

One of the most important things they do is work with school boards to fully integrate students with special needs, training staff and students alike in supporting the transition from earlier supports to a positive and safe learning environment.

Local champions like the Children's Treatment Centre of Chatham-Kent do great work in helping children with special needs integrate successfully into our schools and communities.

## SIKH HERITAGE MONTH

**Mr. Kevin Yarde:** It is an honour to rise in this House in celebration of Sikh Heritage Month. Sikhs have been in Canada for over 100 years, and they have made valuable contributions to Canadian society.

Their contributions enrich our community and make it a better place to live and thrive.

We just celebrated Black History Month in February, and now we are celebrating Sikh Heritage Month. This is very important, Mr. Speaker. In a world of growing divisiveness, hatred and racism, it is more important than ever to take the opportunity to learn about others in our society and be more accepting.

The Sikh community was recently belittled and labelled by the federal government. With growing intolerance, such actions create conditions of racism and hatred and place a target on the community's back. That is why Sikh Heritage Month is such an important platform for the Sikh community in Ontario—because it allows a platform to educate others about what Sikhs are and what their values and beliefs are.

I want to congratulate the Sikh Heritage Month Foundation, which, in partnership with the city of Brampton, has put forward a calendar of wonderful events in Brampton. I commend the work that the foundation is doing, and I personally look forward to attending great community-based events celebrating Sikh Heritage Month for the rest of April.

I want to wish everyone a happy Sikh Heritage Month and a happy Vaisakhi. *Vaheguru ji ka khalsa; vaheguru ji ke fatehi.*

SPECIAL OLYMPICS  
WORLD SUMMER GAMES

**Mr. Will Bouma:** It's always an honour to rise in this House, and today I want to talk about some amazing athletes from my riding of Brantford—Brant.

Neil MacDonald, Kerry Lane and Jacob Potts recently participated in the 2019 Special Olympics World Games in Abu Dhabi, United Arab Emirates, this past March. This year's games had an estimated 7,000 athletes from 170 countries—and 20,000 volunteers—competing in 24 sports.

In the sport of bocce, Neil MacDonald won two silver medals, Kerry Lane won a silver and a bronze, and as a team, they won fourth in the world. That is just amazing.

In track and field, Jacob Potts won fourth in the 4x100 relay, sixth in the 200-metre run and seventh place in long jump. What an achievement.

Prior to competing, athletes were taken to Dubai, where they did a variety of activities, including seeing the grand mosque. After the games were over, they did more unique things, like driving over dunes, witnessing native entertainment and camel riding.

These athletes truly are remarkable, and I want them to know that Brantford—Brant is proud of them for their dedication, commitment and passion.

Congratulations, Neil, Kerry and Jacob. You give me my juice.

## VAISAKHI

**Mr. Deepak Anand:** This past weekend, I had the opportunity to celebrate Vaisakhi. On the day of Vaisakhi in 1699, the 10th Sikh guru, Shri Guru Gobind Singh Ji, created and initiated the Khalsa, a warrior with a duty to protect the innocent from any form of religious persecution. Sikhs all around the globe come together to commemorate and reflect on this significant historical event.

Vaisakhi is a day of celebration, the beginning of the harvest period. Families gather at their local temples with flowers and offerings to thank God for this year's plentiful crop and to pray for future prosperity.

It is also believed that the goddess Ganga descended to this planet, and devotees take the ritual dip in the holy waters of the Ganga.

This festival is also celebrated amongst the Tamil community as Puthandu, by the Nepalese community as Nepalese new year, and by the Buddhist community as Vesakha or Buddha Purnima to commemorate the birth, enlightenment and death of Gautama Buddha.

Irrespective of religious belief, it is an occasion for celebrating the community's growth and for remembering a set of shared values and united memories. In both its cultural and religious context, Vaisakhi is essentially about community, progress and celebration.

Mr. Speaker, I believe festivals are stress relievers and help us balance our emotions. More positivity naturally lowers negativity and brings us together.

On this auspicious week, I'd like to urge everyone: Let's celebrate each other's celebrations and festivals together. Let's build a better world full of happiness and joy.

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

1320

## PETITIONS

## VETERANS MEMORIAL

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

"Whereas during the war in Afghanistan, Canada lost 159 military personnel; and

"Whereas those brave souls were driven along the Highway of Heroes between CFB Trenton and the coroner's office in Toronto;

"Whereas since Confederation, 117,000 Canadian lives have been lost in military conflict; and

"Whereas there is a recognized and celebrated plan to transform the Highway of Heroes into a living tribute that honours all of Canada's war dead;

“Whereas that plan calls for the planting of two million trees, including 117,000 beautiful commemorative trees adjacent to Highway 401 along the Highway of Heroes;

“Whereas this effort would provide an inspired drive along an otherwise pedestrian stretch of asphalt;

“Whereas the two million trees will recognize all Canadians who have served during times of war;

“Whereas over three million tonnes of CO<sub>2</sub> will be sequestered, over 500 million pounds of oxygen will be produced and 200 million gallons of water will be released into the air each day, benefiting all Ontarians in the name of those who served our country and those who gave the ultimate sacrifice; and

“Whereas there is a fundraising goal of \$10 million;

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

“That the current government of Ontario put its financial support behind this fundraising effort for the Highway of Heroes Tree campaign.”

I fully support it. I’m going to sign it and give it to Liv to bring up to the front.

#### FISH AND WILDLIFE MANAGEMENT

**Mr. Will Bouma:** “To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

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

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

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

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

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

I fully support this petition. I will place my signature upon it and give it to page Greyson.

#### EDUCATION FUNDING

**Ms. Bhutla Karpoche:** This petition is titled “Don’t Increase Class Sizes in Our Public Schools.”

“To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

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

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

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

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

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

I wholeheartedly agree with this petition and will affix my signature in support.

#### GASOLINE PRICES

**M<sup>me</sup> France Gélinas:** I would like to thank Nicole and Michel Lavallée from Hanmer in my riding for this petition—a petition on the price of gas.

“Whereas northern Ontario motorists continue to be subject to wild fluctuations in the price of gasoline; and

“Whereas the province could eliminate opportunistic price gouging and deliver fair, stable and predictable fuel prices; and

“Whereas five provinces and many US states already have some sort of gas price regulation; and

“Whereas jurisdictions with gas price regulation have seen an end to wild price fluctuations, a shrinking of price discrepancies between urban and rural communities and lower annualized gas prices;”

They petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

“Mandate the Ontario Energy Board to monitor the price of gasoline across Ontario in order to reduce price volatility and unfair regional price differences while encouraging competition.”

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

#### NORTHERN HEALTH SERVICES

**Mr. Jamie West:** I want to thank Margaret Arnold, who collected 26 pages of petitions from Sudbury.

“Save the Breast Screening and Assessment Service.

“To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“Whereas Premier”—and the Premier is named—“promised that there would not be cuts to nurses’ positions; and

“Whereas in Sudbury we have already lost 70 nurses, and Health Sciences North is closing part of the Breast Screening and Assessment Service; and

“Whereas cuts to the Sudbury Breast Screening and Assessment Service will result in longer wait times, which is very stressful for women diagnosed with breast cancer; and

“Whereas cuts to the Sudbury Breast Screening and Assessment Service will only take us backwards;

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

“Provide adequate funding to Health Sciences North to ensure northerners have equitable access to life-saving programs such as the Breast Screening and Assessment Service.”

This is timely with the release of the budget. I'll affix my signature and give it to page Erynn.

#### SOCIAL ASSISTANCE

**Ms. Bhutila Karpoche:** This petition is on social service cuts.

“Whereas we, as a community, have not been consulted at all by our current provincial government regarding revisions to social assistance” as part of “the government’s ‘100-day review.’ As a result of our exclusion in this decision-making process ... any changes that are made to our social assistance programs will not include input from the very people who are at their very core, know the most and are the most affected by these programs. Our government can and must do better;

“Whereas members of our community were consulted on recommendations to forming a clear path forward to social assistance and income security reform. These recommendations were put forward October 2017 in Income Security: A Roadmap for Change. They spelled our truths, addressed some of the most difficult corners of the system, while still staying very conservative in terms of the proposed rate increases.... Regardless, we were still going to be well below the poverty line for a while;

“Whereas before the June 2018 elections, the Liberal government passed several recommendations from or inspired by the Roadmap, including 19 improvements to the ODSP and OW that were to start this fall.” Whereas “Minister MacLeod announced that the rate increases would be cut to a one-time, across-the-board ‘compassionate’ increase of 1.5%, and the 19 improvements were ‘on pause,’ pending the ... review on which our community has not been consulted;

“We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario” as follows: “to reinstate all 19 improvements to ODSP and OW on which our community was consulted, including, but not limited to:

“—3% increase to basic needs and shelter rates;

“—2% increase to other allowances;

“—changing the definition of ‘spouse’—from three months of cohabitation to three years (as per family law);

“—replacing the board and lodge rate with full basic benefits;

“—doubling of the ODSP/OW earning exemption and reducing OW waiting period;

“—full exemptions of TFSAs, RRSPs, gifts and voluntary payments;

“—expansion of remote communities allowance;

“—allowing dependent adults to get OW on their own when living with family due to lack of housing.”

I support this petition and will affix my signature to it.

#### SERVICES EN FRANÇAIS

**M<sup>me</sup> France Gélinas:** J'aimerais remercier l'ACFO de Windsor pour les pétitions.

« Ensemble, résistons!

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

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

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

Ils demandent à « l'Assemblée législative de l'Ontario de : rétablir le Commissariat aux services en français et remettre sur les rails le projet pour une université francophone. »

J'appuie cette pétition, je vais la signer et je demande à Mathew de l'amener à la table des greffiers.

#### LYME DISEASE

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

“Whereas Ontario does not have a strategy on Lyme disease; and

“Whereas the Public Health Agency of Canada is developing an Action Plan on Lyme Disease; and

**1330**

“Whereas Toronto Public Health says that transmission of the disease requires the tick to be attached for 24 hours, so early intervention and diagnosis is of primary importance; and

“Whereas a motion was introduced to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario encouraging the government to adopt a strategy on Lyme disease, while taking into account the impact the disease has upon individuals and families in Ontario;

“We, the undersigned, petition the government of Ontario to develop an integrated strategy on Lyme disease consistent with the action plan of the Public Health Agency of Canada, taking into account available treatments, accessibility issues and the efficacy of the currently available diagnostic mechanisms. In so doing, it should consult with representatives of the health care community and patients’ groups within one year.”

I fully support this petition on behalf of the people of Waterloo and will give it to page Gajan.

#### SERVICES FOR PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES

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

“Whereas over 1,300 Ontarians and their families rely on independent facilitation, a service that helps those with developmental disabilities pursue work or school, live independently, enjoy hobbies and participate in their community;

“Whereas by cutting funding to independent facilitation, families will only be able to access this support through an inequitable fee-for-service model;

“Whereas the ... cuts to the independent facilitation program means fewer resources will now be available to people with developmental disabilities and their families;

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

“To provide permanent funding for independent facilitation services and support to be offered province-wide so all Ontarians with developmental disabilities and their loved ones can access this important service without financial or geographical barriers.”

Speaker, I agree 100%. I’m going to sign it and give it to Liv to bring down to the table.

#### SCHOOL BUS SAFETY

**Ms. Bhutla Karpoche:** This petition is titled “Support Seat Belts on School Buses.”

“To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

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

“Whereas the safety of Ontario’s students should be the top priority of the government of the day, to ensure that every preventative measure is taken to protect them from harm or death on our roads and highways while travelling on school buses; and

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

I support this petition and will affix my signature to it.

#### LONG-TERM CARE

**M<sup>me</sup> France Gélinas:** I’d like to thank the parishioners of St. Peter’s church in Goderich, as well as Louise Levesque Breault from Hanmer in my riding, for these petitions. It reads as follows:

“Time to Care.....

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

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

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

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

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

#### ORDERS OF THE DAY

##### 2019 ONTARIO BUDGET

##### BUDGET DE L’ONTARIO DE 2019

Resuming the debate adjourned on April 11, 2019, on the motion that this House approves in general the budgetary policy of the government.

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

**Ms. Sandy Shaw:** It is my honour to rise today to talk about the budget for the people of Ontario and also for the people that I represent in Hamilton West–Ancaster–Dundas.

There’s a good expression that says you should not judge a book by its cover, and I would say that couldn’t be more apt than it is with this budget before us. If you looked at the cover of this budget, you would think that this budget was about the future of our children. You would think that it was about quality education. You would think that it was about protecting what matters. But you certainly cannot judge a book by its cover.

This budget has been described in many areas—

*Interjections.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott):** I'm sorry to interrupt the member.

The government side will come to order.

The member can continue her presentation.

**Ms. Sandy Shaw:** I've only just got started, Mr. Speaker. It's going to be a rough hour for the government side.

The other thing that this budget has been described as is the booze budget—the fact that there are almost 400 pages in this budget and reference to alcohol happens about 35 times. And guess what? The mention of poverty doesn't happen once in this budget. Do you know what it reminds me of? Have you ever seen those movies, or even in the Simpsons, where they take a book and hollow it out. You open it up and guess what's inside there? A flask. My guess is that would be the best use of this book. It would be a good use of taxpayers' money as that service.

It's quite clear that this book, this budget book, is about booze and rebranding. It's not about investing in the vital programs and services for the people of Ontario. While the Conservatives may try to deflate and deflect what they're doing, while there are a lot of gimmicks in here, this budget actually creates real harm to the things that happen most to the people of Ontario. Try as I might, there is no polishing this dud, Mr. Speaker.

Over the past year, we've seen Ontarians growing more and more concerned about the things that matter most to them; and since this government has been elected, I hear more and more from my constituents about how they're really concerned about the direction that the Premier is taking this province. They feel that their concerns are not being heard. I have to say that in a budget that is almost 400 pages there is a lot of information missing and there are a lot of things that matter to the people of Ontario, a lot of people's concerns, that are missing from this budget.

As I said, we know exactly what the priorities of this government are: It's booze and rebranding. But with this budget, it's quite clear what they don't value. Despite what is on the cover, Mr. Speaker, this is not a budget that values our kids' futures. It's not a budget that values education at all. This budget has been described in some circles as mean-spirited. It's even been described as a callous and cruel budget.

I'll tell you exactly why people feel this way. That's because after 15 years of disappointing Liberal governments, families were feeling that they were left behind. They were struggling with things like paying their hydro bills, finding affordable housing, finding affordable child care, not to mention the crisis in our hospitals and some of the other issues that were most pressing to everyone's daily lives.

1340

But after 15 years, this is a budget that has disappointed people. It has not brought relief to those key issues for the people of Ontario, and it eliminates beyond a shadow of a doubt that—this Conservative government doesn't feel like it's their job to help you or to help your family. We see with the budget that things are being taken away from people in the province of Ontario. Things are being taken

away from the most vulnerable people in Ontario. We see cuts to programs that impact children, cuts to programs that impact students in public schools. We see cuts in our post-secondary schools. We see things that are going to impact people living in the Far North and rural communities, and most certainly we see for the Indigenous population of Ontario nothing that is going to give hope in this budget. Mr. Speaker, just so that I can be clear about what we are talking about here, I'm going to highlight some of the cuts that are identified in this budget.

At the very top, there are a billion dollars in cuts from the Ministry of Children, Community and Social Services.

**Mr. Percy Hatfield:** A billion.

**Ms. Sandy Shaw:** A billion dollars. These are our most vulnerable people. These are children. These are people who are living with disabilities. They are people who rely on this government at the most vulnerable point in their lives, and this government is taking a billion dollars away from programs that they rely on.

We have \$1.3 billion being taken away from rural affairs, northern development and forestry, the two ministries most directly responsible for our environment and climate change. We are now losing \$1.3 billion from that budget.

As I mentioned earlier, the Indigenous affairs budget has been slashed. This ministry is already a third of a ministry, with it being combined with the other two priorities, and now what we're seeing is a slash to this budget that clearly shows that this government is not truly committed to our truth and reconciliation efforts.

There are \$700 million from the training, colleges and universities budget gone, and included in that \$700-million cut is a threat from this government to withhold as much as 60% of what's left if universities don't perform to the standards that this government will determine.

We already have seen health care and education being squeezed, and this budget holds them to less than inflation. When you are spending less than inflation, that means cuts. That means we will be creating real job losses for front-line workers in Ontario.

We've heard this government talk about their super health bureaucracy or the super-agency they're creating, upending our world-class public health system and opening the door to private companies. We are concerned that the words "not for profit" are not put in any legislation, and this budget does nothing to allay fears that they are taking our public dollars and putting them at risk for private profits.

In Hamilton and across Ontario, we struggle with schools that are not in good repair. We already saw a minister who took \$100 million away from the program to fix these crumbling schools. And with these cuts—

**Hon. Lisa M. Thompson:** That's not true.

**The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott):** The Minister of Education has to come to order. The member for Hamilton West—Ancaster—Dundas has the floor.

**Ms. Sandy Shaw:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Despite what the minister says, people in the city of Hamilton are going to schools, our kids are going to school

in Hamilton, where 31 of the schools in Hamilton failed the lead test. These cuts to the infrastructure have real and serious health impacts to our children.

Now, we've learned recently that in this budget we find, sort of hidden in the budget—it took us a while to dig through it to find that there are massive changes in here, which essentially are trying to, and we'll just say it, kneecap the ability of Ontarians to hold this government to account in the courts.

This is why people are describing this as a very mean-spirited budget. But I have to say, the thing to me that is most mean-spirited is the fact that this does nothing to allay the anxiety and worry of the people of Ontario. We have heard time and time again from families with children living with autism that they don't know what the future will be for their children. They don't know what these budget cuts will mean, or these changes to the program will mean. They have been here on the front lawn. They have been in this Legislature with anguished pleas to help them understand what this is going to mean for their children. This budget does not answer any of those questions.

There's no answer for people living with disabilities. Special Services at Home and the Passport Program, things that people rely on to live lives of dignity, are not mentioned at all in this budget. Again, it's cruel to keep people in suspense, in the dark, when these cuts will mean very real things to their lives.

But, Mr. Speaker, don't get me wrong—I'm talking about a lot of cuts in this government. This government is spending big in this budget, but they're just not spending money on you, me or our families. It seems to me that it's ironic that only the Conservative government could spend more than the Liberals and still cut things that matter to people.

In the lead-up to this budget, we had a good look at the spending priorities of this government, and I can pinpoint billions in costs and handouts that this government has already announced. We've heard time and time again about Kathleen Wynne's \$6-million man at Hydro One. This government managed to turn Mr. Mayo Schmidt into a \$9-million man to make him go away.

The Ford government seems to be meddling in our hydro system. There was a story that was reported on—it seems a very long time ago, Mr. Speaker, but it was a big deal here for a while in the House, and that was the fact that at OPG, an old political foe of the Premier's was fired, and that cost \$500,000 in severance. This constant meddling that we're talking about is what led American regulators to block Hydro One's acquisition of the Washington-based corporation Avista. That cancellation of the deal cost \$138 million in penalty fees, and this cost actually balloons to a whopping \$191 million when you factor in the finance charges and the interest on that.

Then there are the famous tickets to the Ford gravy train that we've been hearing about, particularly from the member from Essex. These patronage and favour-trading appointments are adding up to millions of dollars. The former PC Party president, Rueben Devlin, apparently will

be collecting about \$1 million over the course of three years to upend our health care system.

**Mr. John Vanthof:** A million here, a million there.

**Ms. Sandy Shaw:** Yes, a million here, a million there—amongst friends. What's a million amongst friends?

We have the former Ford campaign tour director, Ian Todd, now getting a \$350,000-a-year payday, which is a huge bump in salary, for the gig as the trade representative to Washington. We've even seen that Ford's former principal secretary is making \$197,000 a year after she was appointed to the Ontario Energy Board. These are just a few of these sweet gigs and penalties and costs that are starting to add up for the people of Ontario.

But I have to say that one of the biggest handouts of all was that this government cancelled a tax increase to the wealthiest among us. That cut has resulted in a revenue loss of about \$308 million. It's starting to add up; right?

And can we just say on top of all of that, the cost to Ontario families with this government cancelling the cap-and-trade program is going to cost about \$3 billion? Instead of a program that paid the taxpayers of Ontario, we now have a scheme that in fact will have us spending about \$400 million a year to pay polluters rather than us collecting revenue.

As I said before, this is money that is adding up, and it could have gone to repair the crumbling schools that I talked about. I know that in the city of Hamilton, we would like some of that money to make sure that kids can go to school and drink water lead-free.

While this budget takes away from those services that I've already highlighted, this is a budget that says that the cupboard is bare, that we all have to tighten our belts. Clearly, not everyone in the province of Ontario is being asked by this government to tighten their belts.

I just want to say that there are real cuts identified to programs in this budget, but somehow this government is trying to spin this as a government that's reinvesting.

**1350**

The bottom line is that this government's budget is more than the Liberal spending, but not on programs. There are two things in this budget that account for this bump—the largest budget in the province of Ontario—and those two things really boil down to accounting—not services that people rely on, not supporting the people of Ontario, but accounting changes.

The first one is the treatment of the teachers' pension plan, something that has been discussed a lot, especially on the Select Committee on Financial Transparency. That has come back on the books and accounts for a significant amount of the spending.

Then there is the Liberal's Fair Hydro Plan—

**Ms. Catherine Fife:** Not so fair.

**Ms. Sandy Shaw:** Not so fair. And apparently, now it's the Conservative's Fair Hydro Plan—

**Mr. Percy Hatfield:** Still not so fair.

**Ms. Sandy Shaw:** Still not so fair.

This government had a promise to come up with a 12% reduction in the hydro rates for the people of Ontario; the

budget doesn't address that. But what it does do is it shows that this government is prepared to continue to borrow billions—about \$2.5 billion, if not more, in this budget—to continue to subsidize hydro rates.

The important thing to note here is that the previous Liberal government, starting with the Conservatives before that, began the privatization of our hydro system. Now what we have is a borrowing scheme in this budget that continues to subsidize hydro rates, which, in essence, is subsidizing the profits of the corporations that are profiting from our hydro system.

The people of Ontario were outraged by Kathleen Wynne and the Liberals when they took that borrowing and moved it off-book. But now that that borrowing is in the budget—billions of dollars in borrowing—and it has gone from the ratepayers to the taxpayers, somehow this government is trying to spin it like it's a gift, that this government has given the people of Ontario a gift. But they're using their own taxpayer dollars, their own money, to present it back to them as a gift. That's something that the people of Ontario saw through with the Liberals, and they'll see through that gimmick with this government as well.

I just have to say that in virtually every ministry, as I have said, there are cuts. And where there are increases, they're held to below the cost of inflation. So in real, practical terms, if you are only funding below the cost of inflation, that means cuts. We're talking about cuts to things that people count on—cuts in our quality, affordable, public education; cuts to the health care system, that is already so drastically underfunded. These are the choices that this government has made, and they are going to impact the people of Ontario. So while this budget presents lots of cuts—believe me, this budget is showing spending, but it's not spending on the priorities of the people of Ontario.

If I could just focus on the children, community and social services budget for a minute, as we talked about \$1 billion in cuts in that most—

**Ms. Catherine Fife:** Unbelievable.

**Ms. Sandy Shaw:** Yes. Children, community and social services—\$1 billion of cuts.

There are estimates that poverty can cost the province of Ontario between \$32 billion and \$38 billion, so just ignoring this is not going to make it go away. It's going to have real impacts on the GDP of the province of Ontario, but this government does not seem to understand that. They don't seem to understand the root causes of the kinds of poverty that people are experiencing—child poverty—in the province of Ontario.

As I said before, the fact that this budget continues to leave people in the dark is really, really a huge disappointment. There are no details in this budget about, as I said, the Special Services at Home, about the autism supports, about Passport. These are answers that people have been waiting for and desperately need to know—not in this budget.

The Income Security Advocacy Centre said that this budget “creates even more uncertainty for people who

receive benefits from the Ontario Works (OW) and Ontario Disability Support Program (ODSP) system.” The cuts represent “a shockingly high 11% reduction in spending on benefits and services to some of the most vulnerable low-income Ontarians.”

Clearly, the impact of this budget will be devastating for people who rely on social services. This is \$1 billion. I won't say it again—maybe I will: It's from the most vulnerable people. This is our social safety net—the things that, as decent human beings, we think governments should provide—and yet we are slashing it. Why? It's clearly not a priority for this government.

Madam Speaker, health care is the number one issue for the people of Ontario. It's the number one issue in my riding of Hamilton. We know that the Liberal government has left our world-class health care hanging by a thread. We also know, and it's important to note, that Ontario has the lowest per capita spending in the country of Canada on health care. We spend less than any other province; we come 10 out of 10 in investing in our health care system.

We have a system that's drastically underfunded after years of the Liberals. And now, with this PC government, we do not see anything in this budget that's going to even begin to address this crisis in the health care system.

In the province of Ontario and in Canada, inflation is running at about 1.9%, give or take. It's going down as the outlook starts to get changed daily. According to the FAO, health care inflation has a different number because of the importance of health care and because of the impacts of our aging demographic. According to the FAO, in order just to keep pace with health care spending, that inflation rate is 4.3%. In the budget, this 1.2% increase that this government is touting is below the rate of inflation and will result in clear cuts—not just in the spending, but it will result in layoffs in hospitals. We're already beginning to see those layoffs. We heard this morning about Grand River Hospital losing—how many? I forget the number.

**Ms. Catherine Fife:** It's already 40.

**Ms. Sandy Shaw:** It's 40-plus. And other hospitals are already feeling the impacts of these cuts. They've been hanging on for some relief from this government. Front-line workers—nurses, doctors, PSWs, technicians; some of the best in the world—have been helping to keep this system afloat, looking for an answer from this government for relief, and this budget does not deliver it.

I'm on the finance committee. We toured the province of Ontario and heard from all kinds of people all across Ontario. Health care was the number one thing that people were concerned about.

During the pre-budget consultation, we had a deputation from the Ontario Hospital Association, and they said that they would require \$656 million just to stay at the same place, just in order to prevent layoffs.

**Ms. Catherine Fife:** Just hallway medicine.

**Ms. Sandy Shaw:** Exactly—just to hang on to hallway medicine. In fact, this increase this government is presenting is almost half of what the Ontario Hospital Association said was the bare minimum that they required.

So people will continue to suffer with long waits. They'll continue to be treated in hallways. They'll continue to be treated in converted closets, as was my father. My father was recently in emergency and he was treated in a converted closet. Nothing in this budget is going to change that. What the people of Ontario were looking for is not here.

The government can bray all they want, but do you know what? All the bluster and all the braying is not going to change the fact that this is not a budget that will do anything to fix our health care system. We're looking at longer wait times and more Ontarians treated in hallways and closets.

That brings me to the opioid crisis. Of all the things in this House that have been so egregious to me, it's what seems to be a tone-deaf, almost—

**Ms. Catherine Fife:** Callous, cruel.

**Ms. Sandy Shaw:** —callous, cruel response to an opioid crisis that is in this province, in every one of our communities. This budget has zero information on opioid treatment sites—clearly continuing to ignore this health care emergency. There's zero information on the 21 consumption and treatment sites. This continues to be the response of this government. If they ignore it, they think it will just go away. But this is a crisis that is impacting families all across Ontario.

Mental health: We hear a lot about mental health. There probably is not one of us in this House who hasn't had an issue of mental health impact them personally. This is very real and very personal to the people of Ontario. But really, we already know that this government has cut \$330 million from the planned spending on mental health, and there is zero information in this budget on the government's plans to address our mental health crisis.

**1400**

Another surprise announcement in this budget is the cuts to local public health units. Nobody was expecting this. The government clearly knew, but this was not something that was being expected in communities across Ontario. So this government plans to cut the number of public health units from 35 to 10, cutting that many public health units with no real rationale, no evidence produced as to the reason why. That also includes cuts to public health laboratories. Currently there are about 11 public health laboratories in the province of Ontario. There is zero information on how the \$200-million cut from local health units will be implemented. It's really not clear, again, how this government plans to change the funding formula for these really important public health funds.

Mr. Speaker, I have to say that they are cutting funding—

**Interjection:** “Mr. Speaker”?

**Ms. Sandy Shaw:** Sorry—Madam Speaker. It was written here. I have to change that.

You know what? The very fact that these are the organizations that would be around to help us prevent a future tragedy like Walkerton—I just ask, have the Conservatives not learned anything from past mistakes and past tragedies?

I have to quote the medical officer of health from Middlesex-London: “Public health teams help stop the spread of infectious diseases like SARS and meningitis, they inspect pools and spas, prevent the next Walkerton. We have programs that offer vaccinations, we support early childhood development, breastfeeding support, prenatal support.” And now, thanks to their cuts to health and their backdoor hidden legislation, the government is creating the conditions for another Walkerton. This is described as nothing short of shameful, and I couldn't agree more.

The people of Ontario deserve better than this. They deserve better than a government that feels that they know all the answers. They don't seem to like to listen to evidence or listen to experts, and I hate to say it, but this is a recipe for disaster.

We talk a lot about seniors, seniors living in poverty. There needs to be more recognition of the contributions that seniors have made in the province of Ontario and in Canada. We need to be doing more to support seniors to live in dignity, which they have earned. They built this province, and they deserve this kind of recognition. We have this government that did make a promise during the election that they would implement a dental care program for seniors. We've seen it in this budget. They're announcing \$90 million annually for a new dental program for low-income seniors. I'd just like to add that \$90 million is less than half the amount that this government spent on their botched, failed Avista deal. This is not even close to what they spent in paying for a deal that they botched. But this is for low-income seniors. It's not going to be implemented until the year 2020, and if you're a senior and you earn \$20,000 a year, guess what? You don't qualify.

We've already talked about the changes that this government has made to OHIP+, some of the ways in which, as we've heard in the House—the unintended consequences of people not getting the kinds of medicines that they expected during this program, of it not working just like the government thought because it was rushed and not well thought out, which is sort of typical, I have to say. And you know what? The government continues to fail to explain how the changes in OHIP+ will be implemented. There's talk about \$250 million in annualized savings—no details here, so we can only imagine how these savings are going to materialize. My guess is that it will mean fewer people will have access to the kinds of drugs and services that they could expect.

There's also something telling with this government's move towards privatization in our health care services. There's a lot of talk about means testing in some of the government's reports that they've commissioned. The government states that it plans to “continue its work to examine the Ontario Drug Benefit Program, with the objective of creating a sustainable” program. While there are no clear cuts to this program yet, the idea that this is going to be means-tested is certainly the kind of thing that will make people concerned about how universal their access will be to these kinds of programs.

Again, to date, the government has not provided any policy details on how these changes would unfold in the

program, and it's not clear how they've arrived at some of their cost savings. I guess we just have to take their word for it, right?

**Ms. Catherine Fife:** No.

**Ms. Sandy Shaw:** No? Okay.

Education: a lot of talk about education and a lot of good questions in question period about education. It's a big issue in my riding. We know that the Liberal government underfunded education for years. With this budget, it's clear that we're going to be going from bad to worse.

Education is not keeping up with inflation. So if you fund education lower than the rate of inflation, this equals a cut to program spending. The thing is, in this case, do you know who suffers? We know who suffers: It's unfortunately our children, who are trying to get the best start in life.

I have to quote OSSTF here, who said, "The budget presented today at Queen's Park is smoke and mirrors when it comes to the province's education system." We've already seen what this is meaning in the province. We know that this will mean larger class sizes, fewer available courses, and we're already starting to see education layoffs and teacher layoffs in the province.

Parents and students were looking for a vision for education in last week's budget, and they were sorely disappointed by this budget. I visited a high school, and they're not distracted by the Premier's focus on the colour of the licence plate. Even though they're in high school, they weren't even that interested in the government's obsession with easy access to alcohol.

Ontario's children know that these cuts will have significant impacts in their classrooms. We just learned on Friday that the school boards in Windsor, Guelph and Waterloo have sent out about 260 redundancy notices to teachers. We hear that these changes could amount to as many as 3,500 teacher layoffs in the province of Ontario. That's a lot of teachers being taken out of our kids' classrooms.

Yesterday, I learned that in Hamilton, the Hamilton Catholic school board is issuing notices to 36 of their teachers. So let me quote the Ontario English Catholic Teachers' Association, who calls this a "regressive budget" that "is going to move us backward." They say, "We are most certainly looking at increases in class sizes and the loss of specialized programs and supports. When we should be making investments to ensure all students are able to reach their full potential, the government's cuts will result in more students falling through the cracks." That's the president of the Ontario English Catholic Teachers' Association.

The sad fact, Madam Speaker, is that we have seen this movie before. We saw it the last time the Conservatives were in power. We saw cuts and we saw chaos in our classrooms. We saw it when the Liberals attacked educators with their Bill 115. And now, apparently the government is launching a task force into school boards. These are the same school boards that have been raising concerns about the Premier's plan for larger classes, fired teachers and fewer courses. So, my question: Is this task force

another way now to maybe attack school boards, which will continue to put students' ability to graduate and their quality of education at risk?

It is no joke when we look at schools, particularly in rural and northern communities. We're being warned that in rural and northern communities, these cuts could mean that more kids are being bused along our roads to go to school. We even hear that these cuts could result in school closures in rural and northern communities, and we all know that schools are often the fabric of a community. These cuts that risk taking out the heart of the community is something that goes beyond just budget efficiency.

**1410**

It's almost hard to believe that this is a genuine suggestion from the Ministry of Education: that students should take a semester's worth—four courses—online. Where is the evidence that this makes any sense for children's education? Not only is it a bad idea; it's not based on evidence. Certainly, this decision can't have been made with our kids' best interests in mind.

I need to point out that this mandatory requirement to take online courses is deeply inequitable when it comes, again, to Ontarians who live in rural and northern communities. They don't have access to broadband. Like, hello? I don't know what the government was thinking when they put this in and didn't understand how this was going to impact communities that are already under significant disadvantage.

As I said before, there is no plan in here to address our crumbling schools. I mean, 31 schools in my riding—31 schools with kids going to school every day—failed the lead test. They cannot drink the water in their schools because it's contaminated with lead. Ancaster Senior and Dundas Central are just two of the many schools where kids are going and they cannot drink from the water fountains. But this is a government that is not addressing this in any regard.

I'd just like to end with a quote from ETFO: "The government is undermining learning conditions for all students with larger class sizes and insufficient funding for students," most importantly, "with special needs, mental health issues and high-risk behaviours."

There's a lot missing from the government's plan for education. There is no plan to deal with violence in schools and classrooms. There is really no plan for autism supports in classrooms. Guess what? There's no mention of special education at all. There is no plan, clearly, as I've described, to make Ontario's system more equitable with regard to northern communities, rural communities. And it certainly doesn't even address the additional burden on schools when they operate in low-income communities. There's no new funding for English as a second language and there are no changes to even begin to address the problem of the funding formula for schools. So there's nothing here that people can see any hope in. All they see is it going from bad to worse.

But the ministry did have a suggestion; we may or may not find it helpful. They suggested that school boards should be "finding internal efficiencies in the Ministry of

Education, through modernization initiatives including greater use of virtual meetings.” Maybe that’s what we need to do; we’ll just find some efficiencies by having virtual meetings. I’m sure that’s the real problem with our education system: We have too many face-to-face meetings. Virtual meetings should cover it.

We all feel that our kids deserve so much better, and guess what? The kids know it. We saw hundreds of thousands of kids stand up for their education. I visited a school in my riding, Westdale high school, and they had a message for the Premier, because they heard that the Premier thought this wasn’t something that they did, that they weren’t capable of standing up and defending their own education or even understanding what it meant to them. But they wanted to let the Premier know that they will stand up for their education, that they did this on their own and they’re capable of it. The Premier would make a big mistake if he continues to underestimate the children of our province, the youth. They know what’s going on and they’re going to hold this government to account.

We won’t stand by and watch this government undermine the education of an entire generation of young students. We owe our teachers, our students, our families so much more than what is being presented in this budget—or government.

Post-secondary education: If we think the cuts to K to 12 are bad, we thought that maybe the minister would make some improvements to post-secondary. It’s not in this budget. We’ve got a government that already scrapped free tuition, which helped young people access education. We have a government that thinks that getting rid of the Student Choice Initiative, making it mandatory for institutions to provide an online option, cutting out non-essential services, but also cutting out programs that are about equity and provide some safe options for kids in university—that’s gone.

This government scrapped the six-month interest-free period for student loans. Six months from the time students graduate—it takes them time to find an appropriate job in their field. That six months of additional interest on an already increasing debt burden, thanks to this government—they could have used that time. They could have used that break to take the time to find courses, education in the field that they graduated in, but again, this government is just making things worse for post-secondary students.

We have \$400 million that is going to be lost in post-secondary, and we already know that this is going to have a devastating impact on the students of Ontario to afford education—good, quality education. The Canadian Federation of Students understands this, and they said, “This budget will leave students with more debt and fewer services.” Well, that’s quite clear by this government.

Not only is this government taking \$400 million out of post-secondary education—which really just makes no sense. If you have a province that’s trying to educate people, to have a growing economy, it makes no sense to undermine post-secondary education. Maybe the government has a plan that they might want to share with us, but

not in this budget. Not only is this government cutting post-secondary education by \$400 million; they’re tying 60% of the ongoing funding to performance indicators. Who knows what that means? It would be interesting to know. Sadly, this budget doesn’t show that.

These performance agreements run out next year, so starting very shortly, universities are going to have to march to the government’s tune when it comes to post-secondary education. Clearly Premier Ford wants to tell universities what they can and what they can’t teach, and what better expert than the Premier on post-secondary education? Because you know what? You don’t want to listen to students—but it seems to be a government that has all the answers.

We’ve talked before about the impact this government will have on rural and northern communities. Northern colleges are particularly concerned about how these performance indicators will impact them. The Ontario Confederation of University Faculty Associations said, “The government’s proposal is especially alarming as it promises to tie university funding to 10 unannounced metrics and ignores the reality that Ontario’s universities already receive the lowest per student funding in Canada.” Again, they “already receive the lowest per student funding in Canada.” This approach will likely disadvantage small and northern universities, which already lack some of the resources that the larger universities enjoy.

And so, again, what’s missing from this budget with regard to post-secondary education? A lot. There’s no mention of non-repayable grants for students, particularly grants for Indigenous students, students with disabilities or other equity-seeking groups, only mention of loans.

Again, here we go. Once again, this government seems to be turning their back on Franco-Ontarians. There is no mention of Franco-Ontarian schools in this budget. There’s no mention of a Franco-Ontarian university—

**M. Michael Mantha:** Zéro.

**Ms. Sandy Shaw:** Zéro. It is not something that franco-phone Ontarians are going to overlook. They know how they have already been treated by this government, and this omission in this budget will be something that will continue to sting.

Clearly university students and parents deserve so much better than a government that seems to not value post-secondary education and learning. It just makes no sense to me at all, Madam Speaker.

The government talks of some of the things that they’ve offered. Let’s talk about child care. We know that child care can be one of the biggest expenses for families. In the city of Toronto, parents can pay up to as much as \$20,000 a year on child care, which is an incredible expense for young families, especially for women who are trying to get back into the workforce, or people and families who are just trying to get ahead.

**1420**

But this child care rebate, you may call it, really is not going to do much to alleviate this situation. In fact, there is a possibility that families can perhaps receive as much as \$1,250 from this rebate. Really, based on the cost of

child care, that's less than the cost of one month's child care for one child. So let me just say this: Absolutely, yes, families need a child care plan and they need help with this cost, but this is not a child care plan. It does very little to help families. In fact, there's a good chance that this is going to leave families in worse-off situations than they've already been in because there are no assurances in this child care rebate that the government is going to address the increasing costs of child care.

There's nothing in here that will contain costs. There's nothing in here that will ensure that for-profit child care is not the bulk of child care in the province of Ontario. That is where families need help—with the pressures of the costs of child care. This really is taking child care in entirely the wrong direction, and I would just have to say that if this is put forward as a child care plan, it is sorely, sorely lacking.

I would like to quote the Ontario Coalition for Better Child Care, which said that this government's plan is even less than what the PCs promised during the last election and will do little to address affordability for parents paying the highest child care fees in the country.

Madam Speaker, I want to take the time here to add my complete horror at this government's Bill 66. This government took the opportunity in Bill 66, the red tape reduction bill, to address child care. This government doubled the number of children under the age of two that could be in home-based child care. We said it during the debate and we'll say it now: Children are not red tape. We have seen the reason that this regulation was in place is because there were deaths. Children died in the province of Ontario in this kind of home-based child care, and that's why these protections were put in place. It's not red tape; it's to keep children safe.

I know that the member from Eglinton–Lawrence said during debate that one baby died. It wasn't one baby; four children died in the province of Ontario. Making child care spaces unsafe for the children of Ontario is no way to go forward, and this government should be ashamed of the fact that they referenced children as red tape.

Now that I've got my dander up, let's talk about Indigenous affairs, shall we? This is a Premier who is dragging us further and further away from reconciliation. They've already taken a ministry—and it's a third of a ministry, so they've already compacted the ministry, devaluing the importance of Indigenous issues in the province of Ontario. And now we have a budget that essentially slashes the Indigenous affairs budget. If you were to look for specifics on the impact of First Nations regarding some of the key issues like the Far North Act repeal consultations—not in here. If you wanted to find some information about investments in community mental health and addictions, home care investments—not there. I said earlier about the cuts to the Ministry of Children, Community and Social Services and how it will impact special-needs funding for NAN First Nations—really, not there.

Let me quote Grand Chief Alvin Fiddler from the Nishnawbe Aski Nation—NAN—who said, “We are con-

cerned with the funding reduction for the Ministry of Indigenous Affairs and the impact that it will have on the delivery of programs and services to our First Nations. This budget acknowledges several ongoing activities with our First Nations, and we are hopeful the government will maintain those commitments.”

Madam Speaker, I am hopeful too, but unfortunately a hope and a prayer is not what's going to get this to the point where we're going to really respect truth and reconciliation in the province of Ontario.

There's a lot missing, again, from this budget with regard to Indigenous concerns. There's no mention of Grassy Narrows for the mercury cleanup—not in this budget. We've heard a lot about this in this House. There's no mention of support for the housing crisis in Cat Lake—not one word. How many times have we debated this in the House, but the tragedy that is unfolding in those communities doesn't merit a mention in this budget. And now we're faced with the annual Kashechewan flooding. It would be unbelievably hopeful of me to expect it to be in this budget, but it certainly is not.

**Mr. Michael Mantha:** Nothing on clean water, either, in the communities.

**Ms. Sandy Shaw:** Oh, thank you. Nothing on clean water in the communities.

It's really a budget that does not in any way begin to address the significant issues that First Nations communities have been patiently waiting to be addressed by the people of Ontario and successive governments in the province of Ontario.

I just have to say that environment and climate change—a big issue. I had a town hall in Dundas last night. It was a rainy Sunday afternoon and there were over 150 people that packed a church in my riding. They came to discuss this issue that they are worried about. They're worried about it for themselves and they are worried about it for their children and their grandchildren. We heard from Dianne Saxe. For those of you that don't know, Dianne Saxe is the former Environmental Commissioner that this government—and I asked Dianne Saxe if I could use the F-word—fired, because she agreed that yes, indeed, she was fired. Not only are we getting rid of the independent officer to oversee our progress and our action on climate change, but we have now a budget that we're cutting, the environment, conservation and parks budget, by hundreds of millions of dollars.

I talked earlier about how this budget reannounces the Liberal Fair Hydro Plan, which is clearly now the PC borrowing scam to continue to fund this taxpayers' funding of the rate reduction. But there is no climate change plan. There's no conservation plan. There's nothing in here that helps us address the cost of our electricity system. All there is is a borrowing scheme. It's absent any details on how we are going to really handle our ongoing cost of electricity. We're just simply shifting the cost of electricity by replacing the Liberal multi-billion dollar plan, borrowing with a virtually identical PC plan. We've talked about this when we discussed this. This is not fixing the hydro mess. It's in fact making the hydro mess messier, and it does nothing to address the people's

significant concern about climate change. We just have a handful of years, significant years, to reverse course on this, and we have an irresponsible government that thinks that this is not an issue. I have news for you: The young people of Ontario—actually, all people of Ontario—are concerned about this and are watching this government’s complete dereliction of their responsibility when it comes to our environment.

Let’s talk a little bit about the debt and the deficit, shall we? This is a government that said that it was going to be easy to balance the budget within their term. They said it was easy to find efficiencies. But apparently it’s not that easy, because this is not a budget that’s going to be balanced in this government’s term. They’re pushing it out to the next term. I guess that’s something that we can, again, just tuck in behind and really hope that, in fact, this is a government that gets it, because from what I see up until now, there’s a lot of moving around numbers with this government.

We had a deficit that was \$14.5 billion in the fall economic statement. Now it’s magically \$11.7 billion. So it’s really hard to get a foothold on exactly what the numbers are. The minister has said the numbers are the numbers. Well, there’s numbers and numbers and numbers, and you would be hard pressed to understand exactly what the numbers mean in terms of the debt and the deficit. But clearly we know what the cuts will mean to the people of Ontario, and it’s not good.

I said earlier that this is not a province that spends a lot of money investing in our communities. We have the lowest per capita spending in the country, in Canada, lowest in health care spending, and I think we have the second-lowest in education. So we’re not investing lots and lots of money, like this government would have you believe, in the things that matter to people. We have the lowest per capita spending. But what I would like to say is that now we have a government that is in fact figuring out how they can cut the deficit by not investing in the things that people need.

I would say that one of the things that people will be concerned about is what this will mean to your municipal tax base, because we have seen, starting with Mike Harris, downloading of provincial costs onto the municipal taxpayers. This is unsustainable.

**1430**

There are some concerns in this budget that talk about balancing this budget. The government talks about, “The province will not move forward with the previous government’s proposed changes to the municipal share of the gas tax funding.” For anybody who pays a residential tax bill, the gas tax is a significant contribution to the municipal tax base, and for this government to balance their books on the backs of municipal taxpayers—really, at the end of the day, it’s one taxpayer’s pocket, and so people are going to know that this is something this government has downloaded to their municipality.

When I was touring Ontario as part of the finance committee, we had municipality after municipality say, “We’re broke. We can’t afford any more cuts to our

funding.” They were looking for revenue streams. They were looking for support from this government. They talked about roads that were crumbling. They talked about their inability to support some of their public health units and some of their nursing and long-term-care homes, and this is not a government that has addressed in any way the pleas from municipalities to make sure their needs are met.

It’s interesting to me that the Premier, this morning, said that this is a budget that’s going to put more money in people’s pockets and that they’re then going to go out and spend it and stimulate the economy. Here’s what I say. That’s quite—I don’t know—an interesting economic theory, and it’s pretty simplistic for the province of Ontario, for any economy, but I would have to say—

**Mr. Roman Baber:** It has only been working for 300 years.

**Ms. Sandy Shaw:** You know what? I think the Premier should convey that theory to the people of Ontario who are currently losing their jobs. We talked about health care workers who are losing their jobs. We talked about teachers who are losing their jobs, educators who are losing their jobs. These are real job losses. People are losing their jobs. But more than anything, I’d like the Premier to tell that to the auto workers in the province of Ontario. If this government is actually concerned about protecting people’s jobs, this is the budget that would have an auto strategy. It would address the significant impact that auto manufacturing has on our economy. We have layoffs at GM and, sadly, now in Windsor, and it seems to me a Premier who just threw in the towel when it came to GM—and still there’s nothing in this budget that addresses the fact that we need workers. If you do not have a job and you don’t have money, you’re not contributing to the GDP economy. It makes absolutely no sense. I’m sure economists will have a heyday with the Premier’s 20 words on his theory on how we’re going to grow the economy in Ontario.

Like all good books—they all have a theme. We talked about how this book is like booze and branding; that seems to be the overriding theme in this budget. But the people of Ontario are not going to be distracted by all these gimmicks. Endlessly, it’s jokes and cartoons on changing the licence plate and the Premier’s obsession with changing the Trillium logo, and with tailgating. I go to see Ti-Cat games. Tailgating could be a fun thing—right?—but it’s not a priority. It’s not the number one thing that comes to people’s minds when they can’t pay their hydro bill or they can’t afford housing.

More than anything, I would say that this budget really unveils the true character of this government. What we see is a heavy-handed government. They fired independent officers. They fired the French-language commissioner. They fired Dianne Saxe, the Environmental Commissioner, and they fired the child and youth advocate. Really? I mean, honestly?

This is a government that obviously doesn’t like any criticism and clearly doesn’t like to hear from opposition, so now they’re introducing requirements that you cannot now sue the government for anything you don’t like. And

we have a government that wants to put stickers on all the gas pumps in the province of Ontario; if you don't do that, you're going to be fined \$10,000. What we have is a heavy-handed government that doesn't like to be told what to do and is not prepared to stand up and be accountable for their actions.

I would like to end, Madam Speaker, by saying that this is not a budget that any of us here can support, and it's certainly not a budget that does any justice to the people of Ontario, who have been waiting—waiting desperately—for relief. We believe that this is not what people voted for. They didn't vote for cuts. And we believe that Ontarians have a right to hold the government accountable, including in court. So we will stand here with the people of Ontario and we will continue to advocate for the services that they need, and we'll continue to speak against a budget that cuts things from people and makes life very difficult for the people of Ontario.

It's not what we voted for, and we deserve so much better.

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

**Ms. Jane McKenna:** It gives me a tremendous amount of pleasure to stand today in this House as a member of the government to speak in support of the current budget motion.

I'd like to say something, just listening to the member from Hamilton West—Ancaster—Dundas when she has been speaking for the last hour on this motion. I was sitting there the other day, thinking that for the last 15 years—I was a member from 2011 to 2014, and I can tell you this: It was heartbreaking and heart-wrenching to talk to elderly people when you were speaking to them on a regular basis, because these people have worked extremely hard and they couldn't afford to pay their hydro bills, and they asked, "Should I eat today or should I pay my hydro bill?" We heard that, and I'm sure everybody in this House did over and over and over again. The reason we put this budget together was to make sure that we were protecting what matters most: the good people of Ontario. It was so important that we did that.

I also wanted to say that we look at the past government, the many, many things that they did in the past: They let the school repair backlog grow to—don't quote me on it, but I think it was a little over \$15 billion. We need to make sure our kids are safe. We're going to make sure that we do that.

We're putting \$17 billion over 10 years in capital grants for hospitals, which I heard the member say that we weren't doing, and then \$13 billion in capital grants over 10 years into new schools, obviously, and then that will be to fix the schools for repairs so the children are safe.

We obviously are following the recommendations of the Auditor General, which we have—Minister Thompson had alluded that to me—with \$1.4 billion last year, and then add another \$1.4 billion to get to some of that backlog.

I just want to say that it is an honour to stand here in this House. It's so important. I'm not sure how many

people actually watch the debate that's going on, but it is just very important because people asked us to come in and to turn this province around and to protect what matters most. I can say that again and again and again.

I had a couple of high school students who came and talked to me the other day in the House. They came by here and they were saying that they were devastated because of OSAP and they weren't going to be able to get the monies. I think we were giving out grants to \$175,000 for income at home—pardon me, the Liberal government was doing that.

The reality is we want to mirror what we have, right? So 98% of what Ontario was giving out was grants, where the federal government is giving out 71% in loans. The reality with that is it wasn't sustainable anymore for OSAP to conduct ourselves that way, and for the kids who needed it most, they weren't going to be able to qualify for OSAP.

The other thing is with OHIP as well. Everybody deserves to have that, and we wouldn't have that—it's not sustainable. These things aren't sustainable. That's why we need to protect what matters most, and that's the good people of Ontario, to make sure that they can flourish and grow. We've become the engine of the economy again here in Ontario—and turn around what we need to be able to do, and we're going to be able to do that in six years. How wonderful is that going to be, to put us in a position where we are a have province again instead of a have-not province?

This budget represents a responsible, measured and thoughtful approach to deficit reduction, while at the same time protecting those programs that matter most to the good people of Ontario. We will not only protect, but we will continue to invest in our health and education sectors where the provisions of best-in-class programs and services will always remain first priority for this government.

To all the fearmongers who, for months, have been predicting and waiting for the massive cuts to program spending and services, I say: We are listening to the good people of Ontario. We said from the beginning of our mandate that we would consult with the experts and those on the front lines. We promised we would ask those who are on the receiving end how effectively their public services are delivered. We are continuing to consult in numerous sectors because we want to understand how we can do better and whether we can do it more efficiently, Madam Speaker. We want to understand where there are crucial service gaps, and we want to trim inefficient spending, duplicative programs and mind-numbing regulations.

**1440**

We are equally committed to making life more affordable for families and seniors.

We are taking a responsible approach to balancing the budget that restores confidence in Ontario's finances while protecting what matters most: our world-class health care and education systems.

The Minister of Finance has outlined a slow and steady path to fiscal sustainability, projecting a balanced budget along with a surplus by the year 2023-24. We will bring

\$26 billion in relief to individuals, families and businesses over the next six years.

We are providing relief and restoring balance, all without having to raise taxes. Can you imagine? How successful is that, to do that and not raise taxes for the good people of Ontario? That bears repeating, I think: Budget 2019 contains no new tax increases.

Our government has created a sustainable plan that will take us to balance in five years while protecting the essential services we value most, Madam Speaker. Our plan restores trust in our province's finances for generations to come while bringing real relief to families and businesses today.

Ontario inherited a \$15-billion deficit from the previous Liberal government. They were spending \$40 million a day more than we brought in. I tell people that and they're just shocked; they can't believe it. We will not saddle our children and our grandchildren with the debts of the past.

In fact, the Auditor General of Ontario has identified billions of dollars of waste in her reports. We set ourselves a modest target of finding savings of four cents on every dollar spent by the government, Madam Speaker. To date, we've found nearly double that amount: about eight cents on every dollar spent, on average, over the path to balance, while still preserving front-line jobs.

The President of the Treasury Board is leading this complex, multi-year planning process. His efforts have already resulted in sustainable savings and cost avoidance. As a result, we have reduced the deficit we inherited from the previous Liberal government by \$3.3 billion, going from a \$15-billion deficit to \$11.7 billion for the 2018-19 fiscal year. If that's not unbelievable, I don't know what is for the good people of Ontario.

We will restore order and sustainability to our budget process. We know the Liberals have had a spending problem and an accounting problem, and had they continued to spend recklessly, it would have jeopardized our ability to pay for the vital public services that we expect in Ontario. This budget will clean up the Liberals' mess and return Ontario to balance within a responsible time frame. That's very important, that it's a responsible time frame.

We are providing \$26 billion in relief to individuals, families and businesses by eliminating over \$3 billion in tax increases planned or imposed by the previous government.

We are cancelling the Liberal government's cap-and-trade carbon tax and returning \$10 billion to the pockets of families and businesses.

We are bringing over \$2 billion in relief to low-income families and individuals through the LIFT, the low-income fair tax credit.

We are helping families with the new child care access rebate and expense tax credit totalling over \$2 billion.

We are cancelling \$150 million in scheduled fee increases, and providing \$4 billion in corporate income tax relief through the Ontario Job Creation Investment Incentive, Madam Speaker.

On the hydro front, we are increasing funding of almost \$4 billion for electricity price relief.

Over the last decade under the Liberals, net debt has more than doubled. Now Ontario faces over \$13 billion in interest payments on the debt, money that could be going towards important public services like health care and education.

That is why our government is introducing a clear debt reduction strategy in order to have measurable and transparent targets for our government to restore trust and accountability in our province's finances. We are proposing a new act, the Fiscal Sustainability, Transparency and Accountability Act, which will ensure an unprecedented level of transparency surrounding government financial decisions. Our government understands that transparency for the taxpayer must be the top priority in financial reporting. We are committed to reporting the province's financial data on time on an annual basis. We have built in penalties in case this does not happen.

We feel the need to do this because the previous government had a very, very poor track record of meeting deadlines and ensuring transparency. They used to throw the words "transparency and accountability" out all the time, but we never knew what they were accountable for or what was transparent. Eight out of the last 14 Q3 Ontario finances were either late or not released at all. What a shameful performance—shameful. By bringing in our proposed reporting guarantee, we are telling the people of Ontario that they can be sure they will always receive a transparent account of how the government is spending their hard-earned money. They deserve nothing less.

Investments in health care and capital investment in hospital renovations and new builds will continue. The province is providing \$17 billion over the next 10 years to modernize and increase capacity at hospitals.

**Mr. Rick Nicholls:** How much was that?

**Ms. Jane McKenna:** It's \$17 billion over 10 years.

Across the province, approximately 60 major hospital projects are currently under construction or at various stages of planning.

**Ms. Lindsey Park:** In Bowmanville.

**Ms. Jane McKenna:** There you go.

We've allocated \$1.75 billion to build 15,000 new long-term-care beds and modernize 15,000 outdated existing beds. We're already well on our way with over 7,000 of these beds already allocated.

We're investing \$13 billion over the next 10 years in capital grants to help build new schools in high-growth areas and improve the conditions of existing schools. This includes more than \$1 billion in school renewal and repair over the coming year.

We are all aware of this government's commitment to an open-for-business approach, designed to encourage investment and enhance productivity, job creation and prosperity. "Open for business" will reinvigorate economic growth, which will in turn contribute to the elimination of the deficit in the short to medium term. This government is committed to doing all we can to encourage small businesses to grow into medium businesses, and medium businesses to grow into large. We are fulfilling our promise to cut income tax for businesses earlier than promised by providing \$3.8 billion in relief over six years.

**Mr. Rick Nicholls:** Wow.

**Ms. Jane McKenna:** Isn't that unbelievable?

**Mr. Rick Nicholls:** Businesses create jobs.

**Ms. Jane McKenna:** That's right.

Through our job creation investment incentive, we are enabling faster writeoffs of capital investments. This will encourage businesses to invest in new machinery and equipment right now and create new jobs, Madam Speaker. It is estimated that the Ontario Job Creation Investment Incentive will lead to the creation of between 50,000 and 90,000 net new jobs and between \$7 billion and \$10 billion in net new business investments. The reduction in taxes that businesses are required to pay as a result of the job creation investment incentive will help Ontario to compete for business investment in the wake of recent US tax reform. It was these tax changes in neighbouring US states that prompted our government, last fall, to write to the federal government to ask that they allow for an accelerated capital cost allowance. The federal government took our advice and introduced provisions in their fall economic statement.

**1450**

We are also focusing our efforts on helping businesses that are looking to hire and matching them with the workers who are looking for new opportunities. I know that there are employers in Burlington, and right across the province, that struggle to find the skilled workers they need. At the same time, there are workers who are unable to access the right job that is a match for their skill set.

The current employment service system is unnecessarily complex and not sufficiently focused on getting the results we need to grow our economy and succeed. Our government is transforming employment services for everyone who is looking, including those on social assistance, by creating one efficient, cost-effective system that's easy to use and focused on matching employer and employee.

We are embracing changes in our post-secondary education sector designed to ensure that our institutions are relevant and forward-thinking and will lead to our graduates getting the good jobs they have worked so hard for. That is why we are shifting funding for universities and colleges to be more dependent on student and economic outcomes. This reflects our priorities of making Ontario open for business and open for jobs. We will work with the institutions using a phased-in approach so that funding tied to performance is gradually increased over time. Performance will be re-evaluated every year, ensuring that institutions will have the chance to recover after a poor year.

One of the fundamentals in budget 2019 is ensuring that people continue to have a strong public health care system. The health budget will increase each and every year to ensure that we protect our health care system and end hallway health care. We remain committed to investing in making every dollar count, Madam Speaker, and building a health care system that puts the patients first.

On a larger scale, our government is working to strengthen and protect our public health care system by

moving towards an integrated health care delivery model and establishing Ontario health teams. Our government will reduce the bloated health care bureaucracy by consolidating the six existing provincial health agencies and the duplicative local health integration networks, or LHINs, into a new single agency.

At the same time, we are continuing to increase investments in capital expenditures, in acute care, and in home and community care. This will include increasing front-line care delivery, such as personal support services, nursing, therapy and other professional services at home and in the community. This is expected to reduce wait-lists for long-term care.

The government will create 15,000 new long-term-care beds and upgrade 15,000 older long-term-care beds to meet modern design standards over the next five years, for a total investment of approximately \$1.75 billion in additional funding.

Given Ontario's aging population, the province is focused on helping seniors live healthy, active and socially connected lives. We deserve to do that for our senior population, which has worked so hard, to make sure that at their end of life—that they have the services that they have worked so hard for and paid into their time, that they're able to have that access to them. That was a responsible government to make sure that that happens.

This budget introduces a new dental program for low-income seniors who don't have dental benefits. I'm not sure of the stats right off of the top of my head, but anyone knows that when they've had a toothache and they haven't been able to get it fixed—that then goes into the emergency department and backlogs them because they're not able to deal with the actual—they don't have the monies for the actual care of their teeth right up front, so we're going to make sure that we have that.

This is great news Individual seniors with annual incomes of \$19,300 or less, or senior couples with combined incomes of less than \$32,300, will be able to receive free dental services. The dental care program will be an annual investment of approximately \$90 million when fully implemented.

I just want to say that I've got much more to say, and I hope I have the opportunity again. I'm thrilled to stand here in this House and to be able to speak on the budget motion. Thank you so much for letting me have this time.

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

**Ms. Catherine Fife:** Thanks to the member from Burlington. She referenced her time here during the minority government. She missed those four years in between when it was really, really painful, when they had a majority, because they acted in many of the same ways that this government is doing today.

This budget was a big surprise for me, because budgets are moral documents. Budgets are moral documents. They tell the story of what your values are, what your principles are, what your priorities are.

What did this budget relay? It said that tailgating was now going to be a priority, that alcohol in corner stores—

**Mr. Rick Nicholls:** Oh, stop it.

**Ms. Catherine Fife:** No. You should read the letter from Mothers Against Drunk Driving, because if you're going to liberalize alcohol, you have to have a strategy and an education plan to market that.

But on the child care piece which the member from Burlington referenced: It's interesting, because you've got to peel back the layers on this budget, because when you scratch the surface, sometimes you get a little more surface, Madam Chair. Looking at the funding for the child care tax credit is interesting. For children under seven, one third of children who qualify will get nothing, zero; 41 children right now will get the maximum, which is \$500 a month, to a total of \$6,000 a year. That's 41 children in the province of Ontario. Half of the kids will get less than \$20 a month for this tax credit, when the median fee in big cities for child care is \$1,000 a month. It is not a pragmatic strategy to make child care affordable. In fact, you are essentially offering a tax credit for child care spaces that do not exist.

If you want to be smart and strategic about where you invest limited tax dollars, you look where you're going to get the largest return on investment. For every one dollar invested in quality, affordable child care, there is a \$7 return to the economy, to the province of Ontario—a missed opportunity for this government.

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

**Mr. Stephen Crawford:** I'm very proud to speak on this budget. I thank the member from Burlington, my neighbouring MPP—

**Interjection:** Oh, yes, she's brilliant.

**Mr. Stephen Crawford:** A brilliant MPP, so congratulations on your presentation.

There's so much to talk about in this budget. We have such limited time. But I chaired the finance committee. We led the pre-budget consultations, where we travelled the province. We had about 256 meetings across the province. Time and time again, it came up: "Let's get this province back on track. Let's get investment back into Ontario and Canada," which has been sadly, unfortunately lagging.

Of course, the one issue we heard everywhere we went, from Dryden to Ottawa to Sarnia, was, "We've got to get this budget under control." It's a disaster. We're spending \$40 million a day more than we're bringing in. We're spending \$30 million a day in interest payments.

So one of the first priorities of our government in this budget is obviously to get this budget under control. We're going to be able to balance the budget in a methodical, responsible way. We're not doing it in 12 or 18 months. But over five years, we'll get this budget under control. We're doing it very responsibly. I think that's very important.

A couple of other key points I know that the member from Burlington touched on are on the CARE child care plan. I'm ecstatic about that. I know what it's like, having children of my own and the costs of child care. We don't want a government-run, nanny-state program, but what we are doing is helping people who need it the most and

offering them flexibility. I've had overwhelming response in my riding to this particular aspect of the budget bill. People are ecstatic.

The low-income dental program is also very attractive to a lot of people, not only because it's going to help them with their health, but it is going to reduce the hallway health care we have in this province. There are thousands and thousands of seniors, unfortunately, who are spending time in the hallways in our health care system because of this. This is going to reduce the emergency visits.

Again, there's a lot to touch on—we scratched the surface—but I'm very, very proud to stand on behalf of the government on this budget.

**1500**

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

**Mr. Percy Hatfield:** I do want to talk about my friend from Burlington and my friend from Oakville. I only went to one of those budget hearings, in Sarnia, but not one person, as I understand it, around the province said that their priorities were slogans, new licence plates and tailgating. Nobody ever raised it, but now it's all we're talking about here today.

My friend from Burlington said in her first term here, in the minority government, people were talking about hydro prices or putting food on the table. None of those people today have a lower hydro rate or more food on the table when we talk about putting stickers on gas tanks or tailgating or 9 a.m. drinking hours.

**Ms. Sandy Shaw:** Not one.

**Mr. Percy Hatfield:** None at all, Speaker.

And Indigenous populations had a problem putting food on the table. They had a problem paying their hydro bills, and their budget gets cut in half—absolutely in half. For 30 years they've had boil-water advisories on some reserves. There's not a penny in this budget—no mention of what we're going to do to make clean drinking water available for Indigenous populations. It's the same when you talk about Cat Lake in this House: the mould and the housing—not a penny in this budget for that. There's not a penny that's been designated in this budget for cleaning up the mercury in the polluted rivers in the northern communities.

We can speak all we want about what should be in the budget. What isn't in the budget are a lot of things that would help our population, would help our seniors and would help our children.

There's nothing in here to clean up hallway medicine. There's not a penny in here that's going to do anything for getting rid of the hallway medicine that we see; there's nothing designated. In fact, you're not even keeping up to inflation on the hospital budgets or the school budgets.

How are you going to make all of these promises come true? Well, I know you're not during this mandate and you're hoping for another one. Good luck with that.

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

**Mr. Stan Cho:** Thank you, Madam Speaker. I'll tell you a little story before I get to my comments. If somebody

is hurt in Orillia right now and Orillia EMS show up and they determine that you need an IV drip, and then they realize your injury is a little more serious and you have to be flown to Toronto General, Ornge air ambulance shows up. When the Ornge helicopter shows up, they have to take that perfectly good IV out of your arm and replace it with a new one. Why? Because they purchase from different suppliers. Guess what? When Ornge takes you down to Toronto General and the patient arrives, guess what's going to happen? They're going to take out that second IV and replace it with a third for the same reason. This is the stuff that doesn't make sense.

If it was proof that you could throw more money at a problem and you would fix that problem, well, then the last government would have been very successful. Unfortunately, that is not the case. We have to look at the holes in the system as well. This budget addresses those holes in that very system.

Instead of looking at some of the other issues, why don't we dig a little deeper in the 388 pages and realize that centralized procurement is part of this budget? Here we stand now, Madam Speaker, and the fourth-largest expenditure here in this House is interest on our debt. We spend more on interest payments than we do for training, colleges, universities or transportation. That is money that should be going to health care, that should be going to education.

By the way, let me add to the comments about not following inflation. First of all, the funding is above inflation. Secondly, it's not just about the money we're pouring into the system. We are looking at filling the holes in that system, because as much as you top off the gas tank, if there are holes in that gas tank, the fuel is going to escape. We have a big problem on our hands in this province. We have an out-of-control debt, and our powder is soaking wet because when the economy does take a downturn, we don't have anything to fall back on. We have to do this responsibly. It's those very students we're helping. We're going to get it right, Madam Speaker.

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

**Ms. Jane McKenna:** I want to thank the member from Waterloo, the member from Windsor–Tecumseh, the member from Oakville, and the member from Willowdale.

I can tell you one thing: When I was here from 2011 to 2014, I used to go home constantly discouraged, thinking, “How can we come and sit in this House and nothing ever gets resolved?” I could never understand all the things that the Liberal government was doing. Obviously, they're down to seven seats now. The reason I say that is because you have to know what your government is about and you have to know what they stand for, and nobody knew in the last many, many years what they did stand for. It was a band-aid approach here, here, here and here.

But what I can say is that I have five children; I've mentioned that a few times. My son's my youngest—I have four girls—and my son was so disengaged. When he was able to go vote for the very first time, he said, “Mom, I'm not going. I don't have any interest in going. There's no

one who is invested in me. I want to go to college, I want to get a career, and I want to get out and work with my hands. And going out to vote—vote for what?” I said, “Mac, you have to go vote. There are veterans who gave up their lives for you to have the ability to vote. Plus, if you want to change things, you need to invest in that for change.” And he did.

He came out and he invested in it. It was wonderful to listen to him sit and engage around the table, Madam Speaker. He does talk over and over again about—he did go to college. He didn't want to go to university. He sourced it all out and he said, “Mom, get in the car. I'm going to drive up to Georgian College,” which we did. He enrolled himself for the—I chuckle at this now. Every day while I was here in the House, I'd have to phone every morning to make sure he was out of bed. Of course, he was never out of bed. He had more skipped classes than you can shake a fist at. But then when he got into college, I never had to call him once. The kid was out, feet to the ground, and away he went. He's successful now. He has got a little business up north, Mac's Bargaining. He worked with his hands because this government has invested in him to give him an opportunity to thrive and survive, and for that I am grateful for this government.

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

**Mr. Jamie West:** It's always an honour and a privilege to stand and speak on behalf of the good people of Sudbury. We're here today to talk about the budget and how it's going to impact people in Ontario, and in my riding especially.

Going through the budget, Speaker, it appears to me that the government has different priorities than most people I talk to. Many of my colleagues on both sides of the House—we've all talked about the priorities we heard at the door while knocking on doors during the election. In Sudbury, the top three: hallway medicine, long-term care—those two are intertwined—and hydro. I think they're similar for everybody. You might have a different order, but those, most likely, were your top three issues that came through.

Hallway medicine: I remember I was nominated as a candidate a year before the election. We had a press conference about hallway medicine—the number of days we were over capacity at Health Sciences North. A year later, during the election, we wanted to have a press conference because it was going on so long; and, basically, the press said, “It's not a news story anymore. It has become normal.” That's an issue that has to get fixed, and people have been waiting since the election for it to be fixed.

Long-term care: The quote that stands with me—it was a Conservative. I knocked on his door. He was very clear that he wasn't voting—he was a card-carrying Conservative, but he said, “We need to pay for the things that are important. I have parents in long-term care. When I'm not there, the people who work there are my family.” That stood with me. We don't see ideology. We don't share the same political views, but we have the same core values about caring for our families.

Hydro: As much as the government might break their arm patting themselves on the back one day, let's be honest: This election was about voting Liberals out more than voting somebody in. I'm not saying there aren't good candidates—everyone ran good campaigns—but people were motivated because they really, really, really didn't like the Liberal Party. They were voting people out.

**Mr. Percy Hatfield:** They still don't.

**Mr. Jamie West:** Thank you.

And there were these promises: They were promised a 12% reduction. There were going to be lower rates for industry. Industry is suffering under these high rates of hydro. I looked in the budget, and in the budget it says, "We're going to begin consultations and discussions with industry." This is a top-three issue. You're going to begin now? It has been nine months, Speaker. The time to begin was before the election, and to roll it out.

The priorities for the government don't seem to match what I heard at the door during the election. This summer, summer 2018, as you recall, we were all called back after the election. We rushed here. Being from Sudbury in northern Ontario, I found it weird that we came to discuss the size of Toronto city council. That was not a priority for anybody outside of 416. Honestly, I could care less if your city council is four people or 400 people. That's a municipal decision. You do what you want.

What we do care about, though: hallway medicine, long-term care and hydro. Now, if you look at the government's priorities from reading the budget, we're back in Toronto. We're going to talk about the subway plan. We're going to redo a plan that's apparently already in place; we're going to make a different plan. Again, great if you're in the 416; outside the 416, you know, north—and I know for some people, north sometimes is Barrie, but farther north, even—we're looking for more priorities than what's going on with subways in downtown Toronto.

**1510**

If you look at the budget, you've got alcohol, you've got gambling and you've got rebranding as the priorities. These were the most important things. I don't understand how we knocked on thousands and thousands of doors, as the Premier likes to say, to hear that hallway medicine, long-term care and hydro are the priorities, and we decide alcohol, gambling and rebranding are the priorities.

Under alcohol—and this is just my quick summary going through the budget—we talk about tailgating. I've been to tailgates in the States, and they're fun. I have nothing against tailgating. I don't know why it's a priority, though.

We're going to designate some municipal parks as able to sell alcohol. I guess they could be beer tents. Now we're going to make it easier.

We're going start drinking earlier. You can sell at 9 a.m. I had a very interesting college career; I didn't know we couldn't drink at 9 a.m. I didn't know it was a problem that had to be fixed. And last call is even extended past 2 a.m. I guess it's all right.

There are going to be people with concerns. There's alcoholism. People are worried about youth drinking. But

at the end of the day, I don't think that anyone really thought that these were priorities and were asking the government to step forward on these.

Now when you go on wineries tours, you can have larger serving sizes. You can get free alcohol at casinos, and the casinos can advertise that you're getting free alcohol. Again, for the majority of people I don't think any of this was a priority.

I read an article about more gambling options. It says, "While you're sipping your 9 a.m. beer at the local pub, you'll also be able to bet on the Leafs game or buy a lottery ticket without leaving your bar stool." Again, I don't see how this is a priority for people. At the end of the article, it says, "To make a long story short, the 2019 provincial budget will give Ontarians more ways to gamble, and easier access to the booze that will help them forget about their losing bets. But the house always wins." That's all we're seeing: that the house always wins.

I'm going to get into the branding. I call it the vanity program. We're coming up with logos and slogans that, honestly, I didn't hear anyone really care about before. If you ask the average person on the street what they think of the logo, I think many of them couldn't really describe it as the three-men-in-a-hot tub logo. It's not a priority. They want to end hallway medicine. They want better long-term care. They want better hydro. Instead, what we have are these cruel cuts. We expected cuts, but not cruel cuts. They're taking things away from children, from vulnerable people, from students, and especially from the north. The cuts that are made in this budget are going to make life worse for people in Ontario.

A couple of the stats: \$700 million is being cut from training, colleges and universities; and then there's a threat to withhold as much as 60% based on targets in the future.

There's going to be \$1 billion in cuts to the Ministry of Children, Community and Social Services. Tomorrow, I'm headed back to Sudbury to speak with families of children with autism. They feel like the government was reassessing and waiting for round tables and more information on how to get the proper funding for the needs that children and their families have. They're at the end of their rope and are very stressed out, Speaker.

In the budget there's \$1 billion of cuts—\$566 million in cuts to northern development.

The Ministry of Indigenous Affairs will see its budget cut in half, to \$74.4 million. This is not a government that has a good relationship with Indigenous communities. We had a throne speech that didn't do a land recognition. We're seeing cuts here. We've merged the Indigenous ministry with mines and northern development, which sends a message that the only time we want to have a conversation is if we can profit off of them.

Health care and education spending is squeezed to the point where it won't even be able to keep up with inflation. These are services that families in Ontario really, really count on. I can't help but believe that the message I get out of this is that this Conservative government doesn't think it's their job to help people.

I want to talk about hallway medicine—the number one issue, like I said several times already. I'm trying to drive

that forward, because it would be nice if the government would go, “We should do something about hallway medicine.” People tell me stories about taking a loved one to a hospital and waiting for hours in the hallway. If you have Facebook or any social media, you see that it’s a regular occurrence. Like I said, the year before the election it was a story; now it’s a normal occurrence. Everyone has a story about it. I’m not blaming this government. I know they’ll say, “We inherited a \$15-billion deficit.” We get it, because I remember, for years and years, watching the Liberal MPPs show up with a cheque, announcing the underfunding of the hospital, and the hospital having to stand there sheepishly and pose for a photo with this cheque that wasn’t even going to keep up with inflation. And that left us hanging by a thread, and desperate.

Again, it goes back to the election. This was an election about getting rid of the old government and hoping for something better—hoping for something better. Instead, hospitals received \$272 million less than what was requested by the Ontario Hospital Association. The OHA said that without this funding, staff reductions would be unavoidable.

Again, I want to remind you, Speaker, that the Premier said there would be no layoffs; there would be no job losses and no one would lose their job. Suddenly, it’s “no involuntary layoffs.” It has gone from “no job losses.”

We have a 1% increase from last year’s budget, so we’re not even going to maintain the status quo of the service provided. The status quo, I want to remind everybody, was horrible. Nobody was happy about it. At every single door, they talked about hallway medicine. So the status quo was not good enough, and we’re not even keeping up with the status quo. We’re not doing as good as what was bad. Both Health Quality Ontario and the Premier’s Council on Improving Health Care and Ending Hallway Medicine have identified hospital capacity issues, wait times and system coordination as key issues facing the province’s health care system. I’m reading that, Speaker, just in case they think it’s some weird lefty thing. The Premier’s Council on Improving Health Care and Ending Hallway Medicine said we need to fix this; we need to tackle it.

In my riding of Sudbury, cuts in the budget will severely impact our hospital, Health Sciences North. Health Sciences North is not just the Sudbury hospital; it services the entire population of the northeast. In 2018, there were only 18 days when the acute care site wasn’t operating at more than 100% capacity. One record day, 539 patients were admitted to the hospital, which officially only has 446 conventional beds. Since Christmas, the hospital has been dealing with some of the highest occupancy rates it has ever seen. This is a hospital that has been under pressure for a long time. For the last decade, there have been cuts and cuts and underfunding along the way. Last year, the hospital had an \$11.1-million operating deficit. Imagine the stress of the management in the hospital. Imagine the stress of the workers and the patients and the community, with \$11.1 million of underfunding. The hospital was forced to lay off 60 nurses. They don’t

call it “layoffs.” They call it “attrition” and “balancing around,” but still, there are 60 fewer people working there. They had to cut services to try to balance the books.

The staff, which is breaking under the pressure, have to do more and more with less and less. They’ve been calling on the government to step up since they were first elected, basically telling them what they need to do. I’ll tell you what they need to do. It’s the same thing that a Conservative voter told me: We have to pay for the things that are important to us, and health care is important to us. This fall, CUPE 1623 president Dave Shelefontiuk warned that staff were stretched to the limit. He called on the government to step up. Over the last year, morale among workers in the hospital has been low. Many were wondering when they going to be the next to lose their jobs.

The cuts to the funding: Even if you don’t want to call it “cuts” to the funding, the underfunding of what’s required for our hospitals is going to lead to layoffs. You can’t do more with less. We’ve cut through the skin, through the fat and through the muscle. We’re into the bone, and we’re digging into the marrow. There’s nowhere else to cut. These cuts are putting people’s lives at risk. With too few beds to serve the region and a rapidly aging demographic across Ontario, and primarily in the northeast, overcrowding has been an issue for more than a decade.

This month, Health Sciences North announced that they had balanced their budget after a difficult year, and I know that they worked hard on this. We had consultations. The member from Nickel Belt was with me as well, as the critic for health. It was a struggle to get this done. They had an announcement, and people were looking for relief. They were looking for better times ahead. What they’re looking forward to now is a lack of funding that won’t even keep up with the cost of living. That’s the same stress we’re going to have again.

I was here last month, Speaker, talking about a friend of mine, Kimberly Komarechka. She’s a leader in the community. She volunteers regularly at the soup kitchen. She’s a Steelworker. She’s a secretary at the Steelworkers Local 6500. She’s the one who got me involved with going on the Coldest Night of the Year walk. She’s all around a great person, a fantastic individual. Instead of doing a member’s statement about how great Kimberly is and how much she has contributed over the years to Sudbury, I had to talk about Kimberly here in the Legislature—about her brother, Danny, and how Danny died in a hallway. He was 51 years old. He was dying from cancer. He spent five of the last seven hours of his life in the emergency room, being moved to an examination room where he died two hours later.

I don’t want to go into all of the details, because I know it’s difficult when Kimberly hears this story. But whenever she talks about this, she has nothing but praise for the hospital staff. Imagine that: Your brother dies in the worst of conditions, you’re watching your father grieve for him, saying, “This is not a way to die in dignity,” and all you have to say for the staff in the area is praise. She says that she could tell how urgently they were working to find

Danny a bed, how much they cared, but there simply wasn't any room. When he was placed in the examination room, the rest of the family was able to gather and be at Danny's side, but throughout the whole experience, her father kept saying, "This is not dying with dignity. This is not dying with dignity."

**1520**

This is a cautionary story for other people—an opportunity for the government to fix this. Kimberly doesn't want any other family to experience what her family experienced. She wants a public health care system that puts patients first, and not as a catchphrase—literally puts people first and funds properly.

Also in Sudbury, for years we were fundraising and organizing for a PET scanner. My colleague from Nickel Belt probably spoke about it often here. She spoke often in Sudbury about it—the funding for the PET scanner. It should be funded. It's a government source. But it wasn't. The Liberals set the bar very high.

In Sudbury, we're hard-working. There's a term underground called "adapt and overcome." We reached the bar. We fundraised for it. There's construction of the PET scanner right now. But the government should fully support a project like this, and they're not. We don't mind a challenge, but again, a lack of funding.

We need a second MRI machine. The current runs 24 hours a day, 365 days a year. It completes 13,000 scans a year. We need a second one. But still patients must wait an average of 52 days for a test that should be performed within a provincial target of 28 days.

My colleague opposite was talking about the money tree. I was looking, actually, at the gravy train. My colleague from Hamilton West–Ancaster–Dundas was talking about the \$1 million that was given to one of their colleagues; another salary of \$354,000; \$197,000 for another colleague; the money we're going to spend on vanity projects like licence plates, logos and slogans; the \$308 million that they gave away to their wealthiest friends; the \$3 billion for cancelling the green energy project; and the \$400 million to pay polluters.

**Ms. Catherine Fife:** That's a lot of PET scanners.

**Mr. Jamie West:** That's a lot of PET scanners, and that's a money tree that you guys love to just pull the leaves off and give to your best friends.

We have an overdose crisis in Ontario. There's no denying it. Everywhere you go—it is the number one issue right now in Sudbury when I talk to people. They're upset. They're frustrated. They care about the community. They care about the people being affected. They care about their children who are put in harm's way. They care about the number of people who are being killed. And there is zero information on the 21 consumption and treatment sites that the government promised to put in place.

While we wait for the government to provide us with details about how they're going to address the crisis, young people in my riding are dying. On a regular basis, they're dying. And like hallway medicine, there are going to be none of us who are going to be untouched by this.

The Minister of Health and Long-Term Care called it a "public health emergency" in the Legislature. She used

those words. But we've done nothing as a government to take action on this. We need to allocate resources to harm reduction services. We need to create public education programs. We need to listen to the people that need those services the most. But in the budget, none of the money is going towards this.

The member opposite talked about the dental program for seniors. That is a good thing. One of the things that stands out to me is that, as a single senior, you have to be earning \$19,300 or less. The poverty line in Canada is \$19,930. I don't know what the math is, but \$630 is a lot of money for somebody on the poverty line.

On the one hand, I think as a government we should be embarrassed that we have seniors living in poverty, that we think it's okay that there are people out there making less than \$19,300. But aside from that, I think it's a great initiative. It's a great way of taking care of people and caring for people.

The problem is, in order to get the service, you have to go to a public health unit. Public health units are already super, super busy. What we're doing is, we're cutting it by—the province announced that it would cut \$200 million from the \$1-billion public health sector, which is about a 10% cut. We're going to reduce the number of public health units from 35 to 10. I'm not sure where they're going to be located. I do know that there's one in Sudbury. When you go to 10—

**Mr. Percy Hatfield:** Today. What about tomorrow?

**Mr. Jamie West:** Today there is. I'm assuming that one is going to be in the north—because the government seems to forget that the north is vast. It's an 11-hour drive from Thunder Bay to Sudbury, so I hope it's not in Thunder Bay because that's a long drive for somebody who's making \$19,000.

How will these public health units service their areas? With that sort of range and their scope being cut from 35 to 10, how will people reach out to them? How will these low-income seniors access the dental program? How will they physically travel those distances or pay for the travel? What kind of wait times are they looking forward to as we cut them back? I want to remind—and the member opposite said this—that there are over 600,000 low-income seniors in Ontario, and there are going to be 10 places for them to get these services.

I know that the member opposite disagrees about the cuts to education. I know that involuntary job loss—it's no longer become a job loss; "no one will lose their job" was the promise they had. I have to tell you, in my whole life—my oldest now is 22, so you spend a lot of time with other parents. I've had lots of discussions with parents at Christmas concerts and stuff. I never heard a parent once tell me, "I love everything about my classroom except it's not crowded enough and my child has too much time with the teacher. I wish they were more crowded and the teacher had less time."

Instead, what we're doing is we're saying, "How bad can it be if we crowd them? What's the worst that can happen? They'll have some resiliency." Every time I hear the minister say, "This will prepare them for the life of the

future,” in my head I say, “This will prepare them for a government that doesn’t care about them.”

I’m running out of time, Speaker, so I won’t be able to get to the rest. I’ll speak to it later in debate. I want to thank you for your time to speak about this.

I think that Ontario deserves more than alcohol, gambling and pet projects for vanity plates.

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

**Mrs. Nina Tangri:** I am ecstatic to get up today and talk about our first budget. The people of Ontario finally get to see a government that is accountable, credible and puts the people first. Madam Speaker, no new tax increases: That is so important to the people of Ontario—putting more money back in their pockets so they can spend how they see fit for their families.

The member from Sudbury spoke about hallway health care. For the first time after 15 years of broken promises, cuts to the front-line services and a blow to bureaucracy, our government is providing health care initiatives that put our patients first and at the forefront of the care they desperately need. I served as vice-chair of a hospital for six years in Mississauga. I saw first-hand the challenges faced by our providers. I saw first-hand how people sat in the emergency rooms waiting just to be seen by a doctor. We took many initiatives upon ourselves within the hospital, but we begged and we pleaded with the government at the time to give us more resources and to help us streamline.

Our government listened, and our government acted. Now, should the budget pass and the health care bill pass, our patients will be able to streamline the services that they need. We will put the patients first by moving towards this integrated delivery model system, by establishing our local Ontario health teams. These teams will organize the care delivery and make sure that according to their local community needs that we will make sure that our patients come first and that precious dollars by all the people in Ontario are redirected right to those front lines.

Mr. Speaker, I met this Saturday with many, many people—

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

**Ms. Suze Morrison:** I was listening really intently to the member from Sudbury and his remarks, when he spoke about priorities in this budget and the fact that this is a budget that really prioritizes frills—booze and branding—over what Ontarians actually want.

I had a chance to go through the budget. One of the first things I did when I got the digital copy of the document was, I started doing some word searches. When we searched for “alcohol” and “beer,” combined we get 47 references in this budget to alcohol and beer. The word “brand” shows up in the document 10 times, Speaker.

But do you want to know how many times the word “woman” appears in this document? Four. And almost exclusively in the context of “the men and women of policing”—not services this government is providing to women, which I find really quite interesting considering

the fact that they have collapsed the Ministry of the Status of Women into community and social services and then not even provided a budget line on the status of women in the document. That budget has completely disappeared and been absorbed into the Ministry of Children, Community and Social Services with no detail or accountability on where that money is coming from. So that’s a really interesting show of priorities to me—when you talk about booze and branding but not what you’re going to do for women.

**1530**

The other word I found, interestingly, missing from the document in its entirety was “poverty.” There’s zero mention of the word “poverty” in this budget. So I would ask my government colleagues across the way what your strategy is to be addressing poverty in this province, considering that poverty costs us \$32 billion to \$38 billion a year in Ontario. There is a cost to inaction, and we cannot afford to do less.

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

**Mr. Deepak Anand:** I’m so proud of this budget and I’m proud of this government. Before the budget was to be released, I got a lot of calls from the people. They said, “You’re there for a reason. You’re there to restore accountability and trust.” Proudly, I can say that we have given a budget that is exactly tackling both of these issues. But what I want to talk about is protecting what matters most. What matters most is our health care system and education system. We all know about the debt we have. We all know about the deficit we have. We had a choice. We took a choice to be responsible, and rather than cutting, we have actually increased our budget in those two areas. So I think that’s being sensible.

This budget is built on the credible work of our cabinet and our caucus. In just nine short months—I want to remind everybody—we have done a sensible approach. We have been for the people. We have cancelled the cap-and-trade carbon tax. We have introduced the Low-Income Individuals and Families Tax Credit. We made sure there is money for new schools in high-growth areas. Not only this, but we’re adding new long-term-care beds, more hospital beds and repairs and upgrades to dozens of hospitals. I don’t see those as cuts; I see that as sensible investment. That’s what our government is doing.

Mr. Speaker, let’s not try to kid about this: We inherited a mess. When we inherited the mess, we said, “We need to invest into the future.” That’s what we’re doing, by restoring trust, accountability and transparency through this budget.

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

**Ms. Catherine Fife:** I just want to commend the member from Sudbury for really conveying the principles and the values that we have heard and that we’re hearing from people across this province, and that we heard from the election, around health care and around hydro and around education—those core values that are not seen in any way, shape or form as a solution in this budget.

He did mention that the focus on alcohol, gambling and rebranding is very much there. Even on the gambling piece, though, I just want to say, they're not getting that right. The modernization through OLG to the charity, gaming and bingo institutions in Windsor, in Kitchener–Waterloo and in Oshawa, where not only have you made cuts on the social services perspective, but you've now cut out the option of charities accessing these important revenues—not only that, but the Ministry of Finance has left \$40 million in revenue on the table because they haven't embraced the cGaming model and they have excluded 10 of the charitable gaming centres. You've just doubled down on being cruel and ignorant in some respects. And even the Minister of Finance in his own riding, the Blue Sky Bingo—\$3.3 million goes to charities in his riding. He's cutting them off at the knees.

So you are making cuts on the social services perspective. In the modernization of the OLG, you're choosing winners and losers on the bingo front. I mean, how low do you have to go to even compromise bingo halls in the province of Ontario? Those charities rely on those funds. They're good partners in the province of Ontario, and this government is turning their backs on those charities who access that money. Shame on the Minister of Finance for doing so.

*Interjections.*

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Percy Hatfield):** Thank you. Order, please. Let's not start the cross-aisle bickering at this stage of the afternoon.

We'll return now to the member from Sudbury for his wrap-up.

**Mr. Jamie West:** Thank you, Speaker. It's great to see so many people excited to hear me speak.

I want to thank the member from Mississauga–Streetsville for talking about hospital overcrowding, and the member from Mississauga East–Cooksville about counting on the government and inheriting a mess. We agree on that. It's just the approach—how to fix it is where we disagree. The member from Waterloo on gambling: To follow up on the member from Toronto Centre, she mentioned how “women” were mentioned only four times, how “poverty” was mentioned zero times. Also in my notes, if I could just continue quickly on two points, “francophone” was mentioned only three times.

It's shocking that the word “poverty” was not mentioned in this budget. I want to tell you a personal story. My family was poor when I was growing up with a single mom. I was five years old, living in poverty, when I heard the government announce they were going to eliminate child poverty. I'm now 47 years old waiting for this to come true, and we have a budget with not one word about poverty in it. I know there are five-year-olds right now living in the same home I lived in who are waiting for the elimination of poverty. In Sudbury, there are 21,000 people, or just over 12%, living in poverty right now who are desperate for this information.

I want to talk about the francophone community. In my riding, we have a strong francophone community, including my family. This is important to me, Speaker. You

know, the budget mentions francophones three times. It shows the commitment from the government, again, in the throne speech—they didn't do a land recognition. They didn't say a single word in French.

Moi, je travaille avec mon professeur chaque semaine, parce que le français est important pour moi. Je ne parle pas bien, mais—I'm trying, which is more than we have in this budget. It's frustrating, Speaker, to hear about this.

They cut the French-language university. They cut the office of the French-language commissioner, and the Franco-Ontarian community—not just in the riding of Sudbury but across the province—is upset. Monday was Green Shirt Day. I couldn't find a green shirt because so many people are upset from the Franco-Ontarian cuts that, in Sudbury, they were sold out.

*Interjections.*

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Percy Hatfield):** The member for Perth–Wellington, the member for Durham and the member for Mississauga–Streetsville will come to order. Thank you very much.

Further debate?

**Ms. Mitzie Hunter:** It's a pleasure always to rise in the House and to speak on behalf of my constituents in Scarborough–Guildwood, to talk about this budget that has been tabled and how harmful it is for the people of this province, Speaker.

I am very pleased to continue with this debate and to really point out to the government that, while it talks about things that are not important to Ontarians, like vanity licence plates, gambling, alcohol and all of those things that are repeatedly mentioned in the budget, the things that do matter are not focused on and they're not priorities for this government. We all recognize that mentioning these items 63 times in the budget really demonstrates the government's priorities, and its lack of priorities when it only mentions teachers 23 times, poverty zero times and women—shamefully—just four times in a budget of this size, Speaker.

The Ford government is taking away from our children, our students and our families in this budget. When we look at the numbers, it's really quite shocking how deep the cuts go. Some \$1 billion is being taken away from the Ministry of Community and Social Services, and that really speaks to our most vulnerable Ontarians. But I am not surprised, because they are not acknowledged in the narrative of this budget. They are not being given the due respect that they deserve.

Speaker, this budget, as it is presented to the people of Ontario, takes Ontario back to an austerity state, back to the 1996–99 era. We know how devastating those cuts were when they landed on front-line workers, and services like hospitals, nurses and teachers. We remember that chaos. That is exactly what is being presented to us right now in 2019.

**1540**

The Financial Accountability Officer tabled a commentary on February 14 of this year, and it does a pretty good job of analyzing Ontario's program expenses and its revenues. It really reminds us that Ontario receives less

revenue per person than any other province in this country. At the same time, it also spends less on programs per person than any other province in this country. An example that was provided: Ontario spends \$3,903 per person on health care, and this is the lowest in Canada; it's \$487 per person lower than the Canadian average. Yet we have a budget presented to us that provides \$1.7 billion in efficiencies coming out of our health care sector and projecting year-over-year growth of just 1.6%, well below the rate of inflation—not keeping up with the realities of the demographic changes of an aging population and inflationary demands.

How is it that this government has the priorities—not to mention that the government is combining—talk about bureaucracy—20 health care-providing agencies into one massive, monolithic bureaucracy. What happens to front-line health care workers? What happens to locally provided control and services? People in Ontario don't want all of their decisions made here at Queen's Park. They want local control and local decision-making, and that is definitely not reflected in the direction of this government.

Madam Speaker, I want to talk a little bit about the cuts that are being made to the Ministry of Community and Social Services, because those are amongst the deepest cuts, and being done in a way that is hasty and, really, with no input. We see where that gets us. We've just experienced that with the autism plan that was done in a hurry, without input, and really went nowhere. In fact, it just caused a bunch of crises and issues for families.

I just spoke with a family today. I said to her, "What would you have done if your program for therapy had not been extended for your child for six months?" She said that she had no idea because her child is not able to go to school full-time. And that is the only solution that these families were presented with for the flawed autism program, which is now apparently under review.

When we look at what's coming for the Ministry of Community and Social Services, it's not a good picture. In fact, \$1 billion—where is it going to come from? Is it going to come from maybe the special diet program, so that people who rely on that type of subsidy will no longer be able to purchase fresh fruits and vegetables to keep themselves healthy? Where is it really going to come from? Is it going to come from the actual amount that people receive through our Ontario Works and our ODSP program? I know that Minister Fedeli was asked that question directly last Thursday, and he was completely unable to answer the question. When is this government going to be transparent and come clean with Ontarians and say where \$1 billion is going to be found from this ministry.

If I reflect back on 2018, the former government invested \$1.8 billion over three years to expand services for people living with developmental disabilities. We were committed to supporting front-line workers and expanding funding to support the Passport Program and supporting people with developmental disabilities. What I hear now is that the Passport Program has been frozen. It has been frozen, and people are waiting and waiting for access to

that program, for access to the services that their adult child with developmental disabilities has, and that program is now frozen under this government.

In the Ford budget, in 2019, there will be comprehensive reviews to identifying opportunities to streamline and improve coordination of provincial programs. What that really means is that there will be a cut, because we see that the expenses for MCCSS have been cut from \$17 billion in 2018-19 to \$16 billion by 2021-22. This is an average annual decrease of 2.1% per year. This will come from social assistance. This will come from some of the most vulnerable individuals in the province, who need that support.

Oftentimes, the members on the opposite side say that the best social program is a job. Well, what is this government doing to bridge people to those jobs and to that employment? What is the plan? How is this going to happen? Is this going to happen because you create efficiencies or because you create so much pain and deprivation in our province that you believe that it's going to happen? That is just callous and cruel and really short-sighted, when it comes to providing real hope and real opportunity for the people of this province.

We're all waiting for the definition of "disability." When is that going to come? Is that going to be the mechanism where you screen people off of this as-of-right program so that they no longer qualify, they're no longer eligible—they're just tossed out? What is the plan? This is a huge cut. We cannot forget that the Ministry of Children, Community and Social Services is looking after those Ontarians that are the most vulnerable and the most in need.

I also want to talk a little bit about our post-secondary education system, because when it comes to preparing Ontarians for the changes that are ahead—and we know that 40% of the jobs that we see today are going to face changes in the future, due to just automation and the transformation that is happening in our workplaces. Over the next decade, what are we doing to prepare—re-skilling and up-skilling—our workforce of the future? Here, we have a government that is cutting services and supports at the primary level, the secondary level and at the post-secondary level. How is this planning for Ontario's future?

We know that investments that we make in the skills and the talents of the people of this province are our best defence. It's our sharpest way that we can prepare for that future, yet that's not happening; \$700 million from this budget is being taken out of our post-secondary education system. That's going to affect a lot of young people, who are working hard. Our young people are working hard, and they're planning for their futures. They have so many goals and aspirations.

Just a couple of weeks ago, I was with Students Say No at their protest, talking to them about what this means for them. Many of the students were concerned about what is ahead. They were wondering: Should they even apply for the OSAP program? Will it be there for them? Or will they be saddled with just an insurmountable loan that they cannot come out from once they graduate? By the way, the

interest will be applied on the first day, so there's no grace period for those young people whatsoever.

When we look at the priorities of this government and whether or not they are in the right place, I would say that they are not in the right place. Based on the budget that they've presented, based on all that we know, Ontario should be preparing right now for a slowdown in the economy, should that occur. Yet this government is doing no such thing. They're putting up billboards and changing licence plates, and that is not a plan for the economy, Speaker.

1550

I want to take a few minutes to talk about an area that I have significant concern around in terms of the cuts from last week's budget, and that is access to justice. When we look at the decrease that is coming to the area of our justice system, it's moving from \$5.6 billion to \$4.7 billion in 2021-22. Where are those cuts coming from? Those cuts are coming from access to our justice system, for people who need to access legal aid. In my constituency office, this is something that people need. This is a service that they rely on in the community. Without access to proper representation, our justice system slows down. In fact, it becomes a human rights issue. So why is this government taking away resources and funding from our justice system?

It says that you're going to be modernizing our youth justice services. Really, it lauds the fact that youth crime rates are the lowest they have been in years. Well, the only reason why youth crime rates are low is because our graduation rates have increased from 68% in 2003 to 86.5%. More young people are pursuing their futures and doing things on a positive basis versus not receiving the supports that they need. What's going to happen should this not continue under this government, because of lack of funding and services and supports, to things like our Focus on Youth program, which is working in priority communities across this province with school boards to support young people? Yet we know that that was one of the first cuts to our education budget: \$25 million taken out of this program.

I have talked to young people who have said to me directly that this program, Focus on Youth, has saved their lives, that it has given them the path to post-secondary education and to a future that they would otherwise not be able to access. It's working, so what happened?

It has cut programs like our Sistema Toronto program, which is in my riding in Scarborough-Guildwood, in two very high-needs areas in the riding. I've talked to those young people, and they are flourishing under this after-school-based program. Yet one of the first things that the Ford government did was cut this program—no longer providing much-needed support and services to expand this to other communities so that other young people can benefit.

Finally, with my time remaining, I want to speak to Indigenous affairs, which has actually experienced one of the most severe cuts. Of the 25 ministry areas, 20 of them have seen a decline in this budget. This is very, very much

an austerity budget, when you have 20 ministry areas that see a cut in their budget. But one of the deepest cuts is in our Indigenous affairs department. And I wonder: What is the motivation for this? Does this government not have a plan to respond to the Truth and Reconciliation Commission's report that was adopted by this Legislature? Does this government not see the need to respond to the needs of both our urban Indigenous as well as Indigenous communities on-reserve? What's the plan here? When you take half of the budget away, when you cut the Indigenous Culture Fund, which was providing remarkable results in terms of the response to truth and reconciliation, when you stop the curriculum development that was Indigenous-led and basically ready to be incorporated across our school system so we do not repeat the mistakes and the errors of the past—and now this is a big blow to Indigenous communities across this province, that this ministry and this program area is seeing a 49% cut to its budget—once again, the Ford government is showing us its priorities. And I would say that those priorities are in the wrong place. They are hasty, they are harmful, and they are providing a lack of vision and foresight for this province. I believe that the government inherited a strong economy in Ontario from the former government, with strong GDP growth and with low unemployment—in fact, it's the lowest in four decades—and with the potential and the prospects to grow that economy. But it's squandering that with these hasty cuts to programs and services that people rely on.

We can think of the Basic Income Pilot that was providing much-needed support to 4,000 Ontarians and being studied in detail so we can find new solutions for how to support and assist vulnerable people to help them to transition. That program was cut right away, without any thought.

We talk about the cap-and-trade program: \$1.7 billion out of revenues that were being used to invest in reducing greenhouse gas emissions and driving new technologies and new innovations so that we could have a carbon-free economy and a climate that is sustainable for our future.

Where is the vision? Where is the foresight? All that I see here is that the government, under Premier Ford and his team, is really taking away from Ontarian's futures, from our children, from our families, from students and from our communities. This is an absolute shame.

I talked about this government recognizing that the headwinds for our economy are challenging right now when we look at what's happening globally, when we look at what's happening south of the border. Ontario should be preparing for that. We should be preparing for that by making investments in the skills and the talents of our people rather than making reckless and hasty cuts.

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

**Mr. Will Bouma:** I would like to thank the member from Scarborough-Guildwood for adding to our debate, but let me tell you something, Madam Speaker: I will not be schooled on financial advice from someone who held multiple portfolios in the previous government.

She talked briefly about this thing called austerity, where we're adding money onto multiple programs. Then, at the end of her speech, she talked about the word "squandered," and that's what I would like to talk about. Who watching this today feels \$200 billion richer? That's how much the debt increased under their watch. Who feels that \$15 billion, \$40 million that we're spending and we're not taking in—that's squandering. Who feels that good people in my community who, when I was knocking on doors, came to me and said, "We can't afford to live here anymore because our hydro rates have doubled over the last 15 years. We can't afford to live here. We have to choose between heating or eating"—you talk to me about squandering? I'll tell you about squandering: squandering the opportunity that this province has had. We're in the 10th year of a fiscal recovery and we were still running a \$15-billion deficit for this year alone. That is shameful. That cannot continue. I will not be told what we're doing with our budget from someone who allowed that to happen on her watch.

**The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Lisa Gretzky):** Questions and comments? The member from York South–Weston.

**Mr. Faisal Hassan:** I would like to thank the member from Scarborough–Guildwood, and also thank you, Madam Speaker. This budget has made clear that this Conservative government does not care about the young people of this province. Two weeks ago, tens of thousands of students walked out of their classrooms to protest the cuts being made by this government to their education. The response they received from this government was that they were put up to it by their teachers and could not have possibly been acting of their own accord. The students of York South–Weston have a message for this government, and it is that they will be heard loud and clear, if not today then at the age of 18. When will this government take the students of this province seriously and invest in education for the future for young people?

1600

Madam Speaker, a 1.2% increase for education, which is what this government has been boasting about, is a cut in real terms. With inflation at 1.6%, the increase does not even keep up with inflation. With the Toronto District School Board alone having a repair backlog of over \$4 billion, this government is preoccupying itself with beer, partisan licence plates, booze and rebranding. All the while, school boards are warning that this level of funding will mean class sizes of up to 46 students, fewer courses and thousands of fired teachers.

The Ford Conservatives came to government promising that no front-line jobs would be lost under their watch. Teaching positions are a front-line job, and it is wrong—

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

**Mr. Randy Pettapiece:** The issue with following the member from Brantford–Brant in these two-minute responses is that he kind of takes the wind out of your sails with his learning and expertise in what he's talking about. His enthusiasm is incredible.

Anyway, I'll get back to the member from Scarborough–Guildwood. If she believes this is an austerity

budget or that we're an austerity state, if she believes that—I don't believe that—take a look in the mirror. Guess who caused that?

How much time did you have where you could have corrected what's going on in Ontario? But you chose not to do that. You spend, spend, spend. You put programs that we hold dear in Ontario in jeopardy because of your spendthrift ways. I would suggest that you think about that. I would suggest that you think about how many schools you closed in the last—think of how many schools you closed—

**The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Lisa Gretzky):** Stop the clock, please. I'm going to remind the member for Perth–Wellington that comments go through the Chair, not directly across the floor.

**Mr. Randy Pettapiece:** I do apologize.

I want to talk a little bit about my riding and work it back to what the member said. You talk about climate change. I remember we tried—how many times did we try to get you to get rid of this Green Energy Act that you had? Fortunately, we've done that. But the Liberals were giving out 80-cent contracts for solar when the going rate was five or six cents. That's what the consumer was paying for it. Who has to make up for that? The consumer in Ontario has to make up for that. They pursued and pursued that. They couldn't see the error of their ways.

That's why our hydro rates are expensive. That's what people in our ridings in this province still have to deal with today because of their failed government initiatives.

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

**Mr. Wayne Gates:** I will have an opportunity, over the course of this afternoon, to do 20 minutes on the budget, but the one that really drives me nuts is they're taking a billion dollars from children, community and social services. I'll talk about that in my speech.

I wanted to talk about the Liberals. I don't know how any Liberal can stand up after 15 years of what they did to the province of Ontario, privatizing, doing P3s and selling off our Hydro. The biggest mistake that you guys made—because you privatized it—and the Liberals did is they sold off—

**Interjection:** Bob Rae.

**Mr. Wayne Gates:** He's a Liberal—they sold off Hydro. And what happened? Rates went up 300%—300%. Single moms, single dads: They could not pay their bills. They could not pay their bills, and then they had to choose between heating, feeding themselves or getting their medication.

I said this a couple of weeks ago.

*Interjections.*

**Mr. Wayne Gates:** It would be nice if you guys would listen for a change, rather than heckle. Why don't you listen to something intelligent? It's important here. I'm trying to go through the Speaker, but unfortunately you guys keep talking.

But I want to say to the Liberals: Where was the auto strategy? As we lost jobs in Windsor, we lost jobs in Oshawa, we lost jobs in St. Catharines—no auto strategy.

And what do we see in this budget? I can't find an auto strategy in your budget. Do you know what? You would think that you would do that, and I'll tell you why.

Madam Speaker, I know you're from Windsor; 10,000 jobs are going to be lost in Windsor, and 20,000 are going to be lost in Oshawa. I know you guys said, "Let Oshawa die," and the union kind of stuck up and have done some work there, but in Windsor, the president of Unifor, Dave Cassidy, has asked the Premier to call him. Can I ask all of you guys over there to go to your Premier and say, "Call the president of Unifor"? Thank you.

**The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Lisa Gretzky):** Back to the member for Scarborough–Guildwood.

**Ms. Mitzie Hunter:** Thank you to all the members— from Brantford–Brant, York South–Weston, Perth–Wellington and Niagara Falls—for your comments.

The bottom line here with this austerity budget—it is actually just adding cuts and confusion to our province, and it's also callous and uncaring. One of our young students said that, very articulately—how disappointed she was, how uncaring this government is.

When you look at the cuts to access to justice, from \$5.6 billion to \$4.7 billion—the government says that it's streamlining legal aid to generate \$164 million in savings. Really, what it's doing is blocking our court system when people lack adequate representation. It's reforming victim compensation services, when really it's taking away, at a time when people need support, victims' compensation for people who are experiencing gun violence, maybe sexual assault. It has been in place since 1971, and this government saw fit to cut \$6 million from this budget that has funded victim compensation.

And so, Madam Speaker, what I say to this government is to look at making investments in areas that people really need. Stop doing your drive-by consultations and actually talk to people so that you can get the best ideas and figure out how to implement programs in a responsible way, because we want Ontarians to be ready for the future.

Absolutely, there is a changing economy. We need to make those investments, and what I see here is a government that is only looking itself and its cronies. It is only making decisions to suit its own continuous campaign, and is not investing in the people of Ontario and is not investing in the future of Ontario. I think that that's wrong, Madam Speaker, and it needs to change.

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

**Mr. Parm Gill:** It's always an honour and a pleasure to stand in this House and represent my constituents in the great riding of Milton. As mentioned many times, Milton is a very active community, and it's great to see events going on on the weekend. This past weekend, I must say, we also had a number of events, and I had the opportunity and pleasure of attending.

One of them was our community awards gala, which is put on by the Milton Chamber of Commerce. They recognized some outstanding individuals in the community, and I'd like to take a brief moment and recognize the individuals who received awards organized by the Milton Chamber of Commerce:

—Mario Durante, lifetime achievement award—a very unique and quite inspiring history with the Durante family. I want to congratulate the entire Durante family;

—David Gallinger received the citizen of the year award;

—Jennifer Sibbitt, volunteer of the year;

—Ali Zaheer, entrepreneur of the year;

—Cosimo and Maggie Lizzi, business person of the year;

—Orange Snail Brewers received small business of the year;

—Reebok CrossFit FirePower received medium business of the year; and

—Sovereign Fusion Inc., large business of the year.

At this event, I must say that I had the opportunity to talk to many individuals regarding the budget that was introduced last Thursday and received just an amazing amount of positive feedback from business leaders, from community leaders.

#### 1610

One of the individuals was Walter Heyden. He is chair of our Milton Chamber of Commerce. I think he put it perfectly. He said that the Minister of Finance was put in an impossible, tough position, having inherited such a mess. But Walter was really impressed with how the budget was crafted and really complimented this government for the tremendous work that the cabinet and the entire caucus put in in crafting this budget.

Another important event I was part of on Saturday was the downtown BIA's Easter egg hunt, where the main street shuts down and thousands of families come out each year. This also allowed me the opportunity to talk to hundreds of families at this Easter egg hunt. Like I said, it's a great community. To be part of it and to have the ability to talk to many of them is a great pleasure. There were about 5,000 people that attended this event on Saturday—again, an overwhelming response towards our government's budget. It was very, very positive. Most of those who came out were young families with young children that were really encouraged with our child care tax credit of up to 75%. The news was welcomed by all of the families.

Like I said, my team and I had the opportunity to make some pancakes and serve people attending this Easter egg hunt. We served about 2,000 people, Madam Speaker. My team and I were able to make 5,000 pancakes. All of this was served with local maple syrup from the Mountsberg Conservation Area. I know many families in attendance and businesses who participated appreciate the measured approach this budget took to protecting what really matters most.

I was also glad to see a continued focus in this budget on putting drivers first, Madam Speaker, building on the success of my private member's bill, the ending postal code discrimination in auto insurance act. Our government is committed to bringing relief to drivers across this great province. There are close to 10 million drivers in Ontario, and we all know we pay amongst the highest auto insurance premiums in the country.

Madam Speaker, just this morning, I was reading another article that outlined a retired couple from Oshawa that had their insurance rates jump by \$600 simply because their postal code was changed by Canada Post. From what I understand, this family has been living at the same address for 10 years. They drive the same car and they live at the same address. All of a sudden, Canada Post changed their postal code. When they called the insurance company to inform them of the change, they learned that their insurance premium would go up by \$600—imagine. I've been hearing about stories like this ever since I introduced my private member's bill. These are the types of issues and problems in the auto insurance industry that my bill also aims to fix.

In this budget, there are further changes that will benefit drivers in this province. We're returning the default benefit limit of \$2 million for those catastrophically injured in an accident; introducing a driver care plan that will help streamline access to care by making the claims process easier to navigate; increasing competition; and reducing insurance fraud by creating a fraud reduction strategy. We are working towards a system that is more affordable, accessible and that will put drivers first.

Madam Speaker, another area of concern, of course, for my constituents—and I know neighbouring in and around Milton that has been a huge concern—is the 401. It's also great to see in this budget a Highway 401 expansion from Mississauga to Milton. It's not only trucks and truck drivers that use this stretch—it's also one of the busiest truck distribution routes in Canada—but drivers in the GTA know that the 401 is the busiest highway in North America. I'm proud that our government is investing in widening the 401 from Credit River to Highway 25 in my great riding of Milton. This will bring relief to many drivers, of course, who live in and around Milton.

The Toronto Region Board of Trade released a discussion paper that outlined \$6 billion in lost productivity each year. Without the investments our government is making, like widening Highway 401, it is projected to grow to \$15 billion in loss of productivity. The investment in the 401 in Milton is much-needed relief for drivers in my riding.

Our PC government introduced a plan for Ontario. It is a plan that will help the province of Ontario deal with its deficit and its debt as well. Being one of the most indebted subnational governments, Ontario had interest payments on the \$343-billion debt ringing in at \$13.3 billion last year, the fourth-largest expenditure in the budget. These are funds that could have been spent on health care, education or other important government services. In fact, when breaking down the numbers, this equals \$24,000 of debt for each and every resident of Ontario, including children.

The people of Ontario are worried about Ontario's growing debt. This is an unacceptable legacy to leave to our future generations: our children, grandchildren and their children. I have no words to express my concerns relating to this.

The budget starts by mentioning Ontario's path to balance, debt reduction and economic outlook, then addresses

various industries in Ontario, such as energy, transportation, auto insurance, health care, education, job creation and many more. The budget plan will build on over 200 initiatives the provincial government has implemented over the past 10 months.

Ontario's budget is focused on the following points: the need to restore accountability, sustainability and trust in government; the need to restore confidence in Ontario's finances and reduce the debt burden; the need to protect the critical public services we hold most dear, including our world-class health care and education systems; and the need to make Ontario the best place to do business, a place where jobs and prosperity can reach every corner of our province.

This year's budget is a plan that continues us down the road to fiscal sustainability while protecting what matters most. Balancing the budget is the first crucial step to ensuring our hospitals, schools and other critical services have the sustainable funding they need, now and for years to come.

Looking at some of the initiatives deeper, you can really see the intention here is to help Ontario out of this debt and, at the same time, give Ontarians the needed programs they can rely on.

As it relates to health care, our government will take various actions to make sure Ontarians feel protected and respected. We are investing \$384 million in hospitals and an additional \$267 million in home and community care.

#### *Interjections.*

**Mr. Parm Gill:** Thank you. This is essential to put an end to hallway health care and direct more health care spending where it's needed the most. We need to build a health care model that will address the very serious concerns hospitals and patients have. It is disrespectful for patients to be treated in the hallways of our hospitals. Our doctors deserve more respect for their noble profession, and so do our citizens when seeking help from health care professionals.

#### **1620**

We're investing \$3.8 billion for mental health, addictions and housing supports over 10 years, beginning with the creation of a mental health and addictions system.

Another concern for Ontarians has been long-term-care beds. I'm pleased our government will be creating 15,000 new long-term-care beds over the next five years and upgrading 15,000 older long-term-care beds to provide more appropriate care to patients with complex health conditions.

Another major aspect of this budget is education. We are working towards strengthening Ontario's education curriculum, with particular emphasis on math and science as well as job skills such as skilled trades and coding, and life skills such as financial literacy.

Parents are the best caretakers for their children, and it is important to respect the choices parents want to make for their children, Madam Speaker. Our government is respecting parents by developing a parents' bill of rights, a bill that aims to give parents more say in their children's education. Two of my children are still going through the

public education system, and it is so important for me, just as it is important for every parent in this province, that our children obtain the education that will help them achieve great success in the future. Emphasizing math and science as well as skills such as coding will prepare our children for future endeavours.

Health and education are the two most important aspects that this budget addresses, and these are some of the biggest concerns for the people of Ontario.

Our budget will also provide relief for families across Ontario through proposing a new Ontario Childcare Access and Relief from Expenses—also known as CARE—tax credit. This CARE tax credit will be one of the most flexible child care initiatives ever introduced in Ontario. It is a plan that will put parents and not the government at the centre of the child care decision-making process. The new CARE tax credit would provide approximately 300,000 families with up to 75% of their eligible child care expenses and allow families to access a broad range of child care options, including care in centres, homes and camps.

Along with the CARE tax credit, our government is committing up to \$1 billion over the next five years to create up to 30,000 child care spaces in schools, including approximately 10,000 spaces in new schools, making life easier for parents and families by helping them find more affordable child care.

There is nothing more important for parents than their children, and I know this because there is nothing that makes me happier, Madam Speaker, than seeing our kids succeed and achieve their goals. These initiatives are forward-thinking and will help groom the leaders of tomorrow.

Owning a home in parts of Ontario has become very difficult, Madam Speaker. There was a time when young adults would be able to achieve this essential life goal. However, it has become hard to be able to afford an apartment, let alone a house. Why doesn't this generation get the satisfaction of achieving this life goal, this important milestone in everyone's life? Real estate prices have increased tremendously in Ontario, which has made it very difficult for young people to buy a home. Through this budget, we're making home ownership and renting more affordable by helping increase the supply of housing that people need, through the forthcoming Housing Supply Action Plan.

We're also protecting communities by targeting crime through a provincial gun-and-gang support unit to assist local police officers and prosecutors; and, in addition, creating a Gun and Gang Specialized Investigations Fund to support joint forces operations.

I have mentioned in this House previously how important the safety of Ontarians is for me, Madam Speaker. As a federal MP, I was able to introduce a bill to criminalize gang recruitment in order to protect our youth and make our communities and neighbourhoods safer, which was passed in the House of Commons and then the Senate and went on to receive royal assent and become law.

*Interjections.*

**Mr. Parm Gill:** Thank you.

Our government is also ensuring value for money and prioritizing spending, with projected average savings and cost avoidance of about eight cents for every dollar spent over the path to balance. This action will help provide \$26 billion in much-needed relief to individuals, families and businesses over six years, while eliminating the deficit.

The budget also presents a blueprint for putting Ontario drivers first. Our government is taking action to fix the broken auto insurance system that has led to Ontario auto insurance rates being amongst the highest in the country. We went directly to the people to get their views on auto insurance and received 51,000 responses on how to make insurance cheaper and easier to buy. Our government is working to make finding and buying auto insurance easier and more affordable through this plan, by enabling insurance companies to offer more discounts and options as well as innovative new products such as pay-as-you-go insurance. We're also bringing electronic proof of auto insurance to Ontario drivers and allowing more competition in the auto insurance market.

Along with helping drivers with insurance premium costs, our government will expand Highway 401, as I mentioned earlier, especially in my great riding of Milton. There will be an increase in the number of lanes on Highway 401 from Mississauga to Milton.

We have taken many measures to increase good jobs in Ontario, Madam Speaker, and we will continue to do so.

Our government has deployed a responsible debt reduction strategy for Ontario that will restore fiscal health, preserve critical services and help hard-working individuals and families make ends meet. Our government has a moral, fiscal and economic responsibility to address the pressing debt situation and restore trust, transparency and accountability in Ontario's finances.

I know that I'm running out of time, Madam Speaker. I want to thank again my constituents for sending me here and allowing me to represent them. I look forward to questions and comments.

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

**Mr. Kevin Yarde:** Just hearing from the member from Milton—he spoke about insurance; he spoke about health care. He talked about a few other things, but that was basically it, Madam Speaker: It was just talk.

I'm going to talk a little bit about health care, and then another time I'll talk about insurance.

In Brampton, our population is over 600,000 people, and we have only one full-time hospital. Think about that: one full-time hospital and 600,000 people. That hospital has one of the longest wait times in the province. Thousands of Bramptonians receive health care in hallways of this hospital. The people of Brampton often drive to other cities, like Georgetown, to avoid the long wait times at the Brampton hospital. The fourth-largest city in the province has one hospital. The residents of the city simply cannot get the health care services they need in a timely manner, so they have to go to these other cities. This is shameful. If this government was serious about

cutting long wait times and ending hallway medicine, then it would make the investments needed in Brampton's health care system.

**1630**

The member across—well, he loves to talk about the neglect and mismanagement of the Liberal government over the last 15 years, but realistically, for Brampton, this government is doing much the same. Health care funding is being cut in real terms. The proposed increases will not keep pace with inflation. The budget allocates a 1.6% annual increase for health; inflation is 1.9%. So if you do the math right, that is a cut to health care. Hospitals have already warned that this level of funding will mean cuts to services and layoffs to front-line staff.

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

**Mr. Rudy Cuzzetto:** I'm proud to speak in support of government order 17, the budget motion. The budget introduced by the Minister of Finance last Thursday, April 11, is a plan to protect what matters most: our public health care and education.

The previous Liberal finance minister, whom I ran against, was spending \$40 million a day more than they were taking in in revenue every day. This was reckless and unsustainable. He left Ontario with a \$343-billion debt. We've started to clean up this fiscal mess.

The Auditor General found billions of dollars of waste. We set a target to find savings of four cents for every dollar spent. To date, we've found almost double that: eight cents per dollar spent. This puts us back on a path to balance with no new tax increase, and it will protect what matters most: our hospitals, our schools and our other public services.

In the last year under the Liberals, the health budget was \$59.3 billion. This year it's \$63.5 billion. Madam Speaker, that's an increase of 7%. In the last year under the Liberals, the education budget was \$27.3 billion. This year it's \$29.8 billion. That's an increase of over 9%; at the same time, working to ensure value for taxpayers' money.

We'll put resources where they're needed most: front-line services. I urge all members to support this motion and support our government on this.

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

**Ms. Peggy Sattler:** I'm pleased to rise on behalf of the people I represent in London to offer some thoughts to the comments from the member for Milton. Speaker, I can't believe that my community in London can be that much different than his community in Milton in terms of the response to the budget.

I was out on Saturday collecting signatures on petitions to stop Doug Ford's cuts to our public education in this province, and I can tell you that I can count on the fingers of one hand the number of people who declined to sign the petition, and that was mostly because they were in a hurry. Every single person I spoke to understands the damage that this budget, that this "vision for education" that this government has put forward—the harm that this is going to cause in this province.

Just this weekend, there was a feature article in the London Free Press called "Troubled Students. Terrified Classmates. No Easy Fix." I do take exception to the title of the article because I think there is a fix. We need to invest in public education. We need to hire more educational assistants, more teachers, more guidance counselors, and more mental health professionals to work in our schools. Instead, what we see in this budget is funding that falls well below the rate of inflation. That is a cut, Speaker. Anybody who understands math—which I question whether this government does, but everybody understands that this is a cut.

In my community, in the Thames Valley District School Board, almost 2,000 students are waiting for physiotherapy, occupational therapy, and speech and language therapy. We have 35 educational assistants who have been laid off just as the board is preparing for the entry of 500 students with autism into our system. A hundred teachers on special assignment and learning co-ordinators who specialize in special learning needs have been told that their positions are being eliminated.

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

**Mr. Robert Bailey:** I appreciate the opportunity to reply to the remarks by the member for Milton and also comment on the budget from last week by our Treasurer.

To recap a number of the things that the member from Milton highlighted: he talked about his private member's bill and about the impact that will have on the insurance industry, especially for members of his constituency, as we're all here to do—represent our constituents.

He talked about the \$40-million-a-day more, and the other member also highlighted that the former government spent \$40 million a day more than they were taking in. We have to turn that around. I think we've made a good investment there to do that.

He also talked about the investments in police and public protection with the guns-and-gangs policy, where we have to make real inroads there because of the gang violence, especially in this city where the Legislature sits. Every time I pick the newspaper up or I'm at home, I see about another shooting, knifing or such and such going on here in Toronto. We should get danger pay to come down here to go to work, I think.

He also talked about the efficiencies that the Treasurer looked for, the eight cents on every dollar. In the campaign, we talked about four cents, a minimum of four cents of efficiencies. The Treasurer and the finance minister, Mr. Fedeli, have brought that up to about eight cents now. We can only hope that we can find some more efficiencies going forward.

The child care issue: We talked about care, about how up to 75% of expenses will now be eligible for those families that qualify in certain income groups, who will certainly be able to take advantage of that.

Also, the massive investments in transit—I see I'm running out of time. Maybe I'll get a chance later on to finish.

**The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Lisa Gretzky):** Thank you. Back to the member for Milton.

**Mr. Parm Gill:** I want to thank my colleagues from both sides, the members from Brampton North, Mississauga–Lakeshore, London West and Sarnia–Lambton, for their comments.

I want to reply to the member from Brampton North. He mentioned the health care situation and the hospital in Brampton. Madam Speaker, I represented Brampton–Springdale as a federal MP, and I can tell you I, for years and years—the Brampton Civic Hospital that’s there right now was thanks to our previous PC government. It was actually the Liberals after that who shut down Peel Memorial Hospital. Every time there was an election, they would stand with signs in front of the Peel Memorial Hospital saying how they were going to revamp it, how they were going to open that facility as a full hospital, which never occurred for 15 years. That’s just one failure, and there’s obviously millions of others that we can stand here and talk about.

The bottom line is, our government has inherited this mess from the Liberals, and Ontarians gave us a mandate to fix that. Ever since getting elected on June 7 last year, our government has been hard at work introducing policy after policy, trying to deliver relief for Ontario families.

I can tell you, the member from London West mentioned how her constituents might be a little different from mine. They’re exactly the same. If you go and you talk to real people, you talk to real families about the challenges that they’re facing day to day and how the current policies that we’re introducing are helping families every single day, believe me, they appreciate it. Believe me, she would also receive positive comments if there isn’t a political spin that’s put on, if there isn’t any sort of fearmongering included in part of the conversation.

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

**Ms. Jennifer K. French:** I’m always glad to stand in this Legislature and speak on issues that matter to my community of Oshawa. Today, I am looking forward to sharing some perspectives from my riding—also from my region, but a few from across the province—in response to this first budget brought forward by this government.

Speaker, everyone knew that there would be cuts in this budget. The government has made no secret of their intent to reduce spending and cut where they deemed necessary or where they could. But I don’t think anyone was prepared for the mean-spirited nature of the cuts. That’s feedback that I’m getting from the community.

I don’t think folks were prepared for the reduction in investments in preventive spending. What I mean by preventive spending are things like—when you say that an ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure, we all know that old adage. But it’s true, when we look at something like a budget, that if you invest in medical interventions or you support families with dependants with disabilities and if you invest in mental health, then you don’t see as much in the way of acute-care costs at the other side. You could save folks and families heartache and anguish, which could also save the province, like I said, those acute costs associated with emergency room care or chronic care costs.

**1640**

The cuts will hurt, but they aren’t temporary. They will cost more in the long run and certainly will cost more to families. I would say that this is not a government that cares about those things. I think they are weirdly unmoved by the calls that they inevitably get—calls for help from across the province, from their constituencies. They become indignant when criticized, but, Lord knows, they’re going to stick to their top-line chants and messaging.

But here’s what we’re going to do today: We’re going to delve into what the bill really says. The title, Speaker, despite what you may have heard, is not actually the budget of booze and rebranding. It is “Protecting What Matters Most.” It might be about protecting what matters most to the Premier’s people, but it isn’t about protecting public services or real people. It is about protecting government relationships with their people and their connections, which is I would say an increasingly growing, protected well-feathered nest of the Premier’s friends. It is good for the people that they’re lining up to appoint to these special jobs, while they’re unceremoniously turfing independent officers of the Legislature who aren’t beholden to the Premier—but I digress.

Speaker, let’s look at the 2019 budget. I’ll start with education, because that’s where I started. I come to this Legislature by way of the classroom. It was the Liberals who undervalued our world-class education system. I saw it first-hand as a teacher. When they attacked educators and undermined the education that students received, I decided to stop taking it and run for election. I’ll tell you something, sometimes when you put up your hand, they choose you. So here I am. But I was inspired by the awful Bill 115 attack, and now we have this Premier determined to make it worse by cutting teachers and education workers and dragging education back behind the rate of inflation. The budget allocates a 1.2% increase for education. Inflation is 1.9%. Again, with the math—and maybe they could put this on their math test, but that’s tantamount to a cut, because 1.2% is less than 1.9%.

School boards are warning that this level of funding will mean class sizes of potentially up to 46 students, fewer courses and thousands of unemployed teachers. This budget also sets it up for this government to review and re-evaluate the existence of school boards. Speaker, I would say that’s not good news for students.

Public education should be the great equalizer. It should be a path to opportunity regardless of background, but this Conservative government seems to want to create a crisis, wants to undermine the system, inflate class sizes and ensure that the average kid gets stuck behind kids who can afford opportunities when it comes to eventual job competition down the road.

Supporters of strong public education recognize that there is a very real threat being posed to the futures of our children by this calculating government. As we all saw at the massive rally of education folks and as we saw at the massive walkouts of determined students and as we will see from parents, neighbours and everyday Ontarians, our children and their futures are worth fighting for.

A few things that we do not find in this budget: There is no plan to deal with violence in schools and classrooms. There's no mention of special education funding at all, despite all of the conversations we're having around autism; no plan to make the Ontario school system more equitable; no new funding for English as a second language; no changes to the problematic funding formula—and it is problematic; and no plan to deal with rural or remote school closures.

Speaker, sticking with education, I'm getting to training, colleges and universities. The Premier's new scheme takes more than \$400 million away from post-secondary education but also keeps them under the Premier's thumb with the threat of up to 60% of their remaining funding being withheld if they don't do as he wants, so funding tied to "performance" agreements for institutions to reach targets set by the government. How are colleges and universities supposed to be sustainable with that kind of capricious, bossy thumb hanging over their heads? What is the goal in that? Making it more challenging for there to be a dynamic and strong post-secondary landscape?

I thought of a new licence plate slogan for the Premier. "Welcome to PC Ontario: My Way or the Highway." That's one to try.

Moving into—

**Mr. Mike Harris:** Did Taras write that for you?

**Ms. Jennifer K. French:** The member from Kitchener–Conestoga, I know, is so excited to have comments after my speech, so he is welcome to.

When it comes to health and wellness, I have a letter here from 16-year-old Tamara. She said, "I have been struggling with mental illness for about five years now and a few months ago I finally got the courage to reach out for help. I was ready to turn my life around until I got the news from my mother that it would be over 13 months before I would be able to see any psychiatrist or therapist covered by OHIP. I then realized that I would be months away from graduating high school before I would ever be able to start my mental illness recovery journey.... The fact that the wait-list was so long discouraged me from continuing my recovery and left me hopeless I would ever get help since it was so far in the future.

"I would like to ask if you would consider increasing funding on mental illness treatment and consider people like me and many others that struggle with mental health every day. If you were to increase funding to make the wait-list shorter, more people would be encouraged to reach out for help since they would be able to see a psychiatrist/therapist faster and it would save more people from suffering from terrible mental illnesses."

Speaker, I'm not sure what to say to Tamara. Aside from the 2019-20 packet of money in this budget, there is no information on how this government intends to spend \$3.8 billion in mental health and addictions funding over 10 years. So how do we plan for that?

When it comes to health care, despite the desperate need for investment into patient care, this government is funding health care below the rate of inflation—again,

tantamount to a cut. What will that mean for the already painfully long wait in crowded ERs or for hallway health care?

We're hearing a lot from this government about protecting publicly funded health care, but I want to tell the folks at home that that's not the thing to hear. We need to be hearing about publicly "delivered" health care, because if we're going to take all of our public dollars and put them in a bucket, all of our public money in a bucket, and then we have different private health care providers that are able to reach into that bucket—But "don't worry, you can use your OHIP card," and that's the reassurance—well, that money is not going to go as far, because as soon as you are factoring in profit margins along with patient outcomes, then the money has to go in two places instead of to patient care. It's not just about publicly funded; we all know it's coming from the taxpayer. It needs to be publicly delivered, because just saying over and over, "Don't worry, you get to use your OHIP card"—that's not what to focus on. It is how far is that public money going, and are we getting the best outcomes from it?

How do we have better patient outcomes and ultimately lower acute care costs, or have fewer people in ERs? Talk to your front-line health providers. Work with them. Listen to them. The Ontario Health Coalition had town halls across the province. You've got so many good ideas from the folks there. Stop being afraid of the public. You don't just have to make decisions for them; you can make decisions with them.

I have a letter from Steve, and Steve says, "I am a retired paramedic.... I have been retired for 10 years, and was a paramedic for 33 years." He had a few interactions with our local hospital that took a long time, a four-hour visit and a six-hour visit. Then he goes on to say, "While waiting during this six hours, I also observed a number of ambulance stretchers with patients, and paramedics, in an unable-to-offload situation, attending to their patients. This then creates a reduction in the number of ambulances available to service emergency calls due to being unable to offload, thus having to treat their patients in the hallways. These problems were systemic 10 years ago when I retired, and remain the same today. Nothing appears changed, except maybe it is worse.

"I have no complaint regarding the staff, or treatment, except for the fact it took, and takes too long to streamline patients from arrival to discharge....

"When I retired 10 years ago, politicians, and hospital administrators said things would change. Well, here we are 10 years later, and everything is the same. Nothing has changed." Sorry, Steve. Looking at the budget, things may continue—or, as he suggests, might get worse.

People are worried. We've talked about some of the potential changes coming. I have a letter from someone about the chronic pain treatments and their concerns. I want to get it on the record because I want the government to factor this in. They say, "These injections help people with MS, lupus, Parkinson's disease, diabetic neuropathic pain, arthritis, musculoskeletal pain, car accident injuries, and countless other maladies.

"I suffered a serious injury in 1994 that has plagued me ever since. I need 23 shots per week so that I can stand upright, move my head and walk instead of limping/shuffling. Nobody volunteers to be poked with needles 23 times/week because it's fun; we do it because we need these treatments to be productive members of society, not place a further burden on our health care system, and to have some (even small) quality of life.

"The province is in a opioid crisis, and yet" the Premier "wants to severely limit a safe and non-addictive treatment, thereby leaving us no choice but to turn to opioids (legal or illegal), and go on disability because we are unable to function...."

1650

"It should also come as no surprise to" the Premier "that the people of Ontario value health care over foolishness like changing licence plates and printing cute little stickers.

"We are not to blame for Liberal mismanagement, yet the man 'of the people' has, thus far, targeted the most vulnerable in society: children and the sick.

"One can't help but wonder which 'people' he's talking about...."

"We can't march at Queen's Park, because most of us physically can't do it. We desperately need you to please champion our cause."

That's from Margaret.

Speaker, we're still talking about health care—and we should be talking about health care all day, every day, frankly, because it's on everyone's mind because they're so concerned. But at AMO this past summer—this is part of the submission from the Federation of Northern Ontario Municipalities on the public health units. They said:

"Proposed changes to public health units ... has been a concern to FONOM...."

"We ask that the government ensure that the numbers of public health units are not reduced."

Well, unfortunately, this PC government intends to reduce 35 public health units to 10 by 2020-21. The government also intends to cut the number of public health laboratories, but no numbers are provided.

When we talk about long-term care, the Central East LHIN, which is my area and extended, has the highest wait-lists and the second-highest demand for long-term care in the province. The average wait time for admission in our LHIN is 252 days; the Ontario average is 149 days. In the budget there are no beds in the Central East LHIN, in our area—no new beds in our area. I don't know how that got decided.

Dental care: Here on the opposition benches we knocked on doors and talked about dental care, and we know that it was a winner. We know that everyone, regardless of partisan inclination, had teeth in their mouths and wanted good dental health. Honestly, doing the right thing with this government is like pulling teeth, but unfortunately, the people of Ontario don't have that luxury. They can't get their teeth pulled unless—wait for it—they get an abscess. They have to wait, hoping for an

infection in order to have the pain relieved, in order to have the tooth removed.

**Hon. Bill Walker:** This is feeling a bit like a toothache.

**Ms. Jennifer K. French:** Well, I'm sorry if the minister is unhappy. I have six and a half minutes left, and I promise they will be action-packed.

Speaker, when it comes to dental care, pain meds or the hope of infection are what motivate people, because there's nothing else for them if they don't have benefits, if they don't have the money to pay for dental. The constant ER visits—did you do the math on that and the acute care needs? Because if you're not sure what it costs, ask doctors; I'm sure that they will tell you. People who have to go to the ER to get pain meds—side conversation; let's talk about opioids. But back to dental care: Why aren't we doing dental care for everyone, or all seniors? This government is excited about how, for super-low-income seniors, they're providing dental care. I begrudge those seniors nothing. I know them personally; we all do. They spend a lot of time in our offices, and they sincerely deserve all of the support that we can give them. But what about the other seniors? I don't understand. It just boggles the mind that this government would be so mean and literally divide seniors. I think it's terrible.

Also terrible, moving right along to social services and the \$1 billion cut from the Ministry of Children, Community and Social Services over four years: This is Ontario's most vulnerable, and the social safety net that we all count on. Families with children with autism and people with disabilities who are waiting for help—spoiler alert: They're not going to get it. Special Services at Home? Frozen. We had families here today who sobbed in the public galleries while the minister yelled her tone-deaf answer at us. Passport: no mention; so who knows? Our vulnerable neighbours deserve to know what they're facing.

When it comes to autism, I will say, and I'm happy to shout it in this room, that I was so grateful to see a commitment to Grandview Children's Centre in this budget. There has been a lot of community advocacy that resulted in that commitment. The magic of Grandview, though, is in the caring and the service it provides, and I don't know how going from a not-for-profit to a for-profit model will allow them to provide better services.

I do hope this government will look to places like Grandview that have great records of service and recognize that limiting families to a maximum of \$5,000 will mean that no service providers will be able to deliver programming that evidence shows would support unique children with unique needs. That \$5,000 won't go far enough for children. Grandview and other service providers will have to become businesses and figure out how to offer a menu of piecemeal products and compete for the few dollars that will go towards therapy. But there's no mention of autism funding in this budget, so \$1 billion down in this ministry and no mention of autism. I do have some letters from folks that I will not have a chance, sadly, to read on the record today, but I will find the time another day.

When it comes to child care, the region of Durham had said in its submission on the budget, “We strongly urge your government to update the provincial allocation formula for early learning and child care to take into account both child population growth, and the prevalence of low-income families.... Subsidies need to be maintained as tax credits do not help the poor.” It seems to be a bit of a theme with this government: “does not help the poor.”

Child care: Instead of an actual child care plan, they have a don't-really-care credit, because with the subsidies versus a tax credit—you have to pay up front to get any back. The people who come to our office, the people who cannot get back into the workforce because they can't find affordable child care, are not going to thank you for a tax credit that they will never qualify for because they can't pay. They can't afford it in order to get it. You still have to pay upfront in order to get the tax credit, and they are left out of that game. Families will never have a shot at becoming the upper-income families that can afford child care, because a parent can't go back to work because they can't afford child care. So this pretend-to-care tax credit is disappointing. They talk about wanting to grow the economy, or support economic growth and jobs. This is a basic, basic concept. If people can afford to go back to work because they can afford appropriate care for their children, then ta-dah, you have more folks in the workplace. Statistically, Speaker, it's a female parent or caregiver that stays home and stays out of the workplace when affordable child care stands as a barrier.

Which reminds me: What happened to the status of women? Did the Premier decree that women get enough, or maybe that things are fine? Because there's no mention in the budget. The word “women” appears four times, twice in reference to police men and women in uniform, twice in reference to vulnerable groups—four times.

The word “alcohol” is in 35 times. “Wine,” by the way, is only seven; “beer” is 12. But “alcohol” is 35. “Gambling” is eight.

“Rape,” Speaker, doesn't get a mention. “Shelter” is mentioned twice, once about bail beds and once about shelter needs in a person's life cycle; nothing about women's shelters.

I have a letter from Bethany that I won't be able to read, but Bethany found herself in crisis with nowhere to go. She said, “I've currently called all woman shelters and crisis beds here in Oshawa, and for the last three days everything's been full.

“I'm 28 years old.... As of April 1, 2019, I will be on the streets or trying to find safety and shelter.”

Our office is in connection with Bethany, but Bethany is desperate.

Speaker, I still have so many pages of notes. I want to give them heck on all fronts—

**Mr. Mike Harris:** Give her 20 more, Mr. Speaker.

**Ms. Jennifer K. French:** Oh, if I could have 20 more.

I will say I didn't hear anything about licence plates at the door. I did hear a lot about dental and affordable housing. I heard about transit needs and supports for children in their schools. I didn't hear anything about

licence plates or drinking from 9 a.m. I must have been in the wrong neighbourhood.

I was up in Parry Sound–Muskoka for the NDP riding association annual meeting, and they wanted me to ask this government face to face about the Northlander, which is a word that didn't make it into the budget, by the way, despite the fact that the budget was put together by the Minister of Finance, the member for Nipissing. I thought the Northlander was a promise made in Huntsville, but he can't find enough letters to put together the word “Northlander” in his own budget, so I don't know how that's going to go over in northern communities.

But you know what? Here's a slogan for your true-blue licence plates: “PC Ontario: Under Review.” The Northlander and everything else seems to be under review. Give them their train and give people what they've been asking for.

Speaker, I'm looking forward to my final two minutes to wrap up a few of the final points and to further debate on this horrible budget.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls):** Questions and comments?

**Mr. John Fraser:** It's a pleasure to respond to the member from Oshawa. I want to thank her for her passion. I do agree. “One door for care” in Ottawa, which is similar to Grandview, is going forward. I was pleased to work on that for about 10 years with the community. That's a good thing in the budget.

But what I really, really need to understand is, what is this obsession with alcohol? Alcohol is mentioned 50 times in the budget—either beer, wine or alcohol. We had buck-a-beer, beer and wine in corner stores, longer hours at the LCBO. Now we can drink in a park at 9 o'clock in the morning, something most Ontarians have been clamouring for for years. And we have tailgating.

**1700**

So then in the budget speech—to my surprise and to the surprise of, I think, all of the members in this House—the finance minister says, “We need to change the rules for mixed martial arts fighting, and we're going to change those. It's so important that we're going to put it in the budget speech”—and tailgating. So we have drinking, partying and fighting. I left high school over four decades ago, and I think it's about time that this government does as well.

If you take a look at health care, you took OHIP+ and turned it into OHIP-, putting a bigger burden on middle-class families for their children's drugs. Speaker, the government gave hospitals half of what they need just to keep pace.

The government is making larger class sizes. That's not good for kids. They're putting a greater burden of student debt on middle-class families for post-secondary education. They've cut about half of a billion dollars from the Ministry of the Environment. I think those things are Ontarians' priorities. I think the alcohol and gaming and mixed martial arts, fighting and partying, are kind of down there on the list. The government shouldn't be using that to distract us from those things that are most important.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls):** Further questions and comments? The member from Markham–Stouffville.

**Mr. Paul Calandra:** Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I appreciate the opportunity. What I haven't heard today from the opposition, really, is a lot of what we should be doing. Last week, colleagues, we were hearing about how the draconian cuts were coming. When they didn't come, they didn't know what to do. We increased funding education. Why? Because we want to make changes to education to make it better for our kids. We want to make it more responsible for parents. We made some investments in health care. Why? Because they hadn't been done.

The member for Ottawa South, the Liberal member— if we have an obsession on bringing balance to the budget of Ontario, they had an obsession with spending people's money like this province has never seen, to the extent where they put us into bankruptcy almost.

The reason we talk about the service industry is because it's an important industry to the province of Ontario. If you ask those people who own bars and restaurants right now, while our sports teams are doing well, if this is an important time for them, it is. Many of them will make all of the money that they will make this year over the next two months. When we talk about these industries, it's because they are important. It's not to diminish the people who work in the industries. I'll leave that to the opposition, to diminish people who work in the industries, the craft brewers across the province—like the member for Simcoe North—across the province, those people who work hard in the industry. I know the opposition likes to diminish their efforts. We, on the opposite token, like to lift them up, because we think it's an important part of what makes this province great and what is driving growth in our economy.

We're bringing the budget back into balance. We're doing it over a five-year time period. I'd like to hear more from the opposition, though, Mr. Speaker, as to what it is that they would do. Where are the differences? What are the things that they would do? Under what time frame would they bring the budget back into balance? What taxes would they increase in order to do it? Who would pay the price for the policies that they're advocating? For us, we're making sure that the taxpayers don't pay the price and that the economy grows.

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

**Ms. Peggy Sattler:** I want to commend my colleague the member for Oshawa on her speech and for bringing the voices of her constituents to the debate that we are having here today.

Speaker, as I listened to the voices of those constituents, I found it interesting that—I don't think she got a single email from somebody in Oshawa who said, "What we need in our community is enhanced access to alcohol, beer, wine, or the liquor stores." Not once did she say that she had heard from somebody who said, "What we need in this province are new licence plates," because those are

not the priorities of the people she represents, the people I represent and the people that they represent.

Citizens in this province of Ontario want to have a health care system that is there when they can rely on it. What we see in this budget is health care spending that falls far below both the rate of inflation and the rate that was identified by the Financial Accountability Officer as the kind of spending that's necessary just to maintain health care programs and services in this province.

We see in this budget spending on education that is, again, well below the rate of inflation, well below what we need in our schools in order to address the needs of students with learning challenges.

I was a trustee for 13 years. Every single year, we had to spend more on special education than we received from this province, but does this budget make any mention of funding for special education? Not a word. And this is at the same time as we are expecting more and more students with autism to be entering our system.

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

**Mr. Sheref Sabawy:** We can debate about the budget, but this budget is the budget the Conservatives did to protect what matters most. What matters most is our systems, the systems which we built: the education system, the health system, and any other support system for Ontarians which is already existing and we need to protect.

All Ontarians have to feel secure that the systems will be available for them when they need them. They need to feel that it is sustainable; that we can keep it. We can talk as much as we want about what we hope to see, but we need to talk about what we can do, what can actually be done, and how we can sustain that system.

The budget which was created by our Minister of Finance, Vic Fedeli, is balanced. It's trying to reduce a \$15-billion deficit which we inherited from the Liberals' last budget and at the same time deliver the support Ontarians expect to receive from our responsible government.

We were elected on June 7 with a mandate. This mandate is to stop the reckless spending by the Liberal government, which piled on a \$350-billion debt. It costs the taxpayers more than \$1 billion a month just to service that debt.

Mr. Speaker, we all need to work together to get Ontario back on track, to bring Ontario back to be the economic engine of Canada.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls):** I now return to the member from Oshawa for final comments.

**Ms. Jennifer K. French:** Thank you, Speaker. I would like to say that Oshawa did indeed get a mention in the Ontario budget, Protecting What Matters Most. Just to turn to that page, 196, "Standing Up For Ontario Taxpayers...."

"The federal government has indicated that it will help families affected by General Motors' (GM) decision to close the Oshawa assembly plant. Ontario welcomes the opportunity to work with the federal government to find solutions that meet the needs of affected families and all the people of Ontario without adding red tape and administrative burdens."

I look forward to seeing what that would be. I was hoping for an auto strategy in this budget—but, no, not this one; maybe the next budget.

Speaker, the Minister of Finance stood in Durham last week and talked about Durham. He didn't have too much to say in the way of local specifics. When he was pressed about extending the GO train to Bowmanville, he said that it was a 343-page budget and he couldn't keep track of all the specific details. Well, spoiler alert: It's not in there.

He also said that we ask the Minister of Transportation. Well, we did, when he came to Pickering for a transportation summit recently, and he said that everything was under review. Back to my suggestion about that would be on a good PC licence plate: "Under Review." He did tell us about Kitchener, though.

The Minister of the Environment, Conservation and Parks and the President of the Treasury Board, also from Durham, talk about it being Durham's time, and I'd love to believe them. I think they are also desperate to believe that. A few things that would matter to Durham that we didn't see in this budget but we're still hopeful for—take the tolls off Highways 412 and 418. It was something you campaigned on after we made it as a campaign announcement. I have a private member's bill, Bill 43. You know what? You don't have to wait for the debate on it, although it's coming. You could just take the tolls off. If you were going to remove them, the budget was the perfect opportunity. So get at it, because we are going to be debating it in this room on the official record.

The employment lands along the 412, the 418 and the 407 east: Our municipalities are waiting to have an answer if we can have them back. Again, "under review" is not good enough.

Durham wanted to see more from this budget, and we hope we will see more going forward.

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

**Mr. Kaleed Rasheed:** I'm honoured today to stand here and to speak on this government's first-ever budget, a budget that protects what matters the most, a budget for the people. After 15 years of mismanagement, this province will get the relief it deserves. While providing \$26 billion over six years in relief for individuals, business and families, this budget contains absolutely zero new tax increases. Thank you to the Minister of Finance for this well-prepared budget that will actually balance, and thank you for putting Ontarians first.

1710

This budget is a clear indicator that our government is prioritizing what matters most. Through this budget for the people, our government's approach is both thoughtful and measured, and is built on a foundation of five clear priorities: accountability, efficiency, responsibility, opportunity and prosperity for Ontario.

Our government is increasing accountability through this budget. Ontario faces over \$13 billion in interest payments on the debt, money that could be going towards important public services like health care and education. I always say, whenever I'm having conversations with

many people out there and my constituents, that the fourth-largest ministry is the ministry of interest. It's really sad: The fourth-largest ministry is the ministry of interest. Madam Speaker, just think for a second: If we are able to reduce the interest payment by a billion dollars, just by a billion dollars, think about how that billion dollars can be transferred to other services, such as health care, education and social services. Yet I always feel that the members opposite just want to keep raising the interest more and more so that our children are going to suffer tomorrow. This government is not going to let that happen. We're not going to let that happen.

That is why our government is introducing a clear debt reduction strategy in order to have a measurable and transparent target for our government to restore trust and accountability in our province's finances. The budget focuses on restoring accountability and trust by introducing a credible, sustainable and fully costed plan that will return the province to fiscal balance. Through the Fiscal Sustainability, Transparency and Accountability Act that we will be proposing, our government will ensure an unprecedented level of transparency surrounding government financial decisions. This will enable the people of Ontario to hold their government accountable for its spending decisions.

Our government believes that transparency for the taxpayer should be the top priority in financial reporting. Therefore, we have introduced a first-of-its-kind in Canada: the Premier's and minister's accountability guarantee. It will require the Premier and the Minister of Finance to pay a penalty of 10% of the Premier and minister's salary for a missed public reporting deadline, and for the minister to post a public statement explaining why a public reporting deadline was missed, as well as a revised deadline by which the report will be released.

The guarantee would increase accountability for the people of Ontario and will reinforce our government's commitment to being open and transparent about our province's finances. Through this guarantee, the people of Ontario can be sure they will always receive a transparent account of how the government is spending their money.

Madam Speaker, we are creating more efficiency. The budget's purpose is protecting what matters most by adopting bold new ways to deliver world-class services, such as health care and education, while supporting our front-line workers. We remain committed to engaging with stakeholders on the proposed framework in order to ensure a smooth transition for existing experienced and well-qualified professionals. Our proposed legislation would, if passed, improve efficiency and competitiveness in the financial services industry and will bring about fundamental changes that will ensure efficiencies, especially in health, education and energy.

Let's talk about health, Madam Speaker. We are modernizing how public health units are organized and funded to allow for a greater focus on patients, broader municipal engagement and more efficient service delivery. This will enable greater flexibility for services based on community priorities and ensure public health agencies focus on

providing better, more efficient care, so individuals like my grandmother do not have to suffer at the age of 85 just by waiting for certain public agencies to come to our house to provide services—such as PSWs and a few other agencies that we have personally experienced in the last few years. I'm really proud of the fact that our government is looking into not only modernizing these agencies, but also bringing everything under one umbrella so it makes all these services more efficient. I'm really, really proud of that fact.

In education, we are modernizing our education system in order to update the curriculum, better utilize technology and give students the skills they need to succeed. We are also investing nearly \$13 billion in capital grants over 10 years to help build new schools and improve existing schools. Sometimes when I'm listening to members opposite, I'm like, "Where are they getting their numbers that we are cutting?" when it clearly states in our budget that we are spending nearly \$13 billion in capital grants over 10 years.

We want to ensure that every dollar we spend on education directly benefits students. This includes looking at how school boards can operate as effectively and efficiently as possible to best serve students and their parents.

In terms of energy, we know how critically important fixing the hydro mess is for hard-working families and the businesses that create jobs and contribute to Ontario's economic growth. Our hydro initiative is focused on three main fronts: keeping electricity affordable and improving transparency; reducing costs by centralizing and refocusing conservation programs; and building a modern, efficient and effective energy regulator for Ontario.

Taken together, our plan will find savings of up to \$442 million; make regulatory changes to the Ontario Energy Board to make it more efficient and accountable; hold electricity bills to the rate of inflation; save billions in borrowing costs that were tied to the Liberals' failed Fair Hydro Plan; and replace that failure with a new, transparent rebate on consumers' bills.

Madam Speaker, we are increasing responsibility. Simply put, we do really care for the people of Ontario. We are putting people first by making life more affordable and convenient with our new child care tax credit, a flexible auto insurance plan, an expanded rapid transit system and a reduced estate administration tax.

I'm proud that I can tell my constituents that we are listening to them and we are here working for them. I was so pleased to see that even my mayor, Bonnie Crombie, was pleased with our plan to protect what matters to the people.

1720

**Mr. Mike Harris:** Even the Liberals are excited. Holy cow.

**Mr. Kaleed Rasheed:** Yes, absolutely.

With this plan, our government is ensuring value for money and targeting spending to front-line services while eliminating the deficit. Already in nine short months, our government has accomplished so much, including

cancelling the Justin Trudeau cap-and-trade carbon tax, introducing our Low-Income Individuals and Families Tax Credit, cutting corporate income taxes through the Ontario Job Creation Investment Incentive, building new schools in high-growth areas and adding new long-term-care beds, more hospital beds, repairs and upgrades to dozens of hospitals throughout Ontario, and now this comprehensive provincial budget.

We are speaking out loud and clear, and our message is, we care for you. The signature initiative of the budget is the proposed Ontario Childcare Access and Relief from Expenses tax credit, called CARE. The CARE tax credit will be one of the most flexible child care initiatives ever introduced in Ontario, putting parents at the centre of the decision-making process. CARE would help low- and middle-income families with up to 75% of their eligible child care costs per year, including those for daycares, home-based care and camps.

My colleague here and I were having a conversation about how much this CARE tax credit is going to help both of us—

**Mr. Mike Harris:** It's exciting news.

**Mr. Kaleed Rasheed:** It's really exciting news for both of us. My colleague here has five kids, and I have four. Just imagine how much up to 75% off eligible child care is going to help us.

*Interjection.*

**Mr. Kaleed Rasheed:** Absolutely. I'm really excited.

**Mr. Mike Harris:** I'm excited.

**Mr. Kaleed Rasheed:** I know my colleague is double excited—

**Mr. Mike Harris:** I'm doubly excited.

**Mr. Kaleed Rasheed:** —because he has one more child than I do.

Madam Speaker, one of my constituents, Marium, a brave young mother of four from Mississauga East–Cooksville, said, "I am really happy when I heard about CARE tax credit. I really appreciate especially for me it works a lot because I am single mother with four kids and my youngest son has autism, and I believe that his CARE tax credit will bring huge relief for me and my kids. I just wanna say thank you so much."

I must say that I'm really happy to see this budget making courageous women like her happy.

Another key item in this budget is dental care for low-income seniors. This announcement is very crucial for my riding of Mississauga East–Cooksville. At least two thirds of low-income seniors do not have access to dental care and many end up in our emergency rooms as a result.

Just this past weekend, I was at a few events and a lot of seniors actually came up to me. Surprisingly, I was invited to a few senior events in my riding—

**Mr. Mike Harris:** Who's surprised? I'm not surprised.

**Mr. Kaleed Rasheed:** Especially after this announcement—that's what I meant by surprisingly. It gave me the opportunity to have a conversation with them. They were so happy that, finally, there was a government that was listening to them, and they said—

*Interjection.*

**Mr. Kaleed Rasheed:** Exactly—doing something about it. Actually, they said, “You know what, Kaleed? This is going to bring so much confidence to us and a big smile on our faces once we start using this relief” that our government is giving to them. Madam Speaker, our government is definitely investing \$90 million, starting at the end of summer 2019, to establish this new program to help Ontario’s low-income seniors.

Now, from the very beginning of our mandate, we have said that we are going to end hallway health care, and our government is going to do everything possible in our power to make that happen. In fall 2018, our government took immediate steps to deliver on its promise to end hallway health care by investing \$90 million for 1,100 beds and spaces in hospitals and in the community. This includes the new long-term beds in my riding of Mississauga East–Cooksville at our Cooksville Care Centre.

The Ontario Paramedic Association is applauding our government for a budget that maintains its commitment to paramedics as critical emergency responders in Ontario’s world-class health care system. They said:

“Budget 2019 reaffirms the provincial government’s efforts to protect paramedic mental health, streamline ambulance dispatching and expand alternate destinations for paramedics.

“Budget 2019 also represents a \$1.4-billion increase in Ontario’s overall health care budget.

“Paramedics work with vulnerable populations like seniors, those with disabilities, mental health and addiction patients. The OPA appreciates critical funding flowing to new hospital beds, new long-term-care beds, acute mental health in-patient beds, community paramedicine, addiction services, and, most important: surge funding.”

Madam Speaker, we are creating opportunities for Ontarians. We are making Ontario open for business and open for jobs, lowering business costs and making it easier for employers to hire workers and for workers to find a job. Our Modernizing Skilled Trades and Apprenticeship Act, if passed, will provide support and opportunities for the skilled trades by reducing burdensome red tape, closing the skills gap and increasing access to apprenticeship opportunities.

We are creating a flexible and adaptive system that will respond to the needs of businesses and allow more Ontarians to join the skilled trades. We are focusing our efforts on helping businesses who are looking to hire and matching them with the workers who seek opportunity.

Madam Speaker, I would like to quote one of my constituents, Dan Pavlovic, president and owner of Eurowerx Inc.:

“As the president and owner of a machined parts manufacturing facility, this budget lets me attract top-skilled labour with support from the provincial government in the investment and future expansion of my business.”

I share Dan’s excitement and enthusiasm as I stand here today and talk about the opportunities for success and

growth that this budget will bring for the residents of Mississauga East–Cooksville.

Other key initiatives in budget 2019 include a new Ontario Job Creation Investment Incentive to help businesses grow and create jobs, a digital-first strategy to modernize ServiceOntario’s top 10 transactions and other government services, and a new auto insurance plan that puts drivers first—and thank you to my colleague from Milton. Milton is going to be the new auto insurance place.

We need to make sure that Ontario and cities like Mississauga are protected for generations to come. Through this budget, we will do exactly that, Madam Speaker. This is a plan that puts people first, while making sure that each Ontarian has the opportunity to grow and to prosper by making Ontario open for business and open for jobs.

As I always say, I have been speaking with a lot of businesses and a lot of families, and what people need to understand is that Justin Trudeau’s job-killing carbon tax is not going to—

**Mr. Mike Harris:** It’s a horrible tax—horrible.

**Mr. Kaleed Rasheed:** It is. It is a horrible tax. If you just remove the cap-and-trade words, then it is basically a tax, an extra tax on the people of this province who are already struggling to make ends meet. I am so proud of our government, our ministers and my colleagues here, who are, day and night, fighting this Justin Trudeau carbon tax. We are going to make sure that our government, at the end of the day, brings relief to the people of Ontario.

1730

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

**Ms. Teresa J. Armstrong:** You have to kind of take a deep breath when you’re going to respond to the debate from members from the other side. I understand the member from Mississauga East–Cooksville trying to frame this budget as the best thing that has ever happened to Ontario. A couple of comments he talked about—what this government is talking about is accountability and transparency. When you look into this budget, they’re very fixated on not being responsible for the legislation they create that is going to hurt Ontarians. Because what they’ve done is taken out the ability for people to actually hold them accountable and transparent. It’s going to be very difficult, if at all possible, to sue this government when they make mistakes and they affect peoples’ lives in grave ways. They’re looking to the future to make sure they have that escape clause and that they won’t be held accountable legally for the bad policies they’re creating today. That’s very offensive to me.

This member also talked about how delighted he is about the tax credit for child care. Of course, he makes over \$100,000, like we all do here. It’s going to be easy to pay for your child care up front when you make that kind of money, and then, when your taxes come due, you can write that off. But the person who is making \$25,000 a year—a single mom, a single parent—can’t put out that \$10,000, that \$15,000 to pay for their child care and wait for that tax credit. It’s going to work for the very

privileged, like we all are here in this House, making over \$100,000 a year, but it's not going to work for the people that actually need it and can't afford to pay for their child care up front and wait for the money to come back.

So you've got to put the right information out there. If you want to say it works for you, that's great, but it's not going to work for the people that need it most.

**The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Lisa Gretzky):** Questions and comments? The member for Thornhill.

**Mrs. Gila Martow:** Thank you very much. I always feel that the Speakers are happy to see me rise because I have such an easy riding for them to remember; it's just one word. I feel that they should thank me every now and then.

Madam Speaker, I'm very pleased to rise and speak after the member from Mississauga East–Cooksville spoke so nicely. We're talking about the budget today, but it's a budget motion. It's what goes on sometimes—delay tactics by the opposition parties here in the House.

This morning, I was at the Vaughan Chamber of Commerce at a wonderful post-budget event. Minister Fedeli was there with myself and the member from King–Vaughan. We heard overwhelmingly from the community and from business leaders about how pleased they were with this budget. They were just feeling that they could plan for the future. They felt confident that this was a government that they could tell us—and they did tell us about things that can be done, rules that could be changed, red tape that can be cut to streamline and make business growth and investment more efficient.

We told them we want to hear about jobs available in their communities. We know that there is a big mismatch in Ontario. There are jobs available in some areas, and then there are other people who say they can't find jobs. As a government, it's our job—our job—to facilitate and make sure that everybody who can work and wants to work is able to work, and that everybody who needs employees to grow their business has skilled employees with the right skill set that they need. And it's our job to work with the education system.

It's not just silos, Madam Speaker. We all have to work together—all the different members of this House, all the different ministries—with our business communities and our families and our residents, and give them the support: the CARE program for child care so that people can go to school, go for training and work, and ensure that for the future, we are saving for the next generations and prioritizing what matters most. That's what this budget was about. We saw with the media that there was a lot of support, and we're looking forward to seeing this bill pass and getting forward on getting Ontario to be the great province it can be.

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

**Mr. Kevin Yarde:** Hearing the budget last week, on Thursday, I still feel like Rod Serling is here in the building and that we're still in some sort of a twilight zone, because I can't believe I heard them mentioning about serving alcohol at 9 o'clock in the morning, talking about

tailgating and tailgate parties, and not talking about things that really matter to Ontarians.

The member from Mississauga East–Cooksville talked about education and making it more modern. Well, it's further from the truth. So here today, Madam Speaker, we're in a changing world and the employment patterns are continuing to change and technology has proven to be such a disruptive agent of change.

Now, in such times, it only makes sense that we do everything in our power to prepare the future generations of this province and this country for the rest of the world. That means we should be providing the resources and the needs for our education system so it can produce doctors, engineers, scientists, teachers, leaders for tomorrow. The Liberals, we all agree on both sides, for the last 15 years while they were in power, left Ontario's world-class education system on the verge of crumbling. They simply did not make the investments needed to the education system and proceeded to fix the leaks with their band-aid solutions. The result we have now is the result of a system that is deprived of resources needed and pushed to its limits.

This government, unfortunately, often points to the mismanagement of the last government and they vow to do better. However, what they've been doing is further from the truth. They say they will modernize our education system, but in reality, instead of fixing this education system, the government is making it even worse by cutting teachers and education workers and dragging education backwards.

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

**Mr. Roman Baber:** It's a pleasure to rise and speak to our government's first budget. I want to congratulate my friend from Mississauga East–Cooksville, as there are approximately 41 new Conservative MPPs that delivered their first budget. For me, this is terribly exciting and this is exciting for the province because, finally, after 15 years of neglect and mismanagement, we're seeing the path to balance, and this is incredibly exciting.

I want to comment on something that my friend from London–Fanshawe said, because she likes to be accurate. The child care tax credit is not a deduction, as she suggested; it's a credit, which makes it very, very progressive, irrespective of income. Not only that, contrary to her assertion that somehow it would be the privileged class that would benefit from it, with respect, I don't agree with that suggestion because, in fact, the tax credit is progressive in that there is no tax credit beyond \$150,000, and with every \$25,000 or so, the amount of the credit falls.

Also, I want to comment very quickly on my friend's assertion with respect to what I refer to as the evil carbon tax, and to congratulate the Ministry of the Attorney General lawyers, who, this morning, commenced arguments before the Court of Appeal to suggest that the federal carbon tax is not constitutionally valid. You cannot be applying a certain tax in Ontario and apply a different tax, presumably, in Quebec, and still refer to it as a federal income tax. That is incorrect and I'm looking forward to

the Court of Appeal ruling on this invalidating the federal carbon tax. I wish I had more time to speak to this.

**The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Lisa Gretzky):** Back to the member for Mississauga East–Cooksville.

**Mr. Kaleed Rasheed:** The 2019 Ontario budget is showing the world that our government is serious about fiscal sustainability, protecting front-line services and making Ontario the best place to invest and create jobs.

Madam Speaker, I want to thank my colleagues from both sides for their comments, but as my colleague from Markham–Stouffville earlier mentioned, we are still waiting for the members opposite to come up with some policies, to provide us with some real information that can help us. Instead, the only thing we hear from morning to evening is just “cuts, cuts, cuts.” As I always say, they are always talking about cuts, but are not really bringing any great information to us, or no suggestions. Rather, they’re just saying, “Oh, you guys are doing cuts. You guys are doing cuts.” We are not doing cuts, because, as you can see in this budget, we are investing in health care, we are investing in education and we are investing in other services as well.

I think it’s time for you guys to open Protecting What Matters Most and actually start looking at it. You will know that there are no cuts; rather, there are investments that we are making in a lot of services that we are offering in this province.

1740

This budget marks a new beginning for the province that respects tax dollars, makes life more affordable and ensures that the government works for the people and not the other way around. This is the vision and approach of our Premier, Doug Ford, and this government for the people, which will put Ontario back on track. This plan is for the people, by the people—

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

**Mr. Wayne Gates:** I’d like to thank you, Madam Speaker, for allowing me to rise today. It’s always a pleasure to talk on this motion.

Before I get into what I want to talk to—it’s a lot of local stuff, by the way—my colleague was saying that there’s no cuts. Tell me if I’m wrong on this, because if I’m reading it wrong, I’ll apologize; that’s for sure: \$1 billion from the Ministry of Children, Community and Social Services. Am I wrong on that? I didn’t think so.

Then \$700 million from training, colleges and universities, with a threat to withhold as much as 60% from our colleges. Am I wrong on that? I don’t think so.

Health care and education squeezed less than inflation—which is a cut when you need 5.5%. Tell me if I’m wrong there.

The Indigenous affairs budget—and this is disgusting, by the way—was cut nearly in half, with my colleague who is beside me.

Conservative priorities are booze and rebranding, so I’m going to tell you—I’m a little surprised at it, but I think it’s fair to say this: You’re going to rebrand the licence plate. I have no idea why you want to have a licence plate

in the province of Ontario that looks like a Q-tips box. I don’t understand that at all; I don’t.

There are areas that this government chose to focus on that I hope they will tweak. One of them is alcohol sales. For some reason, this government is focused on making this budget about alcohol, about making alcohol as accessible as possible.

I want you guys to listen to this, if you will. I spoke in this House about drinking and driving. I hope that this government will take the time to ensure that these loose regulations mean that they will work on ensuring that people don’t drink and drive. You mentioned alcohol in this budget 46 times. Do you know how many times you mentioned poverty? None, and that hurts, because I grew up in poverty, just like my member from Sudbury did.

My question to the government—and there are people over there who I respect; I’m not going to name them because it will end up in a flyer somewhere—tell me why we have to have booze available at 9 o’clock in the morning. I don’t get that, and I’ll tell you why.

*Interjections.*

**Mr. Wayne Gates:** No, I’m going to tell you why. You can heckle all you want, but I’m serious about this.

I stand here over and over again, talking about drinking and driving. Do you know why? My wife, who is a principal, was driving on Lundy’s Lane at 5 o’clock at night. A drunk driver came out of the Sundowner. Some of you may already know what the Sundowner is, but it’s a strip joint in Niagara Falls. She got hit head-on, and do you know what? That changed her life, for the rest of her life. The quality of her life was altered, and the quality of the life of her daughter and her family. So when you make these decisions about making it easier for people to drink and get hammered earlier in the day, that’s what happens. It happens.

Let’s talk about this expansion. With the LCBO, there’s actually some action to ensure that local wines take priority on the shelf.

*Interjections.*

**The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Lisa Gretzky):** The member from Sault Ste. Marie will come to order. The member from Kitchener–Conestoga will come to order.

**Mr. Wayne Gates:** Try to listen. I know you guys have trouble with that.

I’ve always said that it’s not enough and we must do more to get shelf space for our local wines, but there are some protections. Now that the government has opened up liquor sales to grocery stores and convenience stores, what protections are you willing to put in place to ensure that local wines get that space, and not major international corporations? That’s what’s going on in the LCBO today.

Down in Niagara, we have brilliant businesses, community leaders, and some of the best wines, quite frankly, in the world. And they are great jobs. They drive money back into the local economy, which I think you guys are interested in, and they create an incredible tourism sector down in Niagara. Our wine should be our priority on their shelves.

Madam Speaker, if we're going to expand sales of wine, craft beer, cider and spirits, let's do it in a way that gives back to our local economy and jobs. If we want to create jobs and benefit our community with our policies, this is a no-brainer. Why isn't it in there? For every dollar spent on Canadian wine sold in Canada, \$3.42 in GDP is generated right across the country, including in the province of Ontario. More money goes into the local economy when wines are local.

The one thing that we have to remember—I know you guys don't, because it's unionized—with the profits the LCBO makes, it's around \$2 billion. That money goes right back into health care, right back into our education, right back into infrastructure, so why are we not expanding the LCBO, not cutting it away?

In a report from 2015, the Ontario wine industry generated \$522 million in tax revenue and markups, with a total economic impact of \$4.36 billion—that's with a B; I hear you guys say that all the time. If they're going to do this, at least do it in a way that benefits us.

Madam Speaker, I see here that the government is also looking to pressure the federal government to bring in single-sports betting—

*Interjections.*

**Mr. Wayne Gates:** It would be nice if I could hear, Madam Speaker.

I find this interesting, considering the federal government and Conservative senators stopped single-sports betting from coming to Canada in the first place. How many here know that? As you stand up and say that that's what we need, it was Conservative senators who stopped it. Some of the guys that were in Ottawa at the time—I know there are some on that side of the House—you know that's accurate. The NDP put bill after bill forward to bring this in. The Tories weren't excited then, but I'm glad that you've changed your mind. You're putting this forward because it's a way to create good jobs.

Madam Speaker, I've always said this: We can use single-sports betting programs to bring jobs back to the Fort Erie Race Track. Since the slots were denied to them without any public input—I'll repeat that: without any public input—we are left with a track that still has the capacity for gaming, and yet no gaming. If we're going to bring in single-sports betting, the track would be a prime place to do that. I hope this government would support that. I hope they'll come to Fort Erie and work with us to introduce single-sports betting there. It would create good-paying union jobs. It would bring in tourism. It would help the track get additional revenue, which I hope will lead to more race days, because that's what we really need down in Fort Erie: We need more race days. I will never, ever give up on that track or the jobs there. Single-sports betting should be allowed to happen there so we can continue to support our track.

I hope the government has been listening. I want to touch on one last thing that was left out of this bill, which should never have been: mental health funding for Niagara. Madam Speaker, on December 6, 2018, this House passed a motion calling for mental health funding

in Niagara, funding that would provide three round-the-clock mental health drop-in centres capable of serving all 12 Niagara municipalities. That funding has yet to be delivered. People are in desperate need. The deaths by suicide continue, including another one last week who jumped off the bridge. We have a report now that says that a certain piece of infrastructure in Niagara—

*Interjections.*

**Mr. Wayne Gates:** I'm going to read this again, so you guys can hear it. We have a report now that says that a certain piece of infrastructure in Niagara is now the place with the second-highest rate of suicide in all of North America. That has happened since this motion passed, and yet not one dollar of that money has been given to those front-line groups.

During the debate on that bill, the member from Niagara West from the Conservatives had this to say: "I just wanted to add my voice today and say to the member opposite who has brought this forward, it's great to see it being a non-partisan issue that we can all get behind." After he said that, he joined his caucus in voting for that motion, voting for the money to Niagara and voting, more importantly, to save lives.

**1750**

Today, it's April 15. I ask you, where is the money? Where are all the consultations? When will the ministry talk to the groups on the front line of this crisis? I can tell you I've talked to the health minister a number of times on this issue. She knows there is a crisis in Niagara. She knows we need help. How many more people need to lose their family members until there is action? There is not one single mention of that funding in this budget. When can those families expect the money that was promised?

Madam Speaker, there is nothing here that offers relief for families in Oshawa or Windsor facing job loss in the auto sector. There is nothing here about the automotive strategy, a proper strategy that would save their industry. Why isn't the Premier fighting for them? Why is making booze easier to get more important than lives and jobs in the province of Ontario?

I want you to listen to this—there are 20 of you here, and I think that's good. We're talking about 10,000 people affected in Windsor, 10,000 livelihoods, and 20,000 in Oshawa, and that's with the spinoff jobs. I know some people don't understand that, but that's how it works. And the Premier isn't returning calls. I know the Premier is a busy man. I appreciate that. But we're talking about 10,000 people's livelihoods in Windsor. I'm asking the PC Party to talk to their Premier and give a call to the president of Unifor 444 and talk to him about how they can save those jobs.

Madam Speaker, we know he doesn't return their calls because he thinks union leaders are thugs. This is important to me—and I appreciate my colleagues listening. I will tell you, I was president of my union, Local 199, for 12 years, and I won elections from the membership. If I didn't take that fight for them, I would be thrown out. These leaders aren't thugs; they're workers fighting for their members, and this government's budget abandoned them.

I'm going to tell you something. I want you to hear this. I'm a union leader, and I have been for close to 40 years. But I'll tell you what else I am: I'm a husband, I'm a father and I'm a grandfather. I've got three beautiful daughters and five grandkids. Do I look like I'm a thug, because I stand up for our membership and my community, and I say to them, "We've got to make sure we get good collective agreements"? I was happy to say I bargained 150 collective agreements with one three-day strike. I mean, take a look at me. Take a look at this. I'm going to be honest here—I think it's important to do this. I'm five-foot-nothing. Take a look at these pipes. Do I look like a thug? Can you stop calling union people that represent their workers "thugs"? It's embarrassing. Would it be nice if I stood up and said the Premier is a thug? I wouldn't do that. I respect the fact that he's been elected. Respect the fact that I've been elected. It's been bothering me for a long time. Treat union leaders with respect and dignity. It's what they deserve. They've given their whole life to make our communities better.

The United Way, charity things—the people who are probably most surprised were those who actually voted for Ford in the last election. Some of them were told that the province's finances were on fire and that only the Premier could save them. Well, we're here today. The Tories are not only willing to slash and cut programs, but they can manage to do that without even being good fiscal managers.

I spoke about this, the P3s, in the House before. It seems the Ford government never heard the message. This budget is filled with projects that are going to be handed over to the private sector, to donors and friends of the PC Party, even though you know it's going to cost more money. It's not just me saying it. The Auditor General reported that our province had overspent by using P3s instead of public funds. Do you know how much by? Yell it out, anybody who knows—\$8.3 billion. So when you see a government overspending like that, it would seem like we're getting a better product, right? Well, you're wrong.

Take a look at our winter road maintenance. Ever since it was privatized by the Liberals, services have gone down. You can go across the border into Manitoba in the winter and you see directly the difference between a publicly funded system of clearing roads and our awful private one.

Or look at Peterborough—I know that the Peterborough guy was here the last time I mentioned this—or the St. Catharines hospital. Two hospitals, close to the same, built around the same time—the difference was that the Peterborough hospital was \$365 million; the one in St. Catharines was \$1.1 billion. What was the difference? One was built with public dollars, the other was built with a P3.

When you look at this budget, we see a rush to spend public dollars on private builds, so we know that this government is willing to give away money to these corporations even when they can't do the job. They want to pretend they're good fiscal managers, and then we see their policies. They're more focused on flooding money into their private builders than on getting value for money.

It's even worse: They have hidden changes in here that will allow companies to get a break on their taxes. Once again, they're focused on helping out the biggest corporations. They don't care one bit about the average working family across this riding.

What you see is just a continuation of Liberal policies—privatize and cut. If you want to be responsible with our money and provide services, it requires a full overhaul of the way this province conducts itself. Simply tweaking Liberal announcements and cuts isn't going to do it. We need a direction that puts people before profits.

Madam Speaker, when we look at the budget—what have I got, four minutes left?—the question is: What can people expect in terms of cuts? Well, what has Ford taken away from them? Education and health care are being cut, in real terms. Modest increases will not keep up with inflation, let alone the great need we have. The budget has allocated 1.6% for health and 1.2% for education. Inflation currently is 1.9%. Do the math; that's a cut. Even the Liberals offered an increase of about 5% to try to fix the hole they themselves created.

Our population is aging; we need medical care. They're paying their taxes; they deserve the medical care they deserve. It's a basic human right here in Canada. We have seniors—could be parents of yours—waiting in hospitals. We have people waiting hours to see a doctor. We have people being treated in hallways. This budget says that the government is absolutely fine with that. That's what they're saying.

When it comes to policies designed to give corporations more money, they jump at it. When seniors are being treated in hallways, they say, "It's time to tighten your belts." That's their priority.

Madam Speaker, education—oh, my God. I want to say, I'm glad the minister is here. I've got a piece of paper that says, "Board Warns Minister of School Cuts in Her Own Riding"—her own riding, when they said that nobody was losing their job. Two weeks ago, I came back to this office with teachers from across Niagara—rank-and-file members. I know that this government hates unions. I know it makes them uncomfortable when people speak out against them, but I came here with the teachers that live and work in my community. You know why they were here? Because of their kids. And why can I say that it's because of their kids? I already told you that my wife is a teacher and a principal. My one daughter is a teacher in the Catholic school board, and my other daughter is a coordinator for special needs, in the Catholic school board as well. They love their kids. It's what they go to work for, to take care of their kids. I wanted to say that they love their kids.

Ford's cuts mean we can have class sizes of more than 30 children; some are saying as high as 46. What are we doing? That means less teachers hired, less money for programs, less ability to offer programs. These teachers want the best for their kids, and we need to respect them.

Today, Madam Speaker—I know you will be interested in this; I'm almost finished because the time is going to run out—the Premier said that he talked to hundreds and

hundreds of teachers who like the budget. He said that today, and I think it has been reported in one of the really quality papers, like the Star. I say to the Premier: Who did you talk to?

I was here last week. Last week, I was here. Do you know why I was here? It was on a Saturday. Most of you guys were probably doing events or doing whatever you do in your ridings, but I was here. Twenty-five thousand teachers and educators were on the front lawn here who were going against your budget. Think about that.

The Premier could have come and talked to all 25,000 of them. I only got to 22,000 of them. I went and talked to as many as I could, to talk about why they were there, and it was the same. "Why are you here? None of the PCs are here today. Why are you here?" Do you know what they said? "Because we love our kids. We want what's best for our kids, both in public school and in high school." If you wanted to talk to them, you could have come last week.

We have students right here who are going through university to be teachers—I've only got 17 seconds left; I'm going to read this quick, Madam Speaker. I had a constituent named Nicole reach out about these things. She spent five years in university, four years in the application process, three years as a supply, and had numerous interviews. She wants to be a teacher. She won't be able to do it with the way you guys are doing this budget.

**The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Lisa Gretzky):** Next time the bill is called, the member from Niagara Falls will have an opportunity to do his two-minute wrap-up and the other members will have a chance to do their questions and comments.

*Debate deemed adjourned.*

**The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Lisa Gretzky):** Seeing the time on the clock, this House stands adjourned until tomorrow at 9 a.m.

*The House adjourned at 1801.*

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Gélinas, France (NDP)	Nickel Belt	
Ghamari, Goldie (PC)	Carleton	
Gill, Parm (PC)	Milton	
Glover, Chris (NDP)	Spadina—Fort York	
Gravelle, Michael (LIB)	Thunder Bay—Superior North / Thunder Bay—Supérieur-Nord	
<b>Gretzky, Lisa (NDP)</b>	Windsor West / Windsor-Ouest	First Deputy Chair of the Committee of the Whole House / Première vice-présidente du comité plénier de l'Assemblée
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Harris, Mike (PC)	Kitchener—Conestoga	
Hassan, Faisal (NDP)	York South—Weston / York-Sud— Weston	
<b>Hatfield, Percy (NDP)</b>	Windsor—Tecumseh	Second Deputy Chair of the Committee of the Whole House / Deuxième vice-président du comité plénier de l'Assemblée législative
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Horwath, Andrea (NDP)	Hamilton Centre / Hamilton-Centre	Leader, Official Opposition / Chef de l'opposition officielle
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Karahalios, Belinda (PC)	Cambridge	
Karpoche, Bhutla (NDP)	Parkdale—High Park	
Ke, Vincent (PC)	Don Valley North / Don Valley-Nord	
Kernaghan, Terence (NDP)	London North Centre / London- Centre-Nord	
Khanjin, Andrea (PC)	Barrie—Innisfil	
Kramp, Daryl (PC)	Hastings—Lennox and Addington	
Kusendova, Natalia (PC)	Mississauga Centre / Mississauga- Centre	
Lalonde, Marie-France (LIB)	Orléans	
Lecce, Stephen (PC)	King—Vaughan	Deputy Government House Leader / Leader parlementaire adjoint du gouvernement
Lindo, Laura Mae (NDP)	Kitchener Centre / Kitchener-Centre	
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Mamakwa, Sol (NDP)	Kiiwetinoong	
Mantha, Michael (NDP)	Algoma—Manitoulin	
Martin, Robin (PC)	Eglinton—Lawrence	
Martow, Gila (PC)	Thornhill	
McDonell, Jim (PC)	Stormont—Dundas—South Glengarry	
McKenna, Jane (PC)	Burlington	
<b>McNaughton, Hon. / L'hon. Monte (PC)</b>	Lambton—Kent—Middlesex	Minister of Infrastructure / Ministre de l'Infrastructure
Miller, Norman (PC)	Parry Sound—Muskoka	
Miller, Paul (NDP)	Hamilton East—Stoney Creek / Hamilton-Est—Stoney Creek	
Mitas, Christina Maria (PC)	Scarborough Centre / Scarborough- Centre	
Monteith-Farrell, Judith (NDP)	Thunder Bay—Atikokan	
Morrison, Suze (NDP)	Toronto Centre / Toronto-Centre	
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Oosterhoff, Sam (PC)	Niagara West / Niagara-Ouest	

Member and Party / Député(e) et parti	Constituency / Circonscription	Other responsibilities / Autres responsabilités
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Piccini, David (PC)	Northumberland—Peterborough South / Northumberland—Peterborough-Sud	
Rakocevic, Tom (NDP)	Humber River—Black Creek	
Rasheed, Kaleed (PC)	Mississauga East—Cooksville / Mississauga-Est—Cooksville	
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Romano, Ross (PC)	Sault Ste. Marie	
Sabawy, Sheref (PC)	Mississauga—Erin Mills	
Sandhu, Amarjot (PC)	Brampton West / Brampton-Ouest	
Sarkaria, Prabmeet Singh (PC)	Brampton South / Brampton-Sud	
Sattler, Peggy (NDP)	London West / London-Ouest	
Schreiner, Mike (GRN)	Guelph	
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Shaw, Sandy (NDP)	Hamilton West—Ancaster—Dundas / Hamilton-Ouest—Ancaster—Dundas	
Simard, Amanda (IND)	Glengarry—Prescott—Russell	
Singh, Gurratan (NDP)	Brampton East / Brampton-Est	
Singh, Sara (NDP)	Brampton Centre / Brampton-Centre	Deputy Leader, Official Opposition / Chef adjointe de l'opposition officielle
Skelly, Donna (PC)	Flamborough—Glanbrook	
Smith, Dave (PC)	Peterborough—Kawartha	
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Stevens, Jennifer (Jennie) (NDP)	St. Catharines	
Stiles, Marit (NDP)	Davenport	
Surma, Kinga (PC)	Etobicoke Centre / Etobicoke-Centre	
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West, Jamie (NDP)	Sudbury	
Wilson, Jim (IND)	Simcoe—Grey	
Wynne, Kathleen O. (LIB)	Don Valley West / Don Valley-Ouest	
<b>Yakubuski, Hon. / L'hon. John (PC)</b>	Renfrew—Nipissing—Pembroke	Minister of Natural Resources and Forestry / Ministre des Richesses naturelles et des Forêts
Yarde, Kevin (NDP)	Brampton North / Brampton-Nord	
<b>Yurek, Hon. / L'hon. Jeff (PC)</b>	Elgin—Middlesex—London	Minister of Transportation / Ministre des Transports

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John Vanthof  
Committee Clerk / Greffière: Jocelyn McCauley

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**Standing Committee on Regulations and Private Bills / Comité permanent des règlements et des projets de loi d'intérêt privé**

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Will Bouma, Paul Calandra  
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Mitzie Hunter, Laura Mae Lindo  
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John Fraser, Joel Harden  
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