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LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY
OF ONTARIO

Thursday 30 May 2019

ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE
DE L'ONTARIO

Jeudi 30 mai 2019

The House met at 0900.

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

ORDERS OF THE DAY

ONTARIO SOCIETY
FOR THE PREVENTION
OF CRUELTY TO ANIMALS
AMENDMENT ACT
(INTERIM PERIOD), 2019

LOI DE 2019 MODIFIANT LA LOI
SUR LA SOCIÉTÉ DE PROTECTION
DES ANIMAUX DE L'ONTARIO
(PÉRIODE INTERMÉDIAIRE)

Ms. Jones moved second reading of the following bill:
Bill 117, An Act to amend the Ontario Society for the
Prevention of Cruelty to Animals Act / Projet de loi 117,
Loi modifiant la Loi sur la Société de protection des
animaux de l'Ontario.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): I'm pleased to
recognize the Solicitor General to lead off debate.

Hon. Sylvia Jones: I would like to start off by saying
that I will be sharing my time with the Minister of Agricul-
ture as well as the members for Brampton South and
Perth-Wellington.

I am pleased to lead off debate on Bill 117. For anyone
who has had the 30 seconds that it will take to read the
amended 117, this is clearly an interim measure. But it is
a measure, nonetheless, that we need to be taking as a
government.

I really want to begin by thanking some members of my
staff and the OPS who basically worked for the last week
on these changes: Deputy Minister Mario Di Tommaso,
Ady Ibaruchi, Michelle Astill, Stephen Beckett, Debbie
Conrad, Brian Loewen and John Malichen-Snyder. There
is no doubt in my mind that I work with some of the most
talented and engaged individuals in this ministry, and it is
a constant and daily pleasure to have their expertise assist
us in our government.

I'm proud to begin second reading debate of Bill 117.
It is estimated that over 60% of Canadian households have
a pet. In our homes, animals offer us friendship and com-
panionship. They are treasured members of our families.
In zoos and aquariums, animals help to open the minds of
children, expose us to the larger world and introduce us to
the greater natural diversity of our planet.

For all that they give us, we must give back. We do that
by making sure we have laws in place to protect them from
abuse and neglect, and to hold accountable people who do
not properly look after animals under their care. Animals
cannot speak for themselves, so we must speak for them.

As many of you are aware, after 100 years of enforcing
animal welfare laws in the province, the Ontario Society
for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals has informed the
government that it will no longer continue the role past
June 28, 2019. Despite repeated attempts by my ministry
to convince them to continue this vital animal protection
role until our government has a new animal protection
framework in place, the OSPCA has refused, leaving
animals vulnerable, and animal welfare organizations
powerless to protect them.

While several other partners currently play a role in the
enforcement of animal welfare laws, the OSPCA in its
current form only enables inspectors of the OSPCA, its
affiliates and, in limited circumstances, police officers to
exercise the powers and authorities of inspectors under the
act.

My parliamentary assistant, the honourable member
from Brampton South, will provide additional details of
Bill 117 later on, but I would like to provide an overview
of these amendments, share some of the feedback our
government has already received from animal welfare
organizations, and outline our path forward.

First, I'd like to provide the honourable members with
a snapshot of animal enforcement in the province of
Ontario. Enforcement of animal welfare legislation links
to many complex issues. In addition to animal abuse and
cruelty, an animal welfare situation can involve links to
mental health, hoarding, domestic violence, puppy mills,
pets in care, dogfighting and cockfighting, and other
criminal acts, to name a few. That is why many partners
are currently involved in animal welfare in the province,
and that is why a model that has been in place for over 100
years cannot be replaced overnight.

The Ontario Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to
Animals currently provides coverage to approximately
one third of Ontario. We know that there is a lot of room
for improvement in the current legislation. We are de-
veloping a new, permanent model to ensure that appropri-
ate measures are in place to provide animals and their
owners with the protections they deserve and that the
people of Ontario expect. Our goal is an approach that is
transparent and accountable, and ultimately improves the
animal welfare system across Ontario.

In order to develop the new model, we are consulting
with many partners and with the people of Ontario. On

April 8 of this year, my ministry began surveying municipalities, local service boards, municipal police services, First Nations police services and the OPP. That survey ended at the end of April, and the results are being analyzed carefully, to inform our new model. In addition, consultations will continue with policing partners and municipalities over the next weeks and months.

We are also consulting the agricultural industry, veterinary organizations, advocacy stakeholders and other animal welfare organizations. We are also looking at models that may be working in other jurisdictions.

The consultations are further highlighting the complexity of the issues that the new model must respond to, and the need for continued work and consultation with these partners to ensure that the new permanent model achieves our goals.

We are also seeking public feedback through an online survey, to ensure that the people of Ontario have the opportunity to share their thoughts to help improve animal protection. That survey closes next week, but I'll return to that.

Today, we are proposing an interim approach to ensure animal welfare enforcement can continue in Ontario beginning the morning of June 29, the day the OSPCA plans to completely withdraw from their enforcement role.

How did we arrive at this point? In January, a Superior Court justice struck down law enforcement provisions of the OSPCA Act due to lack of oversight, transparency and accountability, but suspended his ruling for a year so that the animals would continue to be protected.

0910

On March 4, the OSPCA told my ministry that it would no longer enforce the OSPCA Act as of April 1 of this year. This was later extended to June 28, but with some exceptions. The OSPCA also indicated to the ministry that they would no longer be enforcing in relation to livestock and horses as of April 1. On March 26, I wrote to the OSPCA and asked that they continue to enforce animal welfare laws until the government introduces a new animal welfare enforcement model. The OSPCA, unfortunately, refused. This means that for the first time in a century, the agents who are responsible for animal welfare will no longer enforce the laws that protect animals.

After hearing from many affiliates that they have had a strong interest in continuing the role of enforcing animal welfare laws in their communities, our government acted to enable them to do so. On May 17, as many of you will know, I filed regulation 59/09, which allowed local humane societies that want to continue enforcing animal cruelty legislation to continue in that role as we transition to a new model. It required the chief inspector of the OSPCA to appoint certain employees of the OSPCA affiliates as inspectors under the OSPCA Act. Unfortunately, the OSPCA leadership indicated their intention to be in contravention of the act by refusing to have a chief inspector in place. The OSPCA Act expressly states, "The society shall appoint an employee of the society as the chief inspector."

This is extremely disappointing and, frankly, puts animals in harm's way. Their decision has the effect of tying the government's hands. Bill 117 is a way of untying them. If passed by this House, these amendments would create special provisions during the interim period that would enable me to appoint a chief inspector who would no longer have to be an employee of the OSPCA, empower the chief inspector to appoint any person as an inspector under the act, and allow me to prescribe a class of persons who may exercise the powers of inspector.

These amendments are a bridge between the existing OSPCA Act and a new, permanent animal welfare enforcement model that our government plans to introduce later this year. They are, in fact, what a number of local humane societies have been asking for so that they can continue their important enforcement role during this transition period.

Let me share a bit of what we've been hearing since introducing the proposed Bill 117 on Monday.

From Humane Canada: "Humane Canada is pleased to see [the Solicitor General] introduce legislation to protect our animals' safety in the interim as we develop robust animal protection legislation that provides transparency and accountability."

From the Windsor/Essex County Humane Society: "We are very pleased at the government's efforts to ensure that an effective transition plan is in place for the remainder of the year to protect Ontario's animals. Our organization looks forward to working with others to create a new animal welfare and law enforcement structure in Ontario that will be a model for other jurisdictions.... We appreciate the government's willingness to take the steps needed to make this smoother transition possible."

From the Lincoln County Humane Society: "Bill 117 will enable the province to appoint a chief inspector who will empower humane society inspectors to continue their vital work to protect Ontario's animals. The expertise of this specialized group of inspectors brings specific skills that benefit animals.... As the Ford government provides leadership on this important issue and continues to move forward for protection of Ontario's most vulnerable creatures, we stand alongside our government."

From Adrienne McBride, executive director of the Guelph Humane Society: "The Guelph Humane Society is one of the affiliated humane societies that has willingly stepped forward to offer our continued assistance as the province works towards a new permanent enforcement model ... Bill 117, which, if passed, would enable our organization to continue the enforcement work it is already doing to protect animals in Guelph and Wellington county. This temporary legislative measure will keep animals safe in the interim."

From the Humane Society of London and Middlesex: "This temporary legislative measure ... will allow the provincial government the appropriate time to build a more robust, transparent and accountable animal protection system in Ontario."

From the Hamilton/Burlington Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals: "The Hamilton/Burlington

SPCA is ready to continue serving” our “community through animal protection, enforcement and investigation services as the province works toward a new, permanent enforcement model.”

From Kathrin Delutis, executive director of the Humane Society of Kitchener-Waterloo and Stratford-Perth: “The Humane Society of Kitchener-Waterloo and Stratford-Perth is one of the affiliated humane societies that has stepped forward to offer our continued assistance as the province works towards a new, permanent model.

“Our board of directors has been very clear that we want to continue to provide animal protection in our community. We have been providing this service for many years in Waterloo region”—with the exception of Cambridge—“and Perth county, and are committed to ensuring that the animals who don’t have a voice have the care and protection they need while a more robust, transparent and accountable animal protection system can be developed for Ontario.”

I’m not quoting from all of these local humane societies in an attempt to pat myself on the back. This is about reacting and responding to what local humane societies have asked for and have proactively reached out and said: “Notwithstanding what the head office of OSPCA is talking to you about, we want to continue animal protection and enforcement in our communities.” So I acknowledge and thank them for their proactive approach, and I want to ensure that we have the legislation to allow them to do that.

Our government won’t allow one person or one organization to block efforts to allow willing local humane societies to help reduce harm and minimize gaps in enforcement. Our proposed amendments, if passed, will allow these organizations and many more affiliates to continue the important enforcement work that they’ve already been doing for many years. If passed, these amendments are the best option to protect animals through this interim period by giving the province greater flexibility to enable local humane societies, prescribed enforcement entities, and potentially others, if necessary, the ability to deliver enforcement of animal welfare laws.

I stress that this is a temporary solution that will help to fill the gaps while we build a new, permanent enforcement model and develop a legislative framework for the future. Animal welfare is complex. Its stakeholders range from veterinarians, pet owners and animal advocacy groups to livestock farmers. We are talking to all of these groups and more, as well as municipalities and police services. For the sake and safety of our animals, I am not going to rush the new long-term model. The stakes are too high. We will take the time that is needed to get the new model right. That includes making sure that the people have their say.

While work is under way to develop a better long-term system, we are seeking public feedback through an online survey to ensure the people of Ontario have an opportunity to share their thoughts to help improve animal protection. I am proud to report that we have already received 6,000 responses in the first three days. We are now close to 11,000 submissions, with another week to go before the survey closes on June 6.

Such a high response rate clearly demonstrates the public interest in animal welfare, and we are listening. I would like to provide a small sampling of those responses.

“It is critical that the government make animal welfare and animal control a priority in this province. Please make this a priority and do the right thing to put in place measures that provide strong protection for animals.”

“There needs to be clear guidelines and laws in place for the protection of animal welfare.”

“Animal welfare is extremely important in Ontario, and the new regulations need to provide a clear and simple pathway for reporting abuse and protecting animals.”

I want to assure the people that this feedback will go directly into shaping Ontario’s new, permanent animal welfare enforcement model, and I encourage everyone who has not yet done so to have their say by going to www.ontario.ca/protecting-ontarios-animals.

Allowing animals to go unprotected is simply unacceptable to our government. We can all agree that protecting animals is important to the people and is important to their government. Since this government was elected, we have clearly stated that the animal protection enforcement system across this province can be and will be made better, and we are taking action to do so. Bill 117 is the first step along that path.

Interjections.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Jennifer K. French): Order.

I recognize the Minister of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs.

0920

Hon. Ernie Hardeman: Thank you very much, Madam Speaker. I’m pleased to rise today to speak to this very important piece of legislation that intimately impacts those in our agricultural communities here in Ontario.

First, I’d like to recognize the hard work of the Solicitor General and her entire ministry in working swiftly yet thoroughly to make sure that absolutely no animal welfare cases fall through the cracks during this period of transition, as we develop a new animal protection system in Ontario. We appreciate her leadership on this important issue.

Our government takes animal welfare very seriously. Following the withdrawal of the OSPCA from enforcement of livestock and equine cases, our government acted quickly to ensure that all livestock and equine welfare cases were directed to the local police authorities across the province. My ministry and our farm organizations continue to provide expertise to police authorities, as needed, in partnership with our local veterinarians.

This was not an easy decision to make during this transition. Our government has worked with the OSPCA for over a century and the OSPCA has always assumed a role of care and protection of animals. Their withdrawal from enforcement of livestock and equine cases put our government in a difficult position, leaving the enforcement to local police authorities to assume this role in the meantime.

We are extremely grateful to the local enforcement authorities in partnership with OMAFRA and local veterinarians, who have filled in the gaps of the OSPCA withdrawal and are working to understand the complex nature of farming and standards of care for livestock.

Our government is currently developing a new animal protection model that better protects animals and livestock across the province. We have an opportunity to improve the current broken system. It must be more robust, more transparent, more accountable, and must put animal welfare first. The OSPCA chose to abdicate their responsibility of the enforcement of livestock and equine cases, ending over a century of shared partnership with the province. While it has left our government in a difficult position, this is our opportunity to create a system that better protects all animals and better understands the unique standards of care that are applicable to livestock and equine animals, not just domestic pets.

Madam Speaker, our farmers are already world leaders in maintaining the highest standards of animal care. They rely on the welfare of their animals to make a living, just like they rely on taking sustainable care of the land and the environment where their animals thrive, to continue making a living for generations. Anyone who has talked to a farmer about their animals can see how much they care about them, their health and well-being.

Farmers and farm organizations are committed to the humane treatment of all animals—livestock, poultry, equine, domestic pets and wildlife. Ontario's farm organizations continue to uphold high standards of care in line with codes of practice and normal farming activities. However, I have seen some unfortunate circumstances where, in cases of animal neglect, mental health is a contributing factor as to why individuals can struggle with taking proper care of their animals. When people struggle with their own internal battles, often ashamed to ask for help or speak up about their problems, these struggles are often reflected in relationships with others in their lives, including how they take care of their animals and livestock. Taking care of one's self is important and necessary to be able to take care of others, and this includes how farmers handle their livestock.

I've heard from farm organizations that having memorandums of understanding with livestock groups is a critical part to maintaining and improving animal care. Our farm organizations want to be part of the discussion and they want to be part of the solution. Livestock groups help to foster co-operation between the animal protection enforcer and the farmer. This is especially important in cases where mental health issues are also in question. Our farm groups want to help make sure that the well-being of farm animals is not compromised and that farmers have the support they need to succeed.

The need to address farmers' well-being is why I have launched a public awareness campaign to highlight mental health challenges suffered by those in the farming community and to encourage people to ask for help. As part of the campaign, I've held a series of round tables with members of the agricultural community to encourage open

dialogue and to discuss how we can highlight the resources available for people in need, and to break the stigma around asking for help.

Combating mental health and addictions issues is one of our government's top priorities, and that is why we are investing \$1.9 billion in mental health and addictions support. Understanding the needs of our farmers to better support them in their well-being is reflected in the well-being of their livestock and businesses, in return.

While our government does more to address mental health issues across Ontario, we'll also be tackling the important need to update and modernize our animal welfare laws. The Ministry of the Solicitor General is currently consulting to help inform the design of a more robust animal protection enforcement system for Ontario. The consultation process to create new legislation and understand what our farmers need in terms of support is critical for generating public understanding of what normal farming practices and standards of care are for livestock. We have been very proactive in making sure that our livestock organizations and stakeholders are engaged and participating in the public online survey, which is open until June 6 of this year, to provide feedback related to reporting and enforcement of animal welfare complaints.

I want to commend the Solicitor General for taking time to go to Guelph to meet with agricultural leaders. I know they appreciated the opportunity to provide input, and I want to commend our agricultural organizations for taking the time to put forward detailed, thoughtful proposals to help develop a new animal protection model for Ontario. Our sector deals with some unique challenges, such as biosecurity, and inspectors need to understand these issues to ensure they do not put our animals at risk.

Consulting with our farmers and those who understand these details intimately is exactly what our government is doing as part of the process in creating the new animal welfare system. We know that a one-size-fits-all formula does not work for different kinds of animals. Standards of care for each group of livestock are so intricate and unique from one group to another, and this cannot be equated to proper standards of care for domestic pets. Our goal is to take these differences into consideration when creating new legislation and make sure the proper protection, education and understanding is in place for each group.

Our government was elected on a mandate of fixing 15 years of mess left by the previous Liberal government. This includes an opportunity to create a new animal welfare system, where our government has long maintained that the system needs change and can be more robust. It needs to protect animals in rural Ontario as effectively as it protects animals in downtown Toronto.

I want to commend the farm organizations and livestock groups for their work to identify what works and what doesn't, and the opportunities to strengthen and improve the system. Farm groups play an important role in upholding animal welfare, establishing strong codes of practice, working to ensure that all farmers meet those codes of practice, and providing expertise when requested.

On January 1, Ontario Superior Court Justice Timothy Minnema ruled that it is not constitutional for the province

to give private charities the policing powers of animal cruelty enforcement without government oversight to ensure accountability and transparency. He said, "Although charged with law enforcement responsibilities, the OSPCA is opaque, insular, unaccountable, and potentially subject to external influence, and as such Ontarians cannot be confident that the laws it enforces will be fairly and impartially administered." He continued to say, "The OSPCA appears to be an organization that operates in a way that is shielded from public view while at the same time fulfilling clearly public functions."

This is exactly the problem that our government is looking to fix as part of the consultation process with livestock groups, legal experts, police authorities and many other stakeholders. Our government was elected to restore accountability and trust in government, and this includes restoring accountability and transparency within the animal protection system. A comprehensive animal review system administered by government and paid for by the taxpayer must be transparent and accountable to the people and the governing body that administers it.

As we work to consult and to create a new animal protection system in Ontario, our government is proposing a solution to work with the local OSPCA affiliates that are willing and able to continue operating during this transition period.

0930

The OSPCA has been a government partner for over a century, and it will not be a quick fix or a one-size-fits-all formula to develop a new animal welfare system that oversees a variety of animals across the province, with new accountability and transparency measures.

We are grateful that the local affiliates have come forward, offering to assist in the meantime, and we want to empower them to make sure that absolutely no cases fall through the cracks as we work to create a better and improved system for Ontario. This piece of legislation does exactly that. We want to make sure that all willing and able affiliates have proper guidance and leadership from the chief inspector, and that they have access to the appropriate resources and tools they need to continue operating in the interim.

I hope the members opposite understand the urgency of this issue and will support us in voting in favour of this legislation.

Thank you very much, Madam Speaker, for allowing me this opportunity to speak to this important bill.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Jennifer K. French): I recognize the member from Brampton South.

Mr. Prabmeet Singh Sarkaria: Thank you very much, Madam Speaker, and good morning to everyone.

I'm very proud to be speaking in support of our government's proposed amendments to the Ontario Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals Act. This is a very important piece of legislation.

I want to start my remarks by thanking the Solicitor General for all of her hard work on this piece of legislation. This is something that the ministry has been working on for quite some time now. Obviously, we know that

throughout the past couple of months, the situation has changed. It's great to see a minister be so proactive, and the ministry and the entire team be so proactive, on an issue that is so important to so many individuals across this province—almost every single Ontarian.

I had the opportunity last week, during my constituent week, to also participate in some of the consultations. I had a chance to visit my colleague Jill Dunlop in her riding, and we got a chance to sit with many different stakeholders within the industry. It was a great hour and a half that we spent with all of these stakeholders. They all had a different view, or they all had a different perspective, that they were able to add to the lens from which we need to tackle animal welfare legislation. That was a great opportunity.

We also had some fun. I got a chance to ride on a horse, thanks to Jill, and the horse was okay after.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Jennifer K. French): I hate to interrupt. A reminder to all members that we refer to members by their riding or their title. Thank you.

Mr. Prabmeet Singh Sarkaria: My apologies, Madam Speaker. My colleague from Simcoe North. I do apologize for that. It slipped. Thank you for that correction.

I also then had a chance to visit my colleague, who I will not name, from Sarnia—Lambton. I also had a chance to host animal consultations there with a diverse group of stakeholders whereby, once again, we were able to learn a lot about what was needed in the legislation, what was missing, and treating this as an opportunity to move forward.

We also had a chance to visit a farm and we met Lee, I believe her name was, who rescued horses. The situation was so sad. OSPCA officers had taken us to this farm for that specific reason. They wanted to show us an incredible story of a farm, about a year and a half ago, that they had visited. The individual had mental health illnesses. There were about 90 animals, deprived of food and deprived of water. This individual had rescued 21 of those animals. It was really great to see. She showed us the before pictures and the after pictures, and the name of the horse was Freedom. When they transported the horse to the farm, it was unbelievable. The horse could barely walk. The horse was in their stable for about 12 hours, and if we know—horses need to move constantly. They need to be standing. It's healthy for them. But this horse didn't have enough energy. There was absolutely no food for them. There was absolutely no water for them.

We don't know how long that took place. When the officers rescued this horse, Freedom, she was basically out in the snow. It was in March, so the snow was melting, and the weather conditions were also not appropriate. But, thankfully, farmers like Lee were able to step up to the plate and rescue 29 animals. Freedom was in the worst condition. But it's incredible to see how far Freedom had come, because that horse was so—

Mrs. Robin Martin: So free.

Mr. Prabmeet Singh Sarkaria: Just so free. We saw the videos from before where the horse would not even be able to stay in the same room as another human because

they had absolutely no trust of any individual. And now, it's great to see that Freedom will be participating in her first show coming up in the next week. So it's amazing to see what farmers and community members can do to step up and really support animals. That's why this piece of legislation is so important. That's why we need to make sure that Ontario has a robust animal welfare legislation. That's why the protection of animals is so important to the people of Ontario and, especially, our government.

The Ministry of the Solicitor General wears many hats. It's responsible for law enforcement, emergency preparedness, the rehabilitation and reintegration of offenders, fire safety and prevention, forensics, death investigations and animal welfare—paw prints as well as fingerprints. The ministry gets a lot of mail, and the care and well-being of Ontario's animals consistently tops the list in volume. Just look at the overwhelming response we have received to our survey. Just like the Solicitor General had previously mentioned, we had over 6,000 responses in the first three days, and almost 11,000 responses with eight more days to go. So I do ask all those watching and anyone interested to please participate in this survey.

The people of Ontario are sending a message, and this government is listening. I want to quote Humane Canada, who have come out in support of this to really underlie what they think and where they think we're going as a government:

"Humane Canada is pleased to see Solicitor General Sylvia Jones introduce legislation to protect our animals' safety in the interim as we develop robust animal protection legislation that provides transparency and accountability. Bill 117, if passed, will enable the province to appoint a chief inspector who could appoint local humane societies to continue their important work in protecting our animals. This is in response to the OSPCA indicating that they will no longer provide protection or enable affiliates to continue their work following June 28. Humane societies are the only specialized force in the country dedicated solely to animal protection, and we look forward to working with the government of Ontario throughout this consultation to ensure an enforcement role for local humane societies, ensuring protection for our animals."

Amendments to the OSPCA Act, 2018, are an important step on a journey this government began almost from taking office. Let me give you a bit of recent history. In January of this year, a Superior Court justice struck down law enforcement provisions of the OSPCA Act, 2009, because of a lack of oversight, transparency and accountability. He didn't close the door on animal welfare law enforcement. He suspended his ruling for a year so that animals would not be vulnerable and unprotected.

The Solicitor General spoke about animal welfare in Ontario in February, assuring the people that, "Our government will continue working for the people and will explore options to ensure appropriate measures are in place to provide animals and their owners the protections they deserve and that Ontarians expect. We have already begun conversations with stakeholders and will continue seeking ideas and input in the coming months.

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"Our goal is an approach that is transparent and accountable, and ultimately improves the animal welfare system across Ontario."

The government's budget 2019 backed up the Solicitor General's statement. It reads:

"Many households across the province have a pet, and these pets are part of family life. The government recognizes the importance of animal welfare for small animals and livestock. Ontario's government for the people is actively reviewing existing legislation to ensure appropriate measures are in place to provide animals and their owners with the protections they deserve and the people of Ontario expect.

"The province has already begun conversations with stakeholders and will continue seeking ideas and input. The goal is an approach that respects the rights of the people of Ontario and ultimately improves the animal welfare system across the province."

The OSPCA's notice to cease enforcing animal welfare law in the province as of June 28 will leave a significant gap in animal protection across the province. Or rather, it could have left a significant gap if the government had not taken decisive action to ensure animals remain protected while the government designs a better system.

A number of local humane societies have already stepped forward to offer their continued assistance as the government works towards a new, permanent enforcement model. The Superior Court justice's suspension of his ruling clears a path for them to do so until the end of this year. The government's proposed legislative amendments would enable other entities to enforce the OSPCA Act during this transition.

Causing animal distress takes on many forms and is not always obvious. According to the Canadian Veterinary Medical Association, all vets will encounter animal abuse in their careers, including physical abuse such as inflicting injuries, causing unnecessary pain, and cruel and inappropriate methods of training such as taping a dog's mouth shut to prevent it from barking. Sometimes the problem is simple neglect, such as an owner forgetting to feed a pet or bring them water, or leaving a pet outside in sweltering or freezing conditions. Every year in North America, hundreds of pets die from heat exhaustion because they were left in parked vehicles while the owner popped into a store or left the car for longer periods with the window open only a crack.

There are also cases of emotional abuse such as denying an animal social interaction; animal hoarding, which is usually performed by individuals who will take strays home but do not know how to care for the animals that they have taken in; dogfighting, a vicious blood sport where a fight can last between one to two hours, exposing dogs to very severe injury and a prolonged and painful death; and puppy and kitten mills, where dogs and cats are mass produced, often in the cruelest of conditions.

This is just a short list and underscores the need for trained and skilled inspectors. Municipalities and police have expressed concern that the government is preparing

to download animal welfare responsibilities on them. This is not the intention of these proposed amendments. The government understands their concerns. Not all municipalities have staff who are trained in animal welfare, inspections and investigations. Not all police services have the capacity to transport animals encountered during an animal-related investigation or incident, or have space for sheltering.

The government can assure its municipal and policing partners that this is an interim solution. Various local humane societies have told the government that they have experience to perform enforcement work during the transition period.

I would now like to outline the amendments the government is proposing.

As we have noted, the OSPCA has been enforcing animal welfare laws in the province for the past 100 years. Under the OSPCA Act, only inspectors of the OSPCA, its affiliates and, in some limited circumstances, police officers have the power and authority of inspectors under the act. Only the OSPCA corporately, or the chief inspector—who must be an employee of the OSPCA, as per the current act—can appoint animal inspectors who are enabled to enforce the act and use the powers set out in it. This has set the OSPCA up as the only game in town. Police officers in parts of the province can enforce the act, but only where the OSPCA or an affiliate does not function.

For purposes of transition, the government's proposed amendments, if passed, would enable employees of other entities, such as humane societies, to enforce the act. The Solicitor General would be enabled to appoint a chief inspector who would no longer have to be an employee of the OSPCA. The chief inspector would be empowered to appoint any person as an inspector under the current act. The Solicitor General would be able to prescribe a class of persons who may exercise the powers of an inspector.

What does the government seek to achieve from these amendments? The OSPCA is pulling out of animal welfare enforcement in less than a month. That is the cold reality we all face. The OSPCA has been asked by the Solicitor General to extend their enforcement capabilities until the end of the year. They have refused. After carefully considering the alternatives, the government's proposed legislative amendments are the most effective transitional response to the urgent need to support animal welfare laws in the interim period. It taps into the experience of animal welfare organizations across the province and leverages the willing capacity in the province without having to rely on OSPCA co-operation, which they have made clear they are not prepared to extend. And it sets the stage for a new permanent animal protection enforcement model that will be more robust, transparent and accountable.

Without these proposed transitional legislative amendments, there are few, if any, options available to ensure that there is animal welfare law enforcement in the province. Ensuring animal welfare is a humane responsibility shared by Ontarians and supported by strong animal legislation and enforcement. The government is encouraged by

the positive response it has received to its proposed amendments. The public can clearly see that this government is taking animal welfare seriously and ensuring that there is continued enforcement by willing local humane societies in the absence of the OSPCA. Animal advocates can be assured that on the other side of this legislative bridge, there will be a new model—stronger, more transparent and more accountable than ever before—to protect and keep animals safe.

Building the first new enforcement system in 100 years will take time. It will be built on the experience of animal welfare stakeholders, agriculture, the life experiences of pet owners and animal lovers, and those who have stepped up to report and prevent animal abuse and animal distress. The government is fortunate to have such knowledge, expertise and passion to guide the ministry as it prepares to roll out a new model for 2020. But in the here and now, we must build a network of local humane societies and other prescribed animal welfare organizations to take up the call of animal welfare across the province and deliver enforcement of animal welfare laws. Bill 117 provides the tools, and I call on all members of this House to support its passage.

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The Acting Speaker (Ms. Jennifer K. French): I recognize the member from Perth–Wellington.

Mr. Randy Pettapiece: Thank you, Speaker. I'm pleased to rise today to speak on Bill 117, an important piece of legislation which directly affects those in our agricultural communities.

To begin with, I would like to recognize the hard work of our Solicitor General. I've been here since 2011, and I've had the privilege of serving the constituents of Perth–Wellington since 2011. I have always been able to go to the Solicitor General if I needed some help or to ask questions, and she has certainly helped me along the way, so I do appreciate her efforts here.

Her ministry has worked swiftly and thoroughly to make sure that no animal welfare cases fall through the cracks during this period of transition. This is a difficult and challenging file to work on. It goes without saying that animal welfare is a complex issue. I want to thank you, Minister, for your leadership on this important file.

I believe I am uniquely positioned to speak on this piece of legislation, and the larger issue of animal welfare, because of my agricultural background. For many years, my parents were dairy farmers. I also had the opportunity to participate in 4-H and show cattle when I was younger.

From a young age, I learned the importance of caring for our livestock and animals. A farmer's livestock is their most important and valued possession. As a kid, I even remember naming some of our dairy cows, as most children do.

Later in life, I also transported livestock part-time for a few local companies in my riding of Perth–Wellington. I understand the stress and pressure that our livestock truckers face each day on the road. They are concerned for the health of the animals, the biosecurity of our food system and the safety of the public.

Since being elected in 2011, I have always tried to bridge the gap between farmer, transporter and animal welfare. I have worked with my federal counterparts surrounding CFIA legislation and new Transport Canada regulations.

Provincially, our caucus has long maintained that the system needs to change and become more robust, transparent and accountable. Earlier this year, our government announced plans to develop a better, long-term system, a system that is more robust, transparent and accountable. I will speak more about this later.

The OSPCA had provided animal welfare protection services in Ontario for over 100 years. On March 4, 2019, they provided the province with less than 30 days' notice that they intended to discontinue those services as of March 31, 2019. Their withdrawal from enforcement of livestock and equine cases put our government in a difficult position.

Bill 117 itself is a temporary measure. It will minimize gaps in enforcement, after the OSPCA gave less than one month's notice that they were withdrawing the animal protection services they had provided for over 100 years. The legislation, if passed, would allow the province to appoint a chief inspector, who could in turn appoint qualified local inspectors, including local OSPCA affiliates, to ensure that animal protection enforcement continues.

Under the leadership of our great Minister of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs, the Honourable Ernie Hardeman, our farm organizations continue to provide expertise to police authorities as needed, in partnership with local veterinarians.

The OSPCA's decision to end their century-long role as a provider of care and protection for animals placed more pressure on our local police forces. I know that Mr. Hardeman and I are grateful to local enforcement authorities, in partnership with OMAFRA and local veterinarians, who have filled in the gaps of the OSPCA withdrawal.

Developing a new model for our animal protection cannot be rushed, and it's frankly too important not to get right. Bill 117 is a temporary solution to fill in gaps while we transition to a new model.

Our farmers are already world leaders in maintaining the highest standards of animal care. Like my parents, and later my family, we rely on the welfare of our animals to make a living, and to continue to make a living for generations to come.

In my past careers, I have seen some unfortunate circumstances where, in cases of animal neglect, mental health is a contributing factor as to why individuals can struggle with taking proper care of their animals. Taking care of oneself is important and necessary to be able to take care of others, and this includes how farmers handle their livestock.

I commend Minister Hardeman on highlighting the mental health challenges in modern-day farming. We have both been hosting mental-health-in-agriculture round tables across the province. In January, I hosted one in Stratford, in my riding of Perth-Wellington. We want to

encourage an open dialogue and to discuss how we can highlight the resources available for people in need and to break the stigma around asking for help.

This past fall, grain farmers experienced a high level of DON in their corn crops. Many farmers struggled to find markets for their corn. Under the leadership of the Minister of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs, our government responded as quickly as possible to the crisis through a variety of mechanisms; however, I know that many farmers in my own riding struggled mentally and financially last fall. The mental-health-in-agriculture round table in Stratford touched on the DON issue, but many livestock farmers also attended. It is not easy taking care of 120 dairy cows for 365 days a year.

Supporting our farming communities and their mental health and well-being is also an important component of protecting the animals they care for. Combatting mental health and addictions issues is one of our government's top priorities, and that's why we are investing \$1.9 billion in mental health and addictions support. Understanding the needs of our farmers to better support them in their well-being is reflected in the well-being of their livestock, and their businesses in return.

Farm organizations, livestock transporters and animal protection enforcers must work together. I remember when I was transporting pigs. Some inspectors would work with the trucker or farmer to address issues they may have seen. It was a co-operation between all parties, and the animals were all better off in the end.

Many local agriculture groups in my riding of Perth-Wellington want to help shape the next animal protection framework. There needs to be a greater understanding of modern agriculture and how much money a farmer will spend to keep their animals happy and healthy. After 15 years of Liberal mismanagement on this file, our government is going to listen to all parties to help build a more robust, transparent and accountable animal welfare system.

Madam Speaker, the Ministry of the Solicitor General is currently consulting to help inform the design of a more robust animal protection enforcement system in Ontario. I know the Solicitor General is well aware of the importance of our agriculture sector and farmers. Her riding of Dufferin-Caledon is home to many farm families and livestock farmers, and I'm sure she is hearing some of the same concerns as I am in my riding of Perth-Wellington. Yet, I want to commend the minister for taking time to go to Guelph to meet with our agriculture leaders. Our government is listening to our farm families. I want to thank them for taking the time to put forward detailed, thoughtful proposals to help develop a new animal protection model for Ontario. We are seeking public feedback through an online survey to ensure the people of Ontario have the opportunity to share their thoughts to help improve farm protection.

Our government has been proactive in making sure that our livestock organizations and stakeholders are engaged. I know I have spoken with many concerned farmers in Perth-Wellington. They just want to ensure that their

animals are treated properly while maintaining biosecurity. Our government is listening to farm families with first-hand knowledge of animal husbandry. The survey is open until June 6 to provide feedback relating to reporting and enforcement of animal welfare complaints. I encourage all agriculture groups, livestock transporters and the general public to participate in the survey. You will directly inform Ontario's new animal welfare model.

Our government knows that a one-size-fits-all formula does not work for different kinds of animals. Standards of care for each group of livestock are unique from one group to another, and this cannot be equated to proper standards of care for domestic pets.

Speaker, as you know, our government was elected to restore accountability and trust in government. This does not just include restoring accountability and trust in our finances, but restoring accountability and transparency within our animal protection system. An animal welfare system administered by the province and paid for by the taxpayer must be transparent and accountable to the people.

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The OSPCA has been a government partner for over a century, and it will not be a quick fix to develop a new animal welfare system that oversees a variety of animals across the province and with accountability and transparency measures. Bill 117 intends to help ensure animals remain protected during the transition to the new enforcement model. We want to make sure that all willing and able affiliates have proper guidance and leadership from the chief inspector and that they have access to proper resources and the tools that they need to continue operating in the interim.

Madam Speaker, I want to speak to you a little bit about my experience, and perhaps you may know some of these things. I don't know how many animals you've loaded on a livestock truck in your lifetime, but I'm going to give you a little lesson on how it's done and what goes on in these large livestock trailers.

Depending on the livestock you're loading, there's different compartments in those trailers. There can be six compartments for large animals, such as cattle, and then it can be transformed into 10 compartments for hogs, and depending on the size of the animal, that's how many hogs or cattle you put in each compartment. And this does a number of things. It keeps the animals from crowding each other. It also gives them a chance that they can lay down if they like to on long-distance hauls.

Even though I had been, part-time, trucking livestock for a number of years, we were required—I think about 20 years ago they started this—to take courses on how to handle livestock safely. All trucking companies do that now, where their truckers are certified that they know how to handle animals humanely and with care. Some of the things we used to do years ago, they don't do anymore. I do know that with the larger trailers they have—and I might warn you, if you ever go up to one of those trailers and look inside at the animals, don't get too close because every once in a while one relieves itself and you can get

splashed. So just be careful if you're doing that. I've seen that happen.

But anyway, the standards have changed. In hot weather you can't put as many animals on a truck as you can in cold weather because it just gets too hot for them. You have to keep moving in hot weather to keep the airflow in there for the animals. There's all kinds of different things. In fact, some trailers right now, the newer trailers, have feed and water in them for long distances. So transport companies are doing all they can to ensure that the welfare of the animals in their care is well taken care of and that the animals arrive at their destination in good shape.

Unloading the animals is another procedure that can be interesting. You have to unload them in a certain way, that you don't have too many running down chutes at any one time, because they can trip and fall and certainly get injured that way. There's all kinds of aspects to hauling livestock other than just driving the truck down the road to a plant somewhere. Truckers also on long-distance hauls will stop every once in a while and check the animals to make sure they are in good shape and they're not being injured while they're in the trailer.

Madam Speaker, I hope the members opposite understand the importance and the urgency of this legislation and will support it with us.

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

Mr. Joel Harden: Thank you to our colleagues in government for bringing forward this legislation today. I agree, the welfare of animals is something that all of us in this House should take as a foremost concern.

In the two minutes I have to comment on the legislation, Speaker, I'd like to raise two stories from Ottawa Centre. One near and dear to my heart is a regular visitor to our constituency office. Her name is Rosemary, and she's asked me at any given opportunity—and here, we have one—to talk not just animal welfare but what animals do to remedy a serious problem in our society, and that is social isolation. Rosemary is a senior. Rosemary visits our office with a cat all the time. She's so attached to her cat, Hannah, that she travels with Hannah everywhere she goes. Unfortunately, Rosemary is one of the seniors in Ottawa Centre who is precariously housed, who deals with significant poverty. One of the things she's decided to do in our city is to be an ambassador for the importance of pets and for people to take their pets to places of leisure, to various buildings. That's an existing problem that Rosemary has asked me to raise here for the record, and so I'm doing it.

The other person I'd like to bring up from home is a constituent. Her name is Alix Packard. Alix is one of the advocates that I know the member for Lanark-Frontenac-Kingston and someone who used to serve in this House, Cheri DiNovo, have worked with on the issue of breed-specific legislation in this province and the discrimination without evidence against pit bull terriers. There are many pit bull terriers in Ottawa Centre, Speaker. I am one of those politicians who can't walk past a dog without petting

them with the owner's permission, and I think it's high time that we as a Legislature take a step to acknowledge that there is discrimination written into animal welfare legislation. To build upon this good work, let's take that on as a project in this sitting. Take care.

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

Ms. Christine Hogarth: I'm quite thrilled to comment on this, and I want to thank the Solicitor General and her team for such a swift action to protect our most vulnerable animals and our pets. Any time I have the opportunity to speak about my pets, my Bruce and Edward—we all love our animals and we all have—they're a special part of our families. And it's not just our home animals; it's our farm animals, it's those animals that are out there that do need protection from all of us.

Earlier this year, I brought in my private member's bill to talk about protecting our pets. It was the Protecting Our Pets Act, which received unanimous consent in this Legislature. I wanted to thank everybody for their support on my private member's bill.

We can always do more when it comes to protecting our animals and our animal welfare. There are people out there who are just cruel. They neglect, and there's just a lack of care. I appreciate our government stepping up to make sure that those animals are looked after in the interim. I want to mention that word again: it's the interim. It's a temporary measure. That's why we have to swiftly pass this legislation, so we can make sure animals are protected while we put together a larger plan to look after our animals in the future. Just to anybody watching out there, there is a consultation online. We have encouraged it to our members and anyone who came to our public consultations on animal welfare, to ensure that they get their voices heard.

There are so many people out there in our communities who give of their time to volunteer, to rescue animals, to rescue dogs, cats, horses, pigs and any type of animal out there. They all need our help. I want to thank all those volunteers who give of their time and their money to make sure that these animals are protected and not in danger.

Once again, please go online. You have until June 6 to comment on the future of our animal welfare. And to the minister and her team, thank you very much for bringing swift action to this. Again, thank you, and I hope the NDP will certainly support this legislation moving forward.

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

Mr. Tom Rakocevic: It's always an honour and a pleasure to rise. I'm really proud to have been able to attend an important animal rights rally that happened earlier this term, and I'm so proud to have been able to read a petition about animal rights here.

I've also had the incredible honour to be invited to many local schools. When I talk to the children there, we talk about so many different things. Certainly about the importance of politics and caring about your community, but amongst young people the issue of the environment and animal rights and animals is so important to them. I

really hope and feel that this next generation will treat animals and species with a lot more love and respect than the grown-ups of the past have. So I do feel and hope that the future will be better for the species that we share this planet with.

Animals and pets make a huge difference in the lives of people. I want to talk about my dear, dear neighbour Mr. Silva. I love him like an uncle. He is now in his retirement. His home is a little quieter these days because unfortunately, about a week or so ago he lost his dear little, sweet dachshund, Coco. Every day when the window was open, I would hear the dog barking and him saying, "Coco, it's okay, it's okay." The dog loved him so much. You could see it. It was like family for them.

I also want to mention one of my closest friends, who lost his amazing dog, Vegas, who was with him as a companion for 15 years. My friend would actually bring the dog, Vegas, who was like his own kid, to seniors' homes to be a source of company to some seniors who were living in isolation. We have, as a species, especially with dogs, evolved with them, and the bond between humans and pets—dogs and all animals—is strong. I think we could all do better, and I'm happy to be able to discuss animal rights. It's so important.

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

Mr. Michael Parsa: Speaker, this is probably one of the most important and sensitive legislations to me, and perhaps to many of my colleagues in this House on all sides. Animals are often referred to as buddies, best friends, and even members of our family. They offer us their unconditional love and ask for very little in return.

Animals cannot at all speak for themselves. That's why they turn to us for protection, and it is our duty to do whatever it takes to support and protect them. That is why I'm proud of our Solicitor General, Sylvia Jones, and her hard-working and caring parliamentary assistant, Prab Sarkaria, for finding a temporary solution to this matter after the OSPCA announced that they will no longer be providing the services of animal protection which they had been doing for over a hundred years.

Speaker, I'm so happy to hear that the ministry is also not going to rush this. It is too important, and we need to get it right. I encourage all those who have an opinion to share their suggestions with the minister and her team at www.ontario.ca/page/protecting-ontarios-animals.

There are so many good people out there who love animals, who love pets—many in this House; I have talked to them. We just heard another story from my colleague across, whose neighbour lost his pet, and he is hurt by it. We've all gone through it. But as much as there are so many great people who care for our animals and love our animals, unfortunately there are also people who are not so good, and we need laws in place to protect our animals from them, which is why this is so important.

Again, I'm so thankful to the minister and her team for stepping up and doing this so swiftly, but also taking the time to do it right, because it's very, very important that we get it right for our animals.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Jennifer K. French): Before I return to the member, a reminder to all members to please use people's ridings, to please refer to people by their ridings or titles going forward.

I believe I return to the Solicitor General for her remarks.

Hon. Sylvia Jones: Thank you very much, Speaker.

To the members from Ottawa Centre, Etobicoke–Lakeshore, Aurora–Oak Ridges–Richmond Hill and Humber River–Black Creek, thank you for your feedback and interest in Bill 117. I think it's pretty clear, based on the size of the legislation, that this is in fact an interim measure to ensure that animal protection in the province of Ontario continues past June 28. The members of this Legislature and the people of Ontario have our assurance as a government that we will get this right. We will listen to the feedback that is currently being collected and provided by, frankly, many, many stakeholders who have a keen interest in this file.

It strikes me every time we speak about animal welfare in the Legislature: Often stories come forward about beloved pets and the impact that they have made on our lives and our communities. So I am keenly aware of the importance of getting this legislation right, of making sure that animal welfare in the province of Ontario is something that continues to be a priority for our government. It's something that a lot of people are watching, and a lot of people are making sure and hoping that we take the time to do it right.

This interim measure will ensure that over the course of the coming months, while we do that due diligence, we can also ensure that local humane societies who have been doing an incredible job protecting animals and animal welfare in the province can continue to do that important work.

Thank you, Speaker. I look forward to further debate.

Second reading debate deemed adjourned.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Jennifer K. French): Seeing the time on the clock, this House stands in recess until 10:30.

The House recessed from 1015 to 1030.

INTRODUCTION OF VISITORS

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Before I ask the members to introduce their guests, I would like to introduce a special guest in the Speaker's gallery this morning. The press gallery's summer intern, Yusra Javed, is here. Welcome to Queen's Park. We're delighted to have you here.

Mr. Mike Harris: This is an extremely special day for me. I've actually got my whole family—finally. It only took a year to get them all here at once, but my wife, Kim; daughter, Gemma; son Jaxon; son Maverick; son Ryder; and son Emeric are in the front row here today.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Welcome to Queen's Park.

Mr. Terence Kernaghan: It gives me great pleasure to welcome Maciek Piekosz and Alfonso Campos Reales

from the Ontario Trial Lawyers Association. Welcome to Queen's Park.

Mr. Doug Downey: I would like to welcome Renee Brown and Wes Crank, the parents of the page captain today, Matthew Crank.

Ms. Andrea Horwath: I would like to welcome members from the Ontario Trial Lawyers Association to Queen's Park today: Laura Hillyer, John Karapita, and Allen Wynperle, who is from my riding, particularly, of Hamilton Centre. Welcome, trial lawyers.

Mr. Mike Schreiner: I would like to welcome three of my constituents from ABISS who are here with the Ontario Trial Lawyers today: Ashley Tindall, Sheila O'Reilly and Deanna Pelino.

I'd also like to welcome family members of my legislative assistant, Samantha Bird, who are visiting Queen's Park for the first time: Susan Jeffrey, Jennifer Cobb, Garth Vanstone and Gail Vanstone. Welcome to Queen's Park.

L'hon. Michael A. Tibollo: Je voudrais présenter trois invités très spéciaux à l'Assemblée législative ce matin. Je voudrais d'abord vous présenter M. Daniel Giroux, président de l'étonnant collège francophone Collège Boréal, situé dans la belle ville de Sudbury. J'aimerais également souhaiter la bienvenue à M. Marc Despatie, directeur des communications, de la planification stratégique et des relations gouvernementales au Collège Boréal.

Ils sont rejoints par le fils de M. Giroux, M. Damien Giroux, qui avait été récemment sélectionné au cinquième tour des sélections 2018 de la LNH par le Minnesota Wild. Damien joue actuellement pour le propre Saginaw Spirit de la LHO. Damien est l'un des plus récents Franco-Ontariens à avoir été sélectionné par la LNH. Quel accomplissement pour cet incroyable athlète de l'Ontario. Au nom de tous les membres de l'Assemblée législative, bonne visite à Queen's Park.

Mr. Faisal Hassan: I would like to welcome a new page from my riding of York South–Weston, Felipe Gaertner, of Immaculate Conception.

I would also like to welcome his parents, Luis and Livia Gaertner, and Daniela Falomo, a teacher of his. Welcome to Queen's Park. Welcome to your House.

M^{me} Nathalie Des Rosiers: I'd like to welcome Colleen Burn, Laurie Tucker and Éliane Lachaine. I had the pleasure of meeting them this morning. They are members of the firm Burn Tucker Lachaine in Ottawa, and members of the Ontario Trial Lawyers Association. Bienvenue à Queen's Park.

Mr. Dave Smith: I'd like to welcome members from the Brain Injury Association from Peterborough: Teryl Hoefel, Carolyn Barber, Kim Belfry, Trevor Connelly, Elaine Devlin and Kayla Lambert.

Mr. Tom Rakocevic: I'd also like to welcome OTLA and ABISS. Thank you for your advocacy and some great conversations this morning. Welcome to Queen's Park.

Mr. Logan Kanapathi: It is a great pleasure for me to introduce 45 members of the Armadale Older Adults Club from Markham, present in the gallery today.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): The member for London West—

Mr. Logan Kanapathi: I'd like to recognize club president Ranjiv Puri, vice-president Kaleshwar Parsad, and secretary Satya Arora. Welcome to Queen's Park.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): I apologize for interrupting.

The member for London West.

Ms. Peggy Sattler: I would like to welcome 11 amazing grade 8 girls from London, from Wortley Road Public School, Tecumseh Public School and St. Martin Catholic School who are here today with the London West Girls' Government: Rachael Noble, Laura Dionne, Maya Hall-Hinds, Ariana Richardson, Laila Seif, Isabella Gilbert, Genevieve Harvey, Julia Harvey, Shelby Hayes, Emma Meidlein and Maggie Slabon, as well as four volunteers who are accompanying them: Brenda Irwin, Katie Slabon, Sandra Gilbert and Amanda Stratton. Welcome to Queen's Park.

Mr. Gilles Bisson: Point of order.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): We're still in introductions. Point of order, the member for Timmins.

Mr. Gilles Bisson: I'd like to do the point of order before we get into actual question period. We were under the impression that the Premier will be here, and we're getting sort of contradictory "may" or "may not." Can we please know—

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): We don't make reference to the absence of members, first of all. Secondly, I don't think it's a valid point of order.

We're still introducing guests. The Minister of Finance.

Hon. Victor Fedeli: I would like to welcome two North Bay guests, Spencer Merritt and Brent Wood.

Mr. Joel Harden: I'd like to introduce three folks from Ottawa Centre who are here with the Ontario trial lawyers: Laurie Tucker, Éliane Lachaine and Colleen Burn. Welcome to the people's House. Thanks for being here.

Hon. Monte McNaughton: I know they're not in the chamber yet, but I'd like to welcome to Queen's Park today my wife, Kate, and my daughter, Annie.

I also would like to introduce to the House the member of Parliament for Bruce-Grey-Owen Sound, Larry Miller. Welcome to Queen's Park.

M^{me} France Gélinas: J'aimerais accueillir M. Damien Giroux, un joueur de hockey avec l'Esprit de Saginaw qui joue dans la ligue ontarienne de hockey. Bienvenue à Queen's Park, Damien.

Mr. Vincent Ke: I'm happy to introduce my guests and my friends upstairs. They are from China. They've come to Canada to attend the Canada-China science and tech innovation collaboration summit.

Their names are: Wang, Aiming; Wang, Honghao; Liu, Limin; Liu, Ye; Shen, Zhi Gang; Huang, Beibei; Zhu, Kaihua; Jin, Puming; Lin, Xingyong; Chen, Guibo; Lin, Aiming; Yang, Jianfen; Lin, Zhao; and Dongmei Chapman.

Welcome to Queen's Park.

Ms. Catherine Fife: From the Brain Injury Association of Waterloo Wellington, we have Lynda Abshoff, the executive director; Michael Abshoff, a brain injury survivor; Mary Bozoian, a board member; and Sarah Nafziger; and, from the riding of Durham, from MPP Taylor's

office, grandmother Elsie Ferguson, mother Lisa Yakeley and daughter Lauren Yakeley as well. Welcome to your House.

Ms. Donna Skelly: I'd like to welcome Sean Shannon, Reena Chawla and Simon Langer from Diabetes Canada, as well as Glen van Gulik, Krista Henry, Kirsten Kelleher and Jillian Rideout from the Salvation Army, who are visiting the Legislature today.

These individuals are here representing organizations that, I'm pleased to say, supported my private member's motion to help reduce the amount of clothing that is sent to our landfills. I'd like to invite all members of the Legislature to join us for a group photo on the grand staircase right after question period.

1040

Ms. Jessica Bell: I'd like to welcome Simona Jellinek, Allen Wynperle and Laura Hillyer from the Ontario Trial Lawyers Association to Queen's Park, as well as Anna Dewey and Anna Lerner from TTCriders; John Di Nino, the ATU Canada president; and Christine Broeze from ATU Local 1587. Thank you for joining us at Queen's Park. Welcome.

Mr. Kaleed Rasheed: I would like to welcome a good friend of mine, Muhammad Alam from Alam Law, to Queen's park.

Ms. Andrea Khanjin: I want to welcome my good friend and supporter Roger Winter here today. I also saw that Amanda Mooyer is with us today too. Thank you.

Mr. Sam Oosterhoff: I have the great privilege of welcoming to the Legislature today many members who are here with the Ontario Brain Injury Association, representatives from across Ontario. I encourage all members of the Legislature to go to room 228 following question period this morning and meet with some of them. Thank you.

Ms. Rima Berns-McGown: I'd like to welcome three people from Beaches-East York today: MJ Perry, Marian Ord and Jackie Ogier. Welcome to your House; welcome to Queen's Park.

Mr. Daryl Kramp: I am really, really pleased today to welcome a former colleague, a very, very good friend, of course a serving federal member for the wonderful north country up there and, quite frankly, the second best fisherman that I know. But most importantly I would really like to welcome his long-suffering wife, Darlene—Larry Miller and Darlene.

Ms. Effie J. Triantafilopoulos: Today is World MS Day. I would like to welcome, from the MS Society of Canada, Justin Cochrane, Catherine McCormack, Lisa McCoy, Phil Dewan and Treena Gracey. Thank you.

Mr. Stephen Crawford: This morning I'm pleased to introduce to the Legislature members of our Oakville community youth council. I'm pleased to have launched this initiative, and this is their inaugural visit to Queen's Park. I'm pleased to introduce Andrei Adam, Bogdan Basaraba, Riaz Mahmud, Dorian Knight, Harry Dai and Benjamin Jesseau. Welcome to Queen's Park.

Ms. Lindsey Park: I'd like to welcome Colleen Burn and Éliane Lachaine in the members' gallery. I'd like to welcome you to Queen's Park. They're from Burn Tucker Lachaine, and Colleen was my articling principal way

back when I was becoming a lawyer. Welcome to Queen's Park.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): I recognize the very patient member for Burlington.

Ms. Jane McKenna: Aw, thank you, Speaker. I'd like to welcome, from the beautiful riding of Burlington, Laura Hillyer and Claire Wilkinson. I had the privilege of going down and speaking to them today. Have a wonderful day here today at Queen's Park.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Points of order now. I think we've concluded the introductions.

WEARING OF CARNATIONS

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): The first one I'm going to recognize is the member for Nickel Belt.

M^{me} France Gélinas: Thank you, Speaker. I believe you will find we have unanimous consent to wear a beautiful pink carnation—

Interjection: Red.

M^{me} France Gélinas: Red. Sorry about that—in honour of multiple sclerosis awareness day. They are red.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): The member for Nickel Belt is seeking unanimous consent of the House to wear a red carnation in honour of MS Day. Agreed? Agreed.

WEARING OF PINS

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): The member for Flamborough—Glanbrook, on a point of order.

Ms. Donna Skelly: I'm also seeking unanimous consent for members to wear pins to show support for all of the work that charitable organizations do through their clothing donation programs.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): The member for Flamborough—Glanbrook is seeking unanimous consent to allow members to wear a pin in honour of the organizations that raise money through clothing donations. Agreed? Agreed.

The member for Timmins has a point of order.

Mr. Gilles Bisson: Mr. Speaker, you will know that the understanding of standing order 10 is that the government has recalled the House for this Sunday. In that vein, the government is skipping out of question period, so I seek unanimous consent to move a motion in order to have a question period on Sunday.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): First of all, there is no order in council prepared as of yet to call the House back. We have not received official notice in that respect, so we can't entertain a point of order of that nature at this time.

ORAL QUESTIONS

EDUCATION FUNDING

Ms. Andrea Horwath: My question is to whoever on the other side wants to answer it. School boards are facing—

Interjections.

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

I apologize to the Leader of the Opposition for interrupting her.

Start the clock.

Ms. Andrea Horwath: My question is to the Premier. School boards are facing overwhelming challenges this year as a result of cuts imposed by the Ford government. They're being forced to fire teachers and lay off education workers. Courses on everything from hands-on technical learning to arts education are being eliminated.

The Premier finally backed down on his plans to impose retroactive cuts to municipalities this year and agreed to hold the consultations he should have been holding in the first place. Will he now agree to do the same thing with school boards?

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): I recognize the Acting Premier.

Hon. Victor Fedeli: I want to begin by reminding the people of Ontario that the previous government was spending \$40 million a day more than they took in. We have developed a budget that was passed yesterday that puts us on a path to balance. It's a five-year path to balance, but it protects what matters most. It protects our health care and it protects our education. In fact, we're adding \$1.4 billion over the next three years in the education budget—a \$700-million increase in the education budget this year—and \$1 billion to create 30,000 child care spaces. In fact, 10,000 of them will be in schools.

These are the kinds of things that we have passed in our budget yesterday, increasing the education budget, that the NDP voted against yesterday. They voted against the \$700-million increase in the education budget.

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

Ms. Andrea Horwath: What we did was vote for the people of Ontario by voting against that terrible budget.

Once again the Premier, and apparently his finance minister, didn't do their homework, and our kids are the ones who get punished for that. Yesterday, the Toronto District School Board started issuing bumping notices as more teachers are displaced due to government cuts.

The Halton board has heard from 7,000 parents who reject the government's cuts to class sizes, and mandatory e-learning. I'm sure that if they were here, they would have voted against the budget too. They're calling for consultation before these cuts are rolled out. Will the Premier provide it?

Hon. Victor Fedeli: Minister of Education.

Hon. Lisa M. Thompson: Again, it's an honour to serve in the role of education minister. I have to share with you that, since we've been in this position for almost a year now, we've come to realize that there's a lot of waste throughout Ontario that needs to be addressed. When we conducted our consultation this past fall, teachers, parents, community-minded people and students alike, when we were talking about efficiencies, they pointed their fingers towards school boards, saying that there is a lot of opportunity for school boards to look from within and see

and identify ways that they could realize efficiencies, so that's what we're asking school boards across this province to do.

While we're increasing our budget contributions to education to the tune of \$700 million—\$90 million of which is going to special education—we're increasing funding for student transportation. That list could just go on and on. We're asking school boards to find—

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

1050

Ms. Andrea Horwath: It's pretty disappointing for the children and the parents of this province to see an education minister who refuses to acknowledge the devastation that her cuts are going to cause. The consequences are for our kids and their futures, and they are devastating consequences. They mean, of course, fired teachers, larger class sizes, fewer course options and more cuts in the classroom.

The Premier finally admitted, as I said, that it was wrong to cut public health, wrong to cut child care and wrong to cut emergency services this year. Why is he so unwilling to consider taking some time before imposing these reckless cuts that will have lasting impacts on our students in our schools?

Hon. Lisa M. Thompson: I completely reject the fearmongering that continues to come from the Leader of the Opposition. The fact of the matter is, we know there are opportunities for school boards to sharpen their pencils. In no way should students suffer because of mismanagement.

We have school boards throughout Ontario that are working with us. They're saving one to four cents on the dollar from within, so they're not impacting the classroom. Unfortunately, we have other school boards that, seemingly, the members of the opposition are propping up to add to the cause of anxiety throughout this province. They're propping them up and saying, "You know what? It's okay that you've been unaccountable and you've mismanaged or carried a deficit for the last four or five years. That's okay." Because that's their mentality.

But we were elected with a mandate to get Ontario back on track. We invite the school boards across this province to work with us to reduce wasteful spending from within and make sure we have a good learning environment—

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

HEALTH CARE FUNDING

Ms. Andrea Horwath: My next question is to the Premier. But I have to say, the Minister of Education doesn't even understand that school boards can't run deficits. That's pretty worrisome.

I do want to say before I bring my question forward that, of course, we have a very important game today, which is the Raptors game. I think everybody in this Legislature is excited about that. Maybe it will change the tone a little bit here. I just want to say that it's really great to see so many cities that are getting involved as well and

so many communities. I hope people are safe out there. I hope people behave well and are safe, and I wish the police forces all the very best in their efforts to keep everybody safe and well.

On that note, my next question again, as I said, is to the Premier. The Premier's claim that families won't be facing health care cuts is looking less and less credible by the day. Among the \$2.7 billion in cuts found by Ontario's independent Financial Accountability Office was actually a \$22-million cut to cancer screening—

Interjection.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): The member for King–Vaughan, come to order.

Ms. Andrea Horwath: —a \$22-million cut to cancer screening—

Interjection.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Sorry. Stop the clock. The member for King–Vaughan is warned.

Start the clock. Leader of the official opposition.

Ms. Andrea Horwath: I think I'll take the opportunity to say that again then, Speaker: It was a \$22-million cut to cancer screening, a reduction of nearly 20%.

Can the Premier explain the rationale for eliminating one-fifth of Ontario's budget for cancer screening?

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): The Acting Premier.

Hon. Victor Fedeli: Thank you for the question. I need to continue to remind this Legislature about the many investments that we are making. We're starting already with an increase in the health budget of \$1.3 billion this year alone, a budget that this NDP opposition voted against. We are adding \$384 million to hospitals, \$267 million to home care, \$1.75 billion to create 15,000 new long-term-care beds, many of which are already started in the ground today, and—I've said this many days now; I cannot believe the NDP voted against this—\$90 million providing free dental care to 100,000 low-income seniors. How dare you? How dare you vote against those seniors?

Interjections.

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

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Order. Order. It seems appropriate to remind the members that we have a large number of guests who are with us today in the House to observe our proceedings. We have to think about what standard we hope to set today and how impressed they will be when they leave. I would ask all members to think about that.

Start the clock. The Leader of the Opposition, I believe, had the floor.

Ms. Andrea Horwath: Thank you, Speaker. I have to say that what I can't believe is that this minister is still trying to spin the budget. The fact of the matter is, the Financial Accountability Officer is independent, and he has identified \$2.7 billion in cuts to the health care system.

I've got to say: Cancer screening is absolutely vital for the detection of cancer. It can literally save lives. Of all the Premier's cut-first, plan-later budget decisions, this may have the most serious consequences for people. Will the Ford government reverse this cut before Ontarians' lives are literally put at risk?

Hon. Victor Fedeli: Minister of Labour.

Hon. Laurie Scott: I say to the Leader of the Opposition: What message is she not hearing from this government? We have increased spending in health care this year, totalling \$63.5 billion—

Interjection.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): The member for Waterloo is warned.

The Minister of Labour had the floor.

Hon. Laurie Scott: Mr. Speaker, we've increased spending in health care, totalling \$63.5 billion. We have made investments in low-income seniors' dental; \$384 million in hospital operational funding; \$27 billion over 10 years for hospital infrastructure spending; \$174 million for mental health and addictions services; a \$267-million increase in home and community care; and 15,000 more long-term-care beds, over half of which have been announced. Mr. Speaker, I don't know why the opposition—

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

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Stop the clock. Order. The member for Carleton will come to order. The Solicitor General has to come to order. The member from Hamilton East—Stoney Creek has to come to order.

Start the clock. The Leader of the Opposition, final supplementary.

Ms. Andrea Horwath: It wasn't so long ago that Conservatives supported independent officers of the Legislature like the Financial Accountability Officer, but now they expect us to ignore the experts. We're not going to do that, Speaker. Nobody believes this government anymore, and we certainly are seeing the evidence from the FAO to back up what people know, which is that the budget spin is not the case and that, in fact, these cuts are going to hurt families very, very deeply.

The evidence is clear: cuts to cancer screening, cuts to public health, cuts to hospital funding, a total of \$2.7 billion in cuts to the health care budget, and a return to the Mike Harris era of closing hospitals, closing hospital beds and firing nurses. Why won't the government admit that these cuts have consequences for families and consequences for our health care system?

Hon. Laurie Scott: Mr. Speaker, I will again reiterate some of the many, many investments we've made in health care, like \$384 million in additional funding in hospital operational funding; \$27 billion over 10 years for hospital infrastructure spending; a \$267-million increase in home and community care; and long-term-care-bed investments: over 7,000 of those beds already announced, and redeveloping 15,000 long-term-care beds.

Mr. Speaker, the government has seen what the Liberals and the NDP have done to health care, and that is like 1,000 people waiting for health care in the hallways of the hospitals that we have now—backlogs of some 30,000 people waiting for long-term-care beds. That's what you did when you supported that Liberal government. That's the state of the health care system you gave to us, and we're fixing it.

1100

Interjections.

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

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Order. Start the clock. The next question?

FIRE IN PIKANGIKUM

Ms. Andrea Horwath: My next question is also to the Premier. But I have to say, I don't know how a \$2.7-billion cut in health care is going to solve hallway medicine, Speaker. It's not; it's going to get much, much worse with this government. The people deserve better than that.

But as we speak here today, there's another issue that's very concerning unfolding in our province, Speaker. The people of the Pikangikum First Nation are facing serious threats from a forest fire. A state of emergency has been declared. Yesterday, I spoke with Chief Amanda Sainnawap about the need for more planes to be assigned to help get people out of her community.

Can the Premier tell us what help the province of Ontario is prepared to provide to the community?

Hon. Victor Fedeli: Minister of Indigenous Affairs.

Hon. Greg Rickford: I appreciate the honourable member's question. I can assure her that fire crews and fire aircraft started fighting this fire yesterday—at 1:30 this morning. It's been a very late night and a very early morning as the Joint Response Coordination Centre, including the Provincial Emergency Operations Centre, together with the Department of National Defence, has mobilized fixed-wing aircraft from Ontario and Hercules from the Department of National Defence. As we speak, people are being evacuated.

I'd like to appreciate the late-night texts between myself and the member of provincial Parliament from Kiiwetinoong. We've coordinated our efforts with Grand Chief Alvin Fiddler and Chief Amanda Sainnawap, a tremendous leader here. The community is under siege and the province of Ontario has mobilized all of its resources to move people out of that community safely.

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

Ms. Andrea Horwath: I spoke to the chief yesterday and she expressed to me her concern that smoke from the approaching fire may soon hinder visibility of aircraft to land.

This is a community that, of course, is still reeling from a youth suicide crisis, that just lost another young person to suicide on Tuesday night. It is clearly a time where every bit of help matters.

It's our understanding that evacuation is very slow because there are only 80 to 100 people that can fit on every plane, and there's really only one plane that's doing evacuations, so we need more planes there to get more people evacuated more quickly.

I appreciate the minister's response and the government's actions thus far, but I guess what I'm asking for is a commitment to ensure that we unconditionally provide

all the help that's needed to support the people of Pikangikum and get them out of harm's way.

Hon. Greg Rickford: Mr. Speaker, this is a very serious matter, and I can assure the member that all assets with respect to aircraft have been mobilized. What we're trying to do now, in my most recent conversation with Chief Amanda Sainnawap and community leaders across northwestern Ontario, is to identify towns and cities in northwestern Ontario that can be either hubs or destination cities. Pikangikum has close ties to Dryden and Kenora. These would be more appropriate places, as the initial evacuations are going to Kapuskasing. We appreciate the folks in Kapuskasing for their efforts. They're very good at this, but it's 860 kilometres away from Pikangikum. Timmins, another host city, is some 920 kilometres away.

I've spoken to mayors from across northwestern Ontario and hotel operators that I have close ties with, and we're mobilizing quickly to ensure that these folks have a safe, comfortable place to be while we deal with this emergency.

In the community itself, Mr. Speaker, the Ministry of Natural Resources has planes coming in and out of there to deliver fire crews, as the community may be at risk. That means soaking down buildings but, as well, moving people out. We have every plane possible helping Pikangikum at this time, and I appreciate everybody's support in this place at this time for those efforts.

GOVERNMENT POLICIES

Mr. Paul Calandra: My question is to the Minister of Economic Development and the government House leader. Fifteen years of Liberal governance in Ontario brought reckless spending that has buried our province in debt. Now, Mr. Speaker, I know you're happy to appreciate that the days of abusing taxpayers' dollars are over in the province of Ontario. Ontario voters demanded value for their money when they headed to the polls last year. Voters across our province elected a PC government knowing that a change in our leadership at Queen's Park would deliver greater transparency and accountability to Ontarians. Since taking office, this government has taken proactive measures to stand up for Ontarians.

We have done so much, and I'm wondering if the minister could remind this House of the steps our government has taken to support the hard-working people across our great province.

Hon. Todd Smith: I'd like to thank the member from Markham–Stouffville for the question this morning. I also want to thank him for the outstanding work that he's doing in representing the constituents in his riding and also assisting our Minister of Energy in ensuring that we're cleaning up the Liberal hydro mess, in the great work he's doing as a parliamentary assistant there.

Speaker, we were elected on a promise to make life more affordable for the people of Ontario, and that's exactly what we're doing and that's exactly why we're continuing to fight Justin Trudeau's reckless, dangerous, expensive carbon tax that he's imposing on provinces

across the territory. This is something that is being supported by our counterparts right across the country.

Yesterday I had the opportunity to speak with many of them at the interprovincial trade meetings in Halifax. We talked about what an egregious tax this is, what a job-killing tax this is. That's why we're standing up tall for our farmers; we're standing up for our small business people, our large manufacturers, our commuters, our drivers in Ontario. We're doing everything that we can. No taxes, no fee increases under this government, Mr. Speaker.

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

Mr. Paul Calandra: I want to thank the minister. Minister, all that we've accomplished in one year for most governments would have been enough. They would have packed it up and moved on. In fact, we've accomplished more in one year than the Liberals did in 15 years. Now, the Liberal accomplishments were lean, but what they accomplished was raising debt, raising taxes for the people of Ontario, making life harder for the people of Ontario. In over 15 years, they set a record. They set a new high bar in how to spend people's money to accomplish nothing.

We've done just the opposite. We have put more money back in people's pockets. We've put ourselves on a path to a balanced budget. We're protecting what matters most to the people of Ontario, because a strong Ontario is a strong Canada.

I'm wondering if the minister could continue to highlight some of the things that we've accomplished over the last year.

Hon. Todd Smith: Again, thanks very much to the member from Markham–Stouffville. You know, he's right. We have accomplished a lot. The Liberals accomplished a lot too, Mr. Speaker. They doubled our debt in Ontario, making Ontario the most indebted sub-sovereign jurisdiction around the world: \$340 billion in debt. It's unbelievable, the mess that they made.

We're working hard to clean that up. We're working hard to ensure that Ontario is a destination where foreign direct investment wants to come and set up and create jobs. We're making sure that our job creators who are already here can create more jobs by reducing red tape. We've taken many, many steps in reducing red tape through Bill 47, the Making Ontario Open for Business Act, and the Restoring Ontario's Competitiveness Act. Other red tape bills are coming, Mr. Speaker, to ensure that we can make Ontario the most competitive place in North America—on the globe—to do business. That's what we're focusing on, while at the same time ensuring that we're not raising taxes or fees—

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Thank you. Next question, the member for Essex.

GOVERNMENT CONTRACTS

Mr. Taras Natyshak: My question is to the Acting Premier. Since coming to office, the Premier has incurred millions in legal fees and settlements on everything from Hydro One to Alykhan Velshi's contract with the OPG,

even to Tesla's electric cars. Speaker, legal experts are now calling the Premier's plan to rip open the contract with the Beer Store "a public policy gaffe of epic proportions."

Can the Acting Premier tell us how much of the taxpayers' dollars he has budgeted for legal fees and eventual settlements?

Hon. Victor Fedeli: Thank you very much. I appreciate the question.

You know, Speaker, this is not just about beer and wine, it's not just about bringing choice and convenience, but it's about creating fairness for the people of Ontario. Now, it's interesting to know—and I'm quite sure most people in the gallery would not know this—that the government of Ontario does not own the Beer Store. Yes, we own the LCBO, but we do not own the Beer Store. It is owned by three global beer multinationals, not the people of Ontario.

1110

We have retained a special adviser, who told us that it was a bad deal for Ontarians and that this contract stifles competition, it keeps prices artificially high and it prevents new craft beer entrepreneurs from getting a strong foothold in the market.

The previous government put multinational profits ahead of people, and we'll make good on our promise—

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): The member for Niagara Falls has to come to order.

The member for Essex for his supplementary.

Mr. Taras Natyshak: It's obvious that protecting what matters most isn't taxpayers' dollars in the province of Ontario under this government.

For a guy who claims to support unbridled capitalism, the Premier seems to really enjoy meddling in the economy. Whether it's millions of dollars spent in our electricity sector or his plan to mandate businesses to display partisan ads or pay a \$10,000-a-day fine, the Premier seems to have a gift of landing his government in court. Unfortunately, it's Ontarians who are going to pay the price.

Will the finance minister tell us today how much he has budgeted of the people's dollars for legal fees and eventual settlements?

Hon. Victor Fedeli: Minister of Energy.

Hon. Greg Rickford: We're obviously concerned with the court of public opinion. The people of Ontario have a right to know that in Windsor–Essex alone, the two hospitals down there are going to incur costs of \$800,000 because of this job-killing, regressive carbon tax that that member supports—

Mr. Taras Natyshak: What does that have to do with any part of this question?

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

Hon. Greg Rickford: In 2019 alone, the automotive products sector in Windsor–Essex is going to incur \$1.5 million because of the job-killing, regressive carbon tax—

Interjection.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Sorry to interrupt. The member for Essex is warned.

I apologize to the minister for interrupting him.

Hon. Greg Rickford: The member opposite talks about stickers; we're talking about sticking it: how he and that party have stuck it to the people of Ontario for a significant cost that we need not incur to fight our environment. We can lower GHG emissions with an Ontario-made plan without adding on a job-killing, regressive carbon tax.

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Stop the clock. We're not yet halfway through question period, and I think it's important to remind the members that our practice has been in recent months that if you're warned and if the Speaker has to call you to order again, you may very well be named.

Start the clock. The next question is from the member for Ottawa South.

AUTISM TREATMENT

Mr. John Fraser: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. My question is for the Acting Premier. Last week, I joined parents and grandparents of children with autism at a round table in my riding of Ottawa South. Here are some of the concerns that they expressed: The new OAP needs to be needs-based; the age cap and categorization of children are barriers to care; and there is no transparency around the expert panel, and it's late.

We also know that the government secretly froze the wait-list last fall, and now we know that no new families have been able to register for the program. Since April 1, there has been no intake for the new OAP.

Interjection.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): The Minister of Children, Community and Social Services must come to order.

Mr. John Fraser: My question for the Acting Premier is: Does the Acting Premier believe that this is acceptable?

Hon. Victor Fedeli: Minister of Children, Community and Social Services.

Hon. Lisa MacLeod: Let me address a couple of the erroneous messages that I just heard. First, 500 children have received their childhood family budget letters this week, so we've started to remove kids off the wait-list as of April 1, just as I promised.

I want to address the fact that the wait-list was frozen: That's completely untrue. In fact, the system was broke and broken; that's why I had to go to Treasury Board to sustain the children that were on the plan for an extra \$102 million. Thanks to the Treasury Board president, thanks to the finance minister and thanks to the Premier of Ontario.

I'd also like to address one other thing: He said that the autism advisory panel is secret. I'd invite the member to check Twitter right now, because the names of those who are on the list have just been released.

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

Mr. John Fraser: I'd like to thank the minister and I'd like to remind the minister that there are parents who are here every day, and you're not just responding to me; you're responding to them.

The intake is not open, and you know that. I'm glad you've announced the expert panel, but there was no transparency—

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): I'm going to interrupt the member. You've got to make your comments through the Chair. When addressing each other in the House, comments through the Chair.

Mr. John Fraser: There has been no transparency around it. We know that you're doing 500 letters a month, which means many families are going to wait years for care. You've done 500 letters, but you know the list is bigger.

This week, the Premier said in an interview that people who are raising concerns "have their hands in the public trough." So let's look at the Premier's record: First of all, he has made OHIP+ OHIP-minus—

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): I'm going to ask the member to withdraw his unparliamentary comment.

Mr. John Fraser: I withdraw, Speaker.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): And conclude your question.

Mr. John Fraser: So let's look at the government's record on children so far: They've made OHIP+ OHIP-minus, halved the increase for social assistance, fired the child advocate, put the families through hell, cut the funding from the children's aid society—and the list goes on and on and on, and every day we learn something new.

Has this government declared war on children? And, Mr. Speaker, through you, does the minister think that opposing these things is having your hand in the public trough?

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

Mr. John Fraser: I withdraw.

Hon. Lisa MacLeod: Let's be perfectly clear: 500 children this past month are now off the wait-list. That was our priority on April 1. We are delivering on that commitment. We believe every single child with autism in the province of Ontario should get a level of support from their Ontario government, unlike the previous Liberal administration that allowed three out of four children, or 23,000 children, to languish on a wait-list—a system that was broken that required an additional injection of \$102 million just to keep 8,000 children in service. No one has lost service; 500 more children have gained service.

I wish he had checked out Twitter if he wants to talk about transparency. There are over 26,000 people following me.

Mr. John Fraser: Oh, wow.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Order.

Hon. Lisa MacLeod: They would know, and he should know, that Dr. Marie Bountrogianni, the former minister of children and youth under Dalton McGuinty, is co-chairing my panel.

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Order. Stop the clock. The member for Ottawa South has to come to order. The next question.

AUTISM TREATMENT

Mrs. Robin Martin: My question is to the Minister of Children, Community and Social Services. Our government inherited a broken, broke, inequitable and unsustainable Ontario Autism Program that left 75% of the precious children waiting for services languishing on a wait-list indefinitely. I was pleased when the minister took action earlier this year to introduce a new plan that would clear that Liberal wait-list and ensure that every child with autism would receive support. These were important steps, but the minister has also promised that this government will do more.

Over the past month, our government has been engaging with parents, family members and service providers to help inform how we can best provide additional enhancements to support children and youth with autism who have complex needs.

Speaker, can the minister update the Legislature on the progress of our government's consultations?

Hon. Lisa MacLeod: I appreciate the opportunity to respond to the member from Eglinton–Lawrence. I'd like to thank you for all the work and the advocacy you have provided to our government with respect to this particular file.

As I mentioned in the previous question, my commitment and my priority has always been to eliminate the wait-list of 23,000 children—three out of four children in Ontario with autism—that we inherited.

The government has engaged in public consultations through an online survey and six telephone town halls. I'm pleased to report that over 2,300 Ontarians participated and completed the survey. Over 1,250 Ontarians participated in our telephone town halls.

I'd also like to thank members of this assembly, including the Green Party leader, the NDP member for Kitchener–Waterloo, as well as many members, including the Minister of Transportation, who have held round tables in their constituencies. We're taking that feedback.

I'm pleased to announce today that we are releasing the autism advisory panel, which will be co-chaired by the Liberal minister of children and youth from 2003 to 2006, Marie Bountrogianni, and the executive director of Autism Ontario, Marg Spoelstra—and many more who I'm excited to tell you about—

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

The supplementary question.

Mrs. Robin Martin: Through you, Speaker, thank you to the minister for that response and for her relentless work since day one to ensure that every child with autism receives support from the Ontario government, as they deserve.

I am glad to hear that so many Ontarians have participated in our government's consultation on this important

issue. I will continue to encourage families in my riding of Eglinton–Lawrence to participate, to help inform additional enhancements to the Ontario Autism Program.

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Speaker, can the minister please elaborate on how these consultations and the new advisory panel will ensure that Ontario has a program where children with autism who have complex needs receive appropriate support?

Hon. Lisa MacLeod: I'm very excited. As we know, our initial commitment was a \$321-million program, which was an enhancement of \$56 million from the previous Liberal administration. In fact, what we did after April 1 is, Premier Ford decided he would unlock an additional \$300 million, so we'll be working towards a more needs-based system for the kids with the most complex needs, and we extended their contract.

I am so excited that Dr. Marie Bountrogianni and Margaret Spoelstra will co-chair this extremely talented group of people, including the Ontario Autism Coalition, including ONTABA, including Autistics for Autistics, other clinical experts from across the province, as well as parent advocates. They will feed all of that information that we have heard to see how we can best address a needs-based system in the province of Ontario with the most expensive system this province has ever come forward with, with over \$600 million dedicated towards children with autism in this province.

I could not be more proud to be part of Premier Ford's administration so that we can put forward a good, sustainable program, unlike what we inherited.

CONSUMER PROTECTION

Mr. Tom Rakocevic: My question is for the Premier. The Toronto Raptors are heading to their first-ever NBA finals tonight, and we're all excited.

Kawhi, Canada loves you. Stay with us. It's going to be maple syrup for life. You know it's sweet.

But watching the game at the Scotiabank Arena is just out of reach for too many fans. Game one Raptors tickets sold out within half an hour thanks to a feeding frenzy by scalpers, forcing Raptors fans to pay \$2,000 for the average seat. Even standing room on the balcony was going for over \$1,000.

One of the first things this government did was side with scalpers and rip up protections that would have capped ticket resales at 50% of their original value. Shame. Why does this Premier believe Raptors fans should be gouged like this?

Hon. Doug Ford: Minister of Economic Development.

Hon. Todd Smith: I could tell you, over here on this side of the House, we are extremely excited about tonight's game, one of the NBA finals. I'll tell you, Mr. Speaker, that's Kawhi the PC government is fully behind the Toronto Raptors.

The NDP could bring anything grinding to a halt with negativity, even something as exciting as this. But what we've done is—we saw the previous Liberal legislation that was completely unenforceable. There was absolutely

no way that we were going to be able to enforce this. What it actually was doing was driving more people to the black market. So we've taken some steps: increasing penalties to discourage black market ticket sales, cracking down on illegal ticket bots, making ticket sellers provide clear and easy-to-understand information about ticket availabilities, getting rid of the print-at-home fees. We're doing everything we can to support Ontarians and the Toronto Raptors.

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Stop the clock. The member for St. Catharines has to come to order. The member for Windsor West has to come to order. The member for Hamilton East–Stoney Creek has to come to order. Yes.

Start the clock. Supplementary question.

Mr. Tom Rakocevic: Last year, the Toronto Star and CBC revealed that Ticketmaster, who monopolizes the sale of Raptors tickets, was double-dipping and secretly helping scalpers online. Rather than stand up for sports fans, the Minister of Government and Consumer Services is siding with scalpers. He saw no problem with tickets being resold for \$60,000—\$60,000, Speaker. No everyday family can afford that.

When it comes to ticket sales here, there's no transparency, and the only real choice for fans is to get ripped off by ticket sellers. That's the only choice fans have here. Will the Premier direct his minister to reverse course and start protecting fans and standing up for sports fans in this province?

Interjections.

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

To the minister to reply.

Hon. Todd Smith: Mr. Speaker, while the NDP and the Liberals are focused on playing politics with ticket prices, we're celebrating the fact that for the first time in their 24-year history, the Toronto Raptors are in the NBA finals. It's a very exciting time.

As you can imagine, the arena holds 20,000-plus fans, not 60,000 fans like in the early days at the Rogers Centre or at the SkyDome—

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Stop the clock. This is the Parliament of Ontario. It's not a basketball game. We're not spectators at a basketball game.

Start the clock. To the minister to reply.

Hon. Todd Smith: Speaker, this is a historic run by Canada's NBA franchise. People in this city are ecstatic. They're going to be down at Jurassic Park, formerly known as Maple Leaf Square, and spread all the way over to the SkyDome. Tens of thousands of fans are going to be packing bars and restaurants, and not just in Toronto; the Raptors have swept the country. I was just in Halifax; representatives from across the country are excited. I know Jurassic Park east is going to be in Pickering. This is an exciting time—

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

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Stop the clock. The member for Hamilton East–Stoney Creek is warned. Next question? Start the clock.

GOVERNMENT FISCAL POLICIES

Mr. Stephen Lecce: My question is to the Minister of Finance. On June 7, 2018, our government received a mandate to lower taxes, to grow the economy, to balance our budget, all while protecting the social services our families depend on. Under the leadership of our Premier, we are acting decisively to restore confidence in the markets and hope in our workers that Ontario's best days remain ahead.

Under our plan, Ontario is leading the nation in economic growth. We are leading the nation in attracting the most immigrants to this pluralistic province. We lead the nation in jobs growth—170,000 overwhelmingly full-time private sector jobs in the province of Ontario. Mr. Speaker, we're just getting started.

We unveiled a responsible plan, budget 2019, that places Ontario on a prudent plan to balance, while returning thousands of dollars back to the pockets of families, seniors and our young people, exactly where it belongs.

To the minister: Can you outline how our plan for jobs and growth is instilling confidence in investors at home and abroad?

Hon. Victor Fedeli: Thank you to the member from King–Vaughan. Yesterday, Fitch announced that they are moving Ontario's outlook from negative, as it was under the Liberals, to stable, as a result of the responsible path that we have put the province on.

Speaker, during a recent meeting with Fitch, we explained our five-year path to balance, our debt reduction strategy and the initiatives we have already taken to control runaway spending. We told them how our government is creating a climate that is open for business, open for jobs, by lowering taxes, providing more focused training programs and eliminating unnecessary regulations and red tape. This is great news from Fitch, and it's a result of our government taking a responsible approach to balancing the budget while protecting what matters most: our world-class health care and education system.

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

Mr. Stephen Lecce: Back to the minister: Yesterday, as the minister noted, the Fitch credit rating agency announced that they are moving Ontario's outlook from negative, as it was under the Liberals, to stable, as a result of the responsible path that we have put our province on. This government is taking immediate action to unshackle this province from the constraints imposed on them by the former provincial and current federal Liberal governments.

Yet the Liberals are content increasing deficits and imposing higher debt levels on our children—debt that leads to service cuts or tax hikes; debt that crowds out future governments' abilities to invest in a sustainable health and education system. The Liberals have demonstrated no fiscal restraint, no value for money, no plan to

make life affordable. No way can these Liberals return to power and further erode the social services of our children.

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That's why, from day one, we've taken action to unleash the potential of our province and our people. Minister, could you outline further evidence that our plan is working, from creating jobs to attracting investment, and signalling to the world about Ontario's renewed economic momentum?

Hon. Victor Fedeli: This news from Fitch came just two days after DBRS rating agency confirmed the province's rating, as well, as stable. DBRS stated: "The ratings are supported by the province's diverse and growing economy, effective debt and liquidity management practices as well as the improving direction of fiscal policy."

They further added: "The change in fiscal policy is clearly positive from a credit perspective and there appears to be a genuine and credible commitment to addressing the province's budget imbalances and gradually reduce the debt burden."

Our plan is working, and the world is taking notice. The business community in Ontario created 170,000 jobs in the last year. For the first time in 15 years, businesses once again have confidence in Ontario as a place to invest, grow and create great jobs.

VICTIMS OF CRIME

Ms. Sara Singh: My question is for the Premier. This week is Victims and Survivors of Crime Week, a chance for us to work with victims and survivors to have their voices heard in our criminal justice system.

Sadly, this government doesn't believe that victims of crime deserve support. Maybe that's why they're cutting millions of dollars that would have gone towards compensating victims of violent crime, money that covers things like their funeral costs, physical therapy and their loss of income.

Does the Premier believe that cutting compensation is a just outcome for victims and survivors of heinous acts of crime?

Hon. Doug Ford: The Attorney General.

Hon. Caroline Mulroney: The NDP has just voted against a budget that will increase support for victims of crime from \$25,000 to \$30,000 a year.

Under the old system, victims of crime were waiting from one to up to three years to get the compensation that they needed in the aftermath of a crime. So, our government took action to ensure that victims of crime are getting the compensation that they need in a faster, more efficient way. That is why we're switching from an adjudicative model to an administrative model. That means that a victim will no longer have to appear before an adjudicator to decide on how much compensation should be paid, and that they will be able to submit their paperwork and receipts to the ministry, who will issue a simple receipt.

Mr. Speaker, our government is committed to ensuring that victims get the support that they need in a more timely, efficient way, and we will continue to do that.

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

Ms. Sara Singh: Back to the Premier: Unfortunately, that's not what we're hearing from advocates across this province who are concerned about this government's cuts and the new funding compensation model for victims and survivors.

The Toronto Star has reported that a victim of human trafficking was previously awarded the maximum amount of \$25,000, entirely for pain and suffering. She planned to use this money to get her life back on track, go to school and support her two children. But with these new cuts, survivors like her will not be able to get the much-needed support that they deserve.

Why is the Premier making it harder for victims and survivors of crime to access the supports and services they need for a speedy recovery?

Hon. Caroline Mulroney: To ensure that our government is meeting the needs of victims of crime—and the member opposite is highlighting some of the growing needs that victims of crime are facing. Victims of human trafficking require great support. To address those growing needs, the Ministry of the Attorney General is overseeing a cross-ministerial review of all the supports that the provincial government provides to victims, to make sure that victims are not simply an afterthought; that we are not providing programs when we understand that new problems arise—that we are thinking thoughtfully and providing meaningful supports to victims, regardless of the crime.

This will ensure that victim programs in Ontario are victim-focused, that they are sustainable and that they are designed to meet, as I said, the growing pressures on the sector.

The previous government failed victims and made unfunded promises. Our victims support system will be sustainable, it will be victims-focused, and it will ensure that those who need help get the supports that they need.

MINING INDUSTRY

Mr. Doug Downey: My question is for the magnanimous Minister of Energy, Northern Development and Mines. For over 90 years, the Ontario Mining Association has done remarkable work. It has helped our province improve the mining sector and it has helped ensure it's sustainable for generations to come. We all know that mining is a major job creator in the north and for suppliers throughout Ontario, like Brotech, where the Premier was recently. It's also the largest private sector employer of Indigenous peoples in Ontario. It is a fantastic success story for this province, and it's one our government intends to build upon.

The minister spent yesterday morning with the Ontario Mining Association. Would the minister please elaborate on our government's firm commitment to making the mining industry open for business?

Hon. Greg Rickford: I want to thank the member from Barrie–Springwater–Oro–Medonte, or Deputy Downey, as

we fondly refer to him, for his important work in this place and for his constituents.

He's right. I spoke to the Ontario Mining Association at their AGM. The future is looking a lot brighter. They like the way we've sharpened the focus of the Northern Ontario Internship Program, particularly with respect to Indigenous youth, levelling the playing field and making it more accessible for them to get on-the-job training to work in the energy sector, to work in the mining sector—the two go hand-in-hand—as we work closely with mines across northern Ontario to push them across the starting line.

It's transforming some of our towns. White River is on the move, thanks to some last-minute interventions by this government so that they could begin extraction activities. Greenstone Gold is moving on to the next step, and a leave-to-construct is just on the horizon. Newmont Goldcorp's Borden mine is set to revolutionize and be electrified in the new look of the mining sector.

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

Mr. Doug Downey: Ontario is lucky to have a government and a minister that's taking action to make our province more competitive. We eliminated the job-killing cap-and-trade carbon tax. We repealed the costly Green Energy Act. And now we've passed the Fixing the Hydro Mess Act.

These measures are important to the entire provincial economy but especially in the mining sector. Mining is an electricity-intense industry that requires the delivery of large quantities of power.

I'm confident that our minister is keeping the best interests of the mining sector in mind when making key energy decisions. Would the minister please tell members of this House more about how he is leveraging his role as minister responsible for the energy file to support Ontario's mining industry?

Hon. Greg Rickford: Mr. Speaker, there was a low point in the discussions the other day. It was around the industrial conservation initiative during the decade of darkness in the previous government—two significant problems: cost, and cost uncertainty. Frankly, as I proceed with our consultations across this province in sectors, we hear it over and over and over again: high costs and unpredictable costs—uncertain costs.

We're working to change that, and it's important for the mining sector. I mentioned the Borden mine in Chapleau, as it goes completely electrified. We've got new mines coming on board that need new, more affordable options for energy. Everything is on the table as we proceed with our consultations to make sure that northern towns have operating northern mines, because a strong northern Ontario is a strong Ontario.

INVASIVE SPECIES

Mr. Ian Arthur: Speaker, through you to the Premier: The Conservative government has given us another example of its reckless cutting to incredibly valuable programs. This time they have cut at least nine programs

aimed at stopping invasive species in Ontario. They've made cuts to the Ontarian invasive species council, a group that combats the advance of plant species that harm biodiversity, recreation, agriculture, land values and a whole lot more. In my riding of Kingston and the Islands and all across Ontario, we are fighting poison parsnip, which can cause skin and eye irritation, burns and blistering. The Ontario Federation of Anglers and Hunters said that it was blindsided by these cuts.

Can this government explain why it does not care about the harm that invasive species do to landowners, farmers, gardeners and nature lovers?

Hon. Doug Ford: Minister of Infrastructure.

Hon. Monte McNaughton: Thank you for that question. Through you, Mr. Speaker, I'm sure the member opposite is well aware of the fiscal hole that we were left by your party, quite frankly, and by the Liberals—a \$15-billion deficit. We've had to review every line when it comes to spending throughout government. But we recognize, as a government, the importance of preventing, responding to and removing invasive species in our province.

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I want to highlight an announcement that was made a couple of weeks ago by our outstanding member from Sault Ste. Marie, who announced \$850,000 in the Invasive Species Centre in Sault Ste. Marie. I know that was wholeheartedly endorsed by the Ontario Federation of Anglers and Hunters.

Mr. Speaker, our government is going to continue to promote public education on the negative impacts of invasive species and continue to fight with all means necessary.

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

Mr. Ian Arthur: Speaker, through you again: Invasive species threaten about 20% of Ontario's species at risk. A recent UN report declares that we are facing a biodiversity crisis. We know this government is not concerned about the climate emergency. We now know that they also do not really care about Ontario's natural diversity. These species have an economic impact, so it's interesting to hear about the fiscal reasons for making these cuts that the government has put forward.

Studies reveal that invasive species plants cost billions of dollars, Speaker, billions of dollars in environmental damages, including to agriculture and forestry and anyone who uses the great outdoors in Ontario. Why does this government think it's not important to fund efforts that prevent environmental and economic damage?

Hon. Monte McNaughton: I will remind the member opposite that because of his party and the Liberal government, they added \$200 billion worth of debt.

Mr. Speaker, this is about our government making careful decisions to protect what matters most to the people of Ontario. That's why the budget that was passed yesterday—that you, sir, voted against—added over \$1 billion to the health care budget, added hundreds of millions of dollars to the education budget. Mr. Speaker, those are the

decisions that we have to make. We were faced with a fiscal crisis in this province.

But in saying that, Mr. Speaker, we are continuing to work with the Ontario Federation of Anglers and Hunters. We work very, very closely with them. They're very supportive of the measures that we brought forward to boost our support for anglers and hunters right across this province.

Again, we just announced, the member from Sault Ste. Marie—\$850,000 in the Invasive Species Centre in Sault Ste. Marie—

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

The next question.

BROADBAND INFRASTRUCTURE

Mr. David Piccini: My question is for the Minister of Infrastructure. We know that in a digital world, being disconnected means being disadvantaged. Dropped calls or lost connections put people in danger during times of emergency.

Mr. Speaker, we can all agree that having reliable cellular and broadband access is critical. Despite this, there are many homes, businesses and roadways in my riding and around eastern Ontario where it remains difficult to make calls and access the Internet. This poses a threat to regional economic growth and personal safety.

But no longer, Mr. Speaker: A new day has dawned in rural Ontario. Our government has taken decisive action to end the gap. Can the minister please tell the House about the exciting announcement he made in Roseneath, in my riding, on the 17th?

Hon. Monte McNaughton: Thank you to the amazing member for Northumberland–Peterborough South for that excellent question and for his leadership on this issue.

Mr. Speaker, without a doubt, being disconnected means being disadvantaged. I'm proud to join the member, along with my colleagues the members from Haliburton–Kawartha Lakes–Brock, Renfrew–Nipissing–Pembroke, Peterborough–Kawartha, Stormont–Dundas–South Glengarry and Hastings–Lennox and Addington, to announce our government's commitment of up to \$71 million to the Eastern Ontario Regional Network, known as EORN. I'm happy to say this project will virtually eliminate all cellular dead zones in eastern Ontario.

Mr. Speaker, better connections mean students can do their homework or take an online course, families can stay in touch, emergency services are accessible and businesses of all sizes can truly benefit from the promise of digital opportunity.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Supplementary question? The member for Sarnia–Lambton.

Mr. Robert Bailey: Thank you, Minister, for that excellent response. Our government's commitment to getting rid of cellular and broadband dead zones across Ontario is just one more example of how we're putting people at the centre of everything we do. Mr. Speaker, we know that this is an issue for all rural communities across the province.

Last week, the minister joined me in my riding for an exciting announcement on broadband access in southwestern Ontario. We've all heard stories of students, business owners and family members having to go to a local fast food parking lot to access their WiFi to take care of their business, to do their homework and to connect with loved ones. Mr. Speaker, for 15 years of Liberal neglect, these communities have been routinely abandoned and forgotten.

Can the minister tell us more about this announcement and how our government is helping the people of rural Ontario?

Hon. Monte McNaughton: I have to thank the member of Sarnia–Lambton for that great question and, of course, his leadership in pushing the government to expand broadband across southwestern Ontario.

Mr. Speaker, rural residents and businesses should be able to stream high-speed Internet from their homes, farms and businesses. People should be able to access digital services, get their work done and connect with their loved ones.

Last week, I was joined by the Minister of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs and the members from Hal-dimand–Norfolk, Kitchener South–Hespeler, Kitchener–Conestoga and Sarnia–Lambton to announce our government's commitment of up to \$63.7 million to the South-Western Integrated Fibre Technology project, also known as SWIFT. This is likewise a project to be delivered with support from other levels of government. We're looking forward to the federal government's support for this initiative.

Affordable broadband connectivity is essential to the families and businesses in rural Ontario. With this commitment, we're proving that we are putting people at the centre of every decision that we make and protecting what matters most.

CHILDREN'S SERVICES

Mr. Terence Kernaghan: Speaker, my question is for the individual we call the Premier. This week, the Children's Aid Society London and Middlesex—

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): That comment caused a lot of discomfort in the House. I would ask the member to withdraw.

Mr. Terence Kernaghan: Withdrawn.

This week, the Children's Aid Society London and Middlesex revealed that their deficit will increase to \$2.1 million, even after spending their surplus saved from previous years. Instead of addressing this shortfall, the government is careening ahead with a \$28-million cut from children's aid societies, leaving London Middlesex children's aid workers scrambling to figure out how they are going to cover programming costs.

Why is the Premier making it harder for vulnerable children to get the care they need?

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

Hon. Lisa MacLeod: Child welfare and child protection in the province of Ontario is extremely important to the Premier, as well as myself and our entire government

for the people. That is why we have started consulting with children's aid societies across the province. If the member opposite would like to provide me with additional details after question period, I would be happy to work with him and his office to ensure that we are protecting the children in his community as much as we possibly can. But I want to assure the member that just the other day I spent some time in my own city, the city of Ottawa, working with the children's aid society. We recognize that the model for customary care with Indigenous children has changed over time. We recognize too that we are trying to ensure there is more kin-based care within the system, more so than has ever been in the past.

We will continue to work with children's aid societies as we ensure that there is greater child protection. I'm looking forward to, in the coming days, announcing a child welfare panel that will report directly to me and provide information. I'm also looking forward throughout the coming months to travelling across the province consulting with children's aid societies.

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

Mr. Terence Kernaghan: Back to the Premier: Cutting before consulting sounds like no plan at all. Speaker, this government is plowing forward like a transport truck without a driver. Children and youth in London need a government that supports them instead of cuts that put them further at risk. My constituents keep asking, "Why is the Premier cutting the budget on the backs of London's most vulnerable children and youth?"

Recently the Premier told Travis Dhanraj that families with autistic children are not real people because they didn't vote for him and were "the same people that have their hands in the public trough" and were "getting money from the public...." When is the Premier going to put the brakes on his gravy train, stop pandering to his socially regressive base, reverse his ruthless cuts to vulnerable children and stop insulting hard-working families of children—

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

Interjections.

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

The Minister of Children, Community and Social Services can reply.

Hon. Lisa MacLeod: It is very difficult to take that member seriously when, just a week and a half ago, he said that not one member of this Assembly on this side of the Legislature spoke about transphobia, when actually I gave a ministerial statement to talk about that, and then he had to respond to it—

Mr. Terence Kernaghan: The day before—

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): The member for London North Centre will come to order.

The minister can reply.

Hon. Lisa MacLeod: Speaker, I will not be bullied by that man opposite. I will continue to stand up for the transgender community across Ontario. I will continue to stand up for—

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

Question period today and this week has come to an end.

VISITORS

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): The Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing has informed me he has a point of order.

Hon. Steve Clark: I'd like to introduce to you, and through you, to members of the Legislative Assembly, the warden of the united counties of Leeds and Grenville and the mayor of Edwardsburg/Cardinal, His Worship Mayor Pat Sayeau. Welcome to Queen's Park.

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

Hon. Caroline Mulroney: I'd also like to introduce the honourable Peter Van Loan, who has joined us today in the Legislature.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Before I recess the House, I have to remind the members that, after repeated calls to order, I had to warn a number of members. The warnings carry over into the afternoon and evening sittings, if applicable.

I warned the member for King–Vaughan, I warned the member for Waterloo, I warned the member for Essex, and I warned the member for Hamilton East–Stoney Creek.

This House stands in recess until 1 p.m.

The House recessed from 1152 to 1300.

INTRODUCTION OF VISITORS

Mr. Joel Harden: I'm expecting quite a few more disability rights activists to arrive, so I'll wait until they come—and maybe even for my remarks here this afternoon—to recognize them, but I do want to welcome Emily Daigle. It's nice to see you there, especially with that Raptors hat on. Good to see you.

Ms. Sandy Shaw: Later today, we'll be debating my private member's bill, the Nancy Rose Act, so I'm pleased to welcome those joining us today: Dr. Mark Greenberg, who is the co-chair of the provincial palliative care steering committee; Dr. Dave Lysecki, who is the pediatric palliative medicine program lead at McMaster; Clare Freeman, who is the executive director of the Bob Kemp Hospice; Danielle Zucchet, who is a bereaved family member and on the family advisory council; Dr. Angelo Mikrogianakis, the chair of pediatrics at McMaster Children's Hospital; Megan Wright, who is the executive director of Roger Neilson House; Dr. Adam Rapoport, the medical director of the pediatric advanced care team for the Hospital for Sick Children; Valerie McDonald and Julie Drury, both on the family advisory council; and Rauni Salminen, the CEO of Emily's House.

Welcome to Queen's Park and thanks for your support.

Ms. Sara Singh: I believe I see Carol-Ann Schafer up in the gallery there, who is a disability rights activist as well, so I just want to introduce her to the people's House.

Mrs. Gila Martow: Today, we have Sherry Caldwell and her daughter Ashley, as well as their friends Ipek Kabatas and Ipek's son Dante Wellington. They're also activists on behalf of the children with multiple medical challenges. Thank you for visiting Queen's Park once again.

Ms. Rima Berns-McGown: I'd like to welcome to Queen's Park a lovely family from my riding: Lark Barker, David Zivot and Sandino Campos. Welcome to Queen's Park.

MEMBERS' STATEMENTS

ARTS AND CULTURAL FUNDING

Ms. Peggy Sattler: Festival season is upon us, and over the next few months, London will become a vibrant hub of arts, culture, music, food, crafts and community, attracting tourists, creating jobs and stimulating our local economy. But some dark clouds are hanging over London's festivals this summer, and I don't mean the weather.

The Conservative government's delay in announcing Celebrate Ontario grants is jeopardizing the success of our amazing festivals, especially two of our biggest events. Sunfest, a glorious festival that has been bringing the world to London for 25 years, and Rock the Park, a lively four-day music festival that has raised millions for local charities over 15 years, are still waiting to hear whether their grants have been approved.

After repeated questions from my staff, the minister's office told us the grants would be announced last week. Yesterday, they said they are "looking into it." This is extremely frustrating for the organizers of these festivals, which annually draw visitors from across the region and beyond, and generate millions in tourism spending. Without vital Celebrate Ontario funding, Sunfest and Rock the Park have had to pull back advertising and promotions, which could reduce attendance and lessen economic impact.

But what is most disturbing is that Celebrate Ontario grants are being rolled out in Brantford, Owen Sound, Nipissing, Muskoka, Oakville and more—all communities represented by Conservative MPPs. I call on this government to prove that it is not playing politics with festival funding and release London's grants today.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Members' statements?

Interjection.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): You just had a statement. Oh, you had an introduction. I apologize.

PEDIATRIC PALLIATIVE CARE

Ms. Sandy Shaw: Later today, we will be debating the Nancy Rose Act, which is intended to provide for the development and implementation of a pediatric palliative hospital care strategy for the province of Ontario. Mercifully, the number of children who need palliative or end-of-life care is relatively small, yet the impact of caring for a dying child has a devastating and long-term effect on their families.

This bill is named after my sister, who died of leukemia in 1975. I spoke with my parents this morning, Mr. Speaker, and my mom and dad wanted me to tell you all that they're sorry they couldn't be here. But they offer this

message: “Here’s hoping that some other parents will be helped by this and Nancy didn’t die in vain.”

We’ve received an outpouring of letters from bereaved families who feel the very same about the loss of their child. For parents, bereavement never ends. I think of Mark and his daughter, Jessica; Julie and her daughter, Katie; Valerie and her daughter, Natalie; Karen and her son, Reese; Dana and her son, Zoe; Heather and her son, Clark; Karla and her daughter, May; Danielle and her son, Keaton; and Graeme and his daughter, Lidia.

Hopefully, we will get all-party support later today on behalf of these families and on behalf of all of the families whose children are facing a life-limiting or a life-ending disease.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): I say thank you to the member for Hamilton West–Ancaster–Dundas. Sorry about the confusion.

COMMUNITY CARE ST. CATHARINES AND THOROLD

Mrs. Jennifer (Jennie) Stevens: Speaker, 2019 is a significant year for St. Catharines and Niagara. Community Care St. Catharines and Thorold is celebrating 100 years of uninterrupted service and supports to the less advantaged in the community of St. Catharines. In the mid 1980s, recognizing an unmet need, the agency opened a branch office in the neighbouring city of Thorold.

What started with a single pot of soup delivered to the homes of soldiers returning from World War I in 1919 has grown to 21 services and supports to those who are struggling to make ends meet. Community Care services residents from across the Niagara region who need assistance with anything from emergency services to food, medical programs, housing security and much, much more.

During this centennial year, Community Care recognizes, acknowledges and celebrates the leadership of strong women who have led the organization through some challenging times, working with dedicated staff and volunteers to make a difference. It recognizes, acknowledges and celebrates the support of a caring community working together in partnership to ensure that no one is denied the luxury of a roof over their head, that everyone has the ability to tuck into a warm bed with a full tummy each and every night.

With over 200 volunteers every single week, it is evident that our community members are simply there to graciously help others. Community Care’s vision for a “healthy, caring community where everyone lives with dignity and purpose” is one that resonates with me deeply.

Thank you to the Community Care CEO, Betty-Lou Souter, and thank you to every staff member and every volunteer for continuing to expand your programs. Thank you for continually treating our residents with the dignity they deserve. Happy 100th anniversary to Community Care.

ANNIVERSARY OF SIKH MASSACRE

Mr. Gurratan Singh: For the last few days, I’ve had a lot of trouble sleeping. All I could think about is what June

1 represents: artillery firing and destroying the sovereign seat of the Sikh people, the Akal Takhat; bullets marring the beautiful golden facade of the Harmandir Sahib, the Golden Temple; the blood of thousands of innocents filling the serene pool that surrounds it, the sarovar; imagining the terror when, 35 years to this very day, in June 1984, as Sikhs gathered to commemorate the sacrifice of our fifth guru, the Indian government launched a military invasion into the Darbar Sahib complex in Amritsar, along with more than 40 other gurdwaras throughout Punjab, killing thousands of innocent worshippers and burning and looting our libraries, all under a complete media blackout.

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Imagine attending a place that was so important to the heart of your religion—your masjid during Eid, your church during Christmas, your mandhir during Diwali—that is the time the Indian government chose to attack the Darbar Sahib complex.

But more than just kill and destroy, in the words of Dr. Joyce Pettigrew, the Indian government’s actions were “to suppress the culture of a people, to attack their heart, to strike a blow at their spirit and self-confidence.”

Well, 35 years later, we stand unbroken. We stand tall and we say, “We will never forget.”

MOTIONS

HOUSE SITTINGS

Mr. Stephen Lecce: I move that, pursuant to standing order 6(c)(iii), the House shall meet from 6 p.m. to 12 midnight on Thursday, May 30, 2019, for the purpose of considering government business.

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

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

All those opposed will please say “nay.”

In my opinion, the ayes have it.

M^{me} France Gélinas: On division.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Carried on division.

Motion agreed to.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): It is now time for petitions.

PETITIONS

CELIAC DISEASE

M^{me} France Gélinas: I would like to thank the Ontario branch of the Canadian Celiac Association for sending me this petition. We are now at 3,098 signatures. It reads as follows:

“To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“Whereas the IgA TTG blood screening is the internationally recognized standard as the first step in diagnosing a person with celiac disease;

“Whereas celiac disease is an autoimmune disease that can strike people with a genetic predisposition at any time of life and presents with a large variety of non-specific signs and symptoms;

“Whereas many individuals, such as family members of diagnosed celiacs, are at higher risk and pre-symptomatic screening is advised;

“Whereas covering the cost of the simple test would dramatically reduce wait times to diagnosis, save millions to the health care system due to misdiagnoses, unnecessary testing and serious complications from untreated celiac disease and reduce the painful suffering and health decline of thousands of individuals;

“Whereas Ontario is the only province in Canada not to cover this blood test;”

They “petition the Legislative Assembly to cover the cost of the diagnostic blood test (IgA TTG) for celiac disease for those who show symptoms, are a first-degree relative or have an associated condition.”

I support this petition and will affix my name to it and ask page Christopher to give it to the Clerk.

PUBLIC HEALTH

Mr. Faisal Hassan: I have a petition here. I thank the community of York South–Weston for giving me this petition today: the staff of the food bank, some of our neighbourhood and community services, Weston Area Emergency Support, York Memorial food bank and other food banks, and also the York Federation of Students Food Support Centre.

This petition is entitled “Stop the Massive Cuts to Public Health.

“Whereas cuts to public health disproportionately impact low-income people, including the more than 24,000 North York community members who rely on food banks each year, many of whom depend on student nutrition programs, health clinics, dental clinics and other public health initiatives;

“Whereas more than 25% of food bank clients in North York are children and youth under the age of 18;

“Whereas public health is a key partner in many of the vital initiatives provided by social service agencies that support people with low incomes across North York;

“Whereas public health and preventative health care saves lives and taxpayer dollars;

“We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to stop the cuts to public health and invest in services that save lives.”

I fully support this petition. I’ll be affixing my signature to it and providing it to page Richelle to deliver to the table.

E-LEARNING

Mr. Tom Rakocevic: I have a petition here from an incredible student in my riding named Lisa Doan, and it says:

“Whereas the Ministry of Education has stated in its plan entitled Education that Works for You that secondary school students will be required to take a minimum of four e-learning credits out of the 30 credits needed to fulfill the requirements of achieving their Ontario secondary school diploma (OSSD), effective in the 2020-21 school year;

“Whereas class sizes for e-learning classes will follow an average 35:1 student-to-teacher ratio and result in a loss of teaching positions and less individualized learning experiences;

“Whereas a number of students in remote areas across Ontario may not have access to Internet service necessary for the completion of an e-learning course; and

“Whereas the Ontario eLearning Consortium(OeLC) has stated previously on its website, in regard to e-learning classes, that ‘e-learning may not be for everyone. In fact, some studies show that e-learning has a higher dropout rate than regular face-to-face programs. Often, the main cause is that some students may not be well suited to this form of learning’;

“We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario that the Ministry of Education reverse and amend its current policy, which is proposed to take effect in the 2020-21 school year, that mandates that all secondary school students will be required to take a minimum of four e-learning courses out of the 30 credits needed to fulfill the requirements of achieving their OSSD.”

I support this petition, will be signing my name to it and giving it to page Felipe.

LEGAL AID

Ms. Bhutla Karpoche: I’d like to thank the good folks at Romero House in my riding for this petition that is titled, “Ensure that Low-Income Ontarians Have Access to Justice.

“To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“Whereas the government of Ontario has cut the funding for Legal Aid Ontario by almost one third;

“Whereas provincial funding for the immigration and refugee law program at Legal Aid Ontario has been completely cut;

“Whereas access to legal aid is essential to low-income Ontarians who are facing legal proceedings such as in immigration, criminal, family, mental health, poverty law and child protection cases;

“Whereas vulnerable populations like refugees will be left to represent themselves in a complex and already overburdened legal system, where a negative decision leads to deportation to countries where lives may be at risk;

“Whereas the cuts will lead to backlogs and delays throughout the justice system, causing chaos in the courts and costing taxpayers more, not less;

“We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to reverse the cuts to Legal Aid Ontario that have already begun to impact the most vulnerable people in Ontario, including immigrants and refugees.”

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

STUDENT SAFETY

Ms. Peggy Sattler: I am thrilled to present this petition from London West Girls' Government, who are with us again in the gallery this afternoon. It has been signed by hundreds of Londoners, and it reads as follows:

"To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas the government of Ontario has a responsibility to provide education in a way that is equitable and inclusive; and

"Whereas one in seven Canadian girls has either left school early or missed school entirely because she did not have access to period products and one third of Canadian women under 25 have struggled to afford menstrual products, and menstrual products are a necessity, not a luxury; and

"Whereas school dress codes are seen by experts as having an unequal impact on male and female students with typically female clothing being more strictly regulated, girls being held morally accountable for the actions of other students in response to their clothing, and girls being disproportionately penalized for dress code violations; and

"Whereas one in three women and one in six men will experience sexual assault in their lifetime, and women are at the greatest risk of experiencing sexual assault between the ages of 15 and 24, and knowing how to talk about these incidents is critical to getting support; and

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"Whereas class size increases will reduce the number of trained professionals and educators who are available in schools to support students in learning about healthy relationships and in dealing with dating violence and sexual violence;

"Therefore we, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly as follows:

"That the Legislative Assembly increase funding for sexual assault centres to ensure that girls and young women have access to counselling and support, and require all school boards to:

"—provide free menstrual products to all students who may require them in both elementary and secondary schools;

"—involve students in the development and annual review of student dress codes;

"—incorporate the concept of consent in all curriculums about healthy relationships, and implement evidence-based programs about healthy relationships that are specific to boys and young men;

"—address issues around gender identity, sexual orientation and understanding of self in age-appropriate ways beginning in grade 3, and involve community partners in the delivery of health and physical education curriculums with regard to these topics;

"—provide resources and staff training to support students who have experienced dating violence or sexual violence; and

"—reverse class size increases."

I couldn't agree with this petition more. I affix my signature to it and will give it to page Julien to take to the table.

LIBRARY SERVICES

Ms. Doly Begum: I'd like to thank the individuals from Scarborough Southwest for bringing this petition forward.

"To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas, according to the statement of public library funding dated Thursday, April 18, 2019, by the Minister of Tourism, Culture and Sport, the Honourable Michael Tibollo, we appreciate that base funding for public libraries will be maintained, we call into question the statement that the Ontario Library Service agencies 'have no involvement in day-to-day operations of Ontario's public libraries';

"Whereas Ontario Library Service—North and Southern Ontario Library Service provide the support for inter-library loans, staff and board training, bulk purchasing, collaborative programming, technological supports, our shared electronic book collection and our shared catalogue database itself;

"Whereas we question how involved the agencies need to be in order to be considered crucial for the day-to-day operations of all provincial libraries, but even more specifically for small, northern and rural libraries;

"Whereas value for money and respect for taxpayer dollars are the umbrella under which the agencies operate—allowing libraries to share resources and expertise in an efficient and cost-effective manner—while also allowing them to best serve their individual communities;

"We, the undersigned, therefore petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"—for the reinstatement of funding to the Ontario Library Service (north and south) agencies to, at minimum, the 2017-18 funding levels, in order for these agencies to continue the day-to-day support of Ontario public library services;

"—to continue to maintain base funding for Ontario public libraries."

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

FISH AND WILDLIFE MANAGEMENT

Mr. Mike Harris: I have a long-standing petition that I know the Legislature loves to hear, and I'd love to read it again today.

"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 endorse this petition. I've already affixed my signature. I present it to page Alexis to bring to the Clerks.

LIBRARY SERVICES

Ms. Judith Monteith-Farrell: I'd like to thank the communities of Red Rock, Dryden, Oxdrift, Ignace, Vermilion Bay, Nipigon and Atikokan for gathering the signatures on this petition.

"Whereas Ontario Library Service—North and Southern Ontario Library Service provide the support for inter-library loans, staff and board training, bulk purchasing, collaborative programming, technological supports, our shared electronic book collection and our shared catalogue database itself...;

"Whereas value for money and respect for taxpayer dollars are the umbrella under which the agencies operate—allowing libraries to share resources and expertise in an efficient and cost-effective manner—while also allowing them to best serve their individual communities;

"We, the undersigned, therefore petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"—for the reinstatement of funding to the Ontario Library Service (north and south) agencies to, at minimum, the 2017-18 funding levels, in order for these agencies to continue the day-to-day support of Ontario public library services;

"—to continue to maintain base funding for Ontario public libraries."

I happily sign this petition and will give it to page Julien to bring to the Clerk.

TORONTO TRANSIT COMMISSION

Ms. Rima Berns-McGown: "To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas the TTC has owned, operated and maintained Toronto's public transit system since 1921; and

"Whereas the people of Toronto have paid for the TTC at the fare box and through their property taxes; and

"Whereas breaking up the subway will mean higher fares, reduced service and less say for transit riders; and

"Whereas the TTC is accountable to the people of Toronto because elected Toronto city councillors sit on its board;

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

"Reject legislation that allows for the breakup and sell-off of any aspect of the TTC to the province of Ontario, and reject the privatization or contracting out of any part of the TTC;

"Match the city of Toronto's financial contribution to the TTC so transit riders can have improved service and affordable fares."

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

LONG-TERM CARE

Ms. Teresa J. Armstrong: I'd like to thank Betty Miller of Niagara-on-the-Lake for returning this petition to the Legislative Assembly.

"Time to Care Act—Bill 13.

"To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

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

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

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

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

I fully support this petition, sign it and give it to page Richelle.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): That concludes the time we have available for petitions this afternoon.

PRIVATE MEMBERS' PUBLIC BUSINESS

ACCESSIBILITY FOR PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES

Mr. Joel Harden: I'd like to move the following motion before the House, motion 68, that, in the opinion of this House, the government of Ontario should release a plan of action on accessibility in response to David Onley's review of the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act that includes, but is not limited to, a commitment to implement new standards for the built environment, stronger enforcement of the act, accessibility training for design professionals, and an assurance that public money is never again used to create new accessibility barriers.

Interruption.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): I'm going to ask our visitors to refrain from clapping or making any comment or any noise. We're delighted to have you here, but we need to allow the members to debate.

Mr. Harden has moved private member's notice of motion number 68. Pursuant to standing order 98, the member has 12 minutes for his presentation.

Once again, I recognize the member for Ottawa Centre.

Mr. Joel Harden: I want to thank my friends in the accessibility gallery and I want to thank my friends in the members' gallery and the folks in the public gallery who have come here today.

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There are a few people I want to acknowledge, Speaker, off the top, because I wouldn't be doing my job as a critic if our office didn't take the time over the last number of months to meet with people with lived experience, and people helping folks in the field. I want to acknowledge Anne Mason, Sherry Caldwell, Ashley Caldwell, Carol-Ann Schafer, Richard Aubrey, Peter Vambe, Gerry Boily, Michele Gardner, Farrah Sattaur, Ryan Hooey, Rahima Mulla, Sinead Zalitach, Kirsten Doyle, Lark Barker, David Zivot and their son Sandino Campos. If I've missed anybody—Emily, we acknowledged you and your power earlier. Thank you for coming again. Thank you all for being here; thank you indeed.

Interjections.

Mr. Joel Harden: We get to clap for you this time.

Speaker, with your indulgence, I'd like to begin with a gesture of unanimous consent. One of the first things that happened to me was that the great David Lepofsky and Thea Kurdi gave me a t-shirt. I know the rules of the House are such that for a t-shirt with lettering on it, we need to ask for unanimous consent to wear it. It reads, "Disability justice is love." I'd like to wear this as I make my remarks.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): The member for Ottawa Centre is seeking unanimous consent of the House to wear a t-shirt while he makes his presentation. Agreed? Agreed.

Mr. Joel Harden: I wore an extra t-shirt just in case. Thank you, Speaker, and thank you, colleagues. Thank you, David, and thank you, Thea, for the t-shirt.

I begin wanting to wear this shirt because one of the people who got me started in politics was Jack Layton. Some of his closing words to Canadians before Jack died were: "Love is better than anger. Hope is better than fear. Optimism is better than despair. So let us be loving, hopeful and optimistic. And we'll change the world." I think that's a fitting note on which to begin, Speaker, captured, I think, by the shirt David and Thea gave to me, because, as I think about what's before us, given David Onley's report—according to Mr. Onley, we're about 30% of the way there to having a truly accessible province with a lot of row to hoe and a lot of barriers that remain.

Minister Cho has mentioned this quotation in the House, and I'll mention it again too. I think it's a powerful one from Mr. Onley's report. Mr. Onley wrote, "Every day, in every community in Ontario, people with disabilities encounter formidable barriers to participation in the

vast opportunities this province affords its residents—its able-bodied residents.... For most disabled persons," however, "Ontario is not a place of opportunity but one of countless, dispiriting, soul-crushing barriers." That captures succinctly what I've heard from friends who have lived experience and what, quite frankly, people with disabilities are looking to this Legislature to do, and that's to act with some urgency.

The Onley report is a call to action like recent climate change reports, quite frankly, are a call to action. What we know is that right now, 1.9 million people in the province of Ontario have a disability of one kind or another, and attached to them are families, loved ones and friends. So I would like to say, as the critic for people with disabilities in this building, that this isn't just an issue for anyone; this is an issue for all of us. So far as we maintain services, building infrastructure, anything in this province which discriminates against anyone, it's a human rights matter.

As one person who deputed to a town hall we hosted earlier in April said, "Each and every one of us is one incident away from disability or trauma that requires physical or mental health supports." We also, Speaker, live in an aging society. In an aging society, we need now to be foreseeing the challenges that we have to have met in order to accommodate that aging society.

I want to talk, for the remainder of my time, about what I've heard directly from folks with disabilities who have been so gracious as to inform me, our office and our party about what they believe needs to be done. I want to talk about Blaine Cameron, from back home—hi, Blaine. Blaine is in the chapter of Ottawa ACORN. ACORN is an organization that fights for poor people in this province, in this country and indeed around the world. One of my favourite experiences with Blaine was street canvassing and farmers' market canvassing. Blaine lives in a scooter—lives in a powered wheelchair. What I found increasingly evident to me, every time I went out with Blaine—because he is easily, and I'm sorry for picking favourites, friends in Ottawa, the most charismatic canvasser we have back home—is that he is unable to go door to door because of the built infrastructure of our city in Ottawa. But he kills at farmers' markets, Mr. Speaker. The man cannot keep leaflets in his hands. The man gets donations in person constantly because of how powerfully he describes the need for social and economic justice. And what the people of Ottawa are missing, Speaker, given our built infrastructure, is the chance to see Blaine at the door doing what he does best: talking justice and talking fairness. We're missing out on that because of the way in which Ottawa is designed and the way in which our province is designed.

I want to talk about Rahima Mulla, whom I met in the hall yesterday and whom we've interacted with before. I know that members in the government caucus have met with Rahima. She doesn't get to come here very often to Queen's Park, Speaker, because there are not always appropriate accessible parking spaces for her. She finds—as I've talked to some of my friends up in the accessibility gallery—the narrow runway up there to be very tricky to

negotiate. That's work we have to do, quite frankly, in this building.

I want to talk about Neil, whom I met a number of days ago, earlier this week, a lovely gentleman who came in with a walker. Neil asked me to walk him into the members' gallery over there and confided to me as we were walking up the aisle that he really didn't feel it was appropriate that there were stairs in front of the members' gallery on the floor. He looked forward to a day when people with accessibility needs could be seated on the floor, like when the great Steven Fletcher, a member of the federal Conservative caucus, took his place in the House of Commons, as a person who lives in a wheelchair, on the floor. I look forward to the way in which we can make this building more open so that can happen.

I also want to talk about what we've learned in the last number of months from people who have episodic disabilities, Speaker, or what some might call hidden disabilities. I want to talk about Shanthiya Baheerathan, who shared a podium with me earlier this week as she talked about, as a student, what it was like for her to seek accommodation at Ryerson University for her learning disabilities and how difficult it was to self-advocate in an institution which—my experience with Ryerson as an able-bodied person has been quite good, when I've been faculty and visiting and running programs there. But the daily struggle to prove her disability because of the nature in which it fluctuates was extremely difficult for her.

Odelia Bay, who is a scholar at Osgoode Hall Law School who has also been here and has testified before the town hall we held earlier in April, has said the same thing: that we need to have an expanded concept of what disabilities are.

Other folks I've met in the time that I've had here—and it's thanks to MPP Andrea Khanjin from Barrie–Innisfil, who hosted a reception for people from sickle cell Ontario. Sickle cell disease is something that not enough of us are aware of, Speaker. It is, to sight, an invisible disease. But what I've been very saddened to learn, particularly for members of Black and Brown racialized communities, is that when they admit themselves to emergency rooms in great trauma, suffering incredible pain, which is hard for most people to understand, as it has been explained to me, sometimes they're treated with suspicion upon admission.

I'm not impugning the motives of any of our health care professionals. I love them. I'm married to one. I love the work they do. But the reality of people living with sickle cell disease is such that the University Health researchers in this great city of Toronto have begun to do epidemiological studies to figure out why it is that people are treated differently when they contact their primary health care system when they have black or brown skin. In the most sad of cases, we've had people suffer fatalities or serious injuries because they haven't been able to get the health care they need.

Speaker, I look forward to the debate on this motion. I think it's an opportunity for us as a Legislature to say, yes, we're ready. We're ready to act on Mr. Onley's report. I salute the fact that the minister has spoken with urgency

on the need of work to be done in this place, and I'm here to support you in that work, but what I like about the motion that I proposed for our consideration today is that it tells us: Actually, let's set some timelines. Let's set some goals. Let's require of people who are being trained to design our public infrastructure in our buildings that they should never again do that in a way that discriminates against people with disabilities.

Thank you, Thea, and thank you, David Lepofsky, and thank you, folks who are here with us today, for all of your advice in that regard. And never let any child feel in this province ever again that their learning doesn't matter to us. Yes, I'm looking at Lark Barker over there, who advocates for dyslexia, people who have stood by children who have felt humiliated as they tried to advance in the public education system, and you've been there for them.

As a province, we need to generalize that right across the board. We need to be there for brain-injured people. We need to be there for everybody who deserves what, quite frankly, socialism means for me: an equal-opportunity society where everybody has the chance to develop themselves to their utmost ability and contribute to this wonderful society in which we live. That's the just society that I first saw embodied in heroes of mine like Jack Layton, Libby Davies, Olivia Chow and others.

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When it comes to advocating for people with disabilities, that is something we are perfectly poised to do.

Interjection.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Jennifer K. French): The member from York Centre will come to order.

Mr. Joel Harden: On a closing note, because I know the member who was just heckling is a Raptors fan just like myself, on a note of levity, I would invite the government to consider a potential revenue source for you to fund a serious accessibility reserve. We know tonight is game one of the NBA finals. We know, unfortunately, that at the moment, businesses can deduct 50% of the cost of tickets against their business income. I've got a PhD in political economy, so I ran some numbers, given what people are assessing the cost of tickets to be. What that leads me to believe, Speaker, is that tonight, as we celebrate Canada's team, about \$45 million is being taken out of provincial coffers in write-offs.

Here's what I would propose to the minister or to the government. I will happily put on a tie, look respectable and go with you to any employer in this province and ask them, "Do you need that business write-off, or do we need that money to make sure that we can make every building in this province accessible, for our health care, our education, our transportation services, and so that this place is open and accessible for people with disabilities?" That is a revenue source we could tap, and I'm here to help you make it happen.

Thanks for listening. I look forward to the debate.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Jennifer K. French): Further debate?

Hon. Raymond Sung Joon Cho: Madam Speaker, I would also like to warmly welcome all the visitors in the Speaker's lounge. Welcome to Queen's Park.

I'm looking forward to discussing this motion because there's lots of work that needs to be done to tear down barriers in Ontario. We all agree on this.

David Onley's report talked about these barriers. He called them "soul-crushing barriers," and Mr. Onley was not the only one who pointed this out. Previous AODA reviews done by Charles Beer and Mayo Moran pointed out many of the same barriers. After 15 years of Liberal government and three reports, not enough progress has been made. In Mr. Onley's words, "Previous governments have promised much but delivered less than they should have." He also points out that while rules and regulations are crucial, what is also required to eliminate barriers is a change of heart.

We understand the good intention of this motion, but these solutions lead to more duplication, red tape and high costs for business. One of the barriers that Mr. Onley talks about is a lack of economic opportunities for Ontarians with disabilities. So while we are making Ontario more accessible, we have to proceed carefully. We do not want to put unnecessary red tape and regulations on business. This will actually harm people with disabilities who are seeking employment by limiting their economic opportunities. To put this in perspective, the employment rate for people with disabilities in Ontario is only 58%, compared to 81% for those without disabilities.

Another issue is that of AODA enforcement. In Ontario, there are about 400,000 organizations that are required to comply with the AODA, including small businesses, large businesses, non-profits and governments. When we audit those that are not meeting the AODA requirements, we have found that an extraordinarily high number, about 96%, voluntarily comply once they learn what their obligations are. Isn't it better that we achieve compliance by reaching out and working with businesses and organizations rather than fining small businesses and driving them out of business?

Madam Speaker, Mr. Onley delivered a thorough and thoughtful report about the barriers many Ontarians face. Since I received the report, my ministry staff have been working across government and with stakeholders to address many of his concerns. Some of his recommendations, like restarting the SDCs, were an opportunity to take action quickly, but other concerns needed greater consideration and consultation to properly address. As the minister, it's my duty to ensure that we take the appropriate time to carefully consider his recommendations.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Jennifer K. French): Further debate?

Mr. Chris Glover: It's an honour to rise today. I'd like to begin my remarks by introducing almost 20 people from Spadina-Fort York and from the city of Toronto who have joined us to be part of this debate. I want to especially thank the MPP for Ottawa Centre, Joel Harden, for bringing forward this motion. I'll introduce the people who are here. We've got Paula Boutis, Heather Vickers-Wong, Madora Rana, Robert Boileau, Alicia Boileau, Mitchell Feinman, Erica Howard, Deborah Fletcher, Dante Wellington, Sherry Caldwell, Ashley Caldwell, Ipek

Kabatas, Varla Anne Abrams, Tracy Schmitt—who is also known as "Unstoppable Tracy"—Kati Israel, Michau van Speyk.

I'd like to thank them all for joining us today. Could we give a round of applause to the people who've joined us for this debate?

Applause.

Mr. Chris Glover: When I became a school board trustee in 2010, I organized a group that was called the Special Education Forum, and for eight years we advocated for changes to the school system to make it more accessible. I want to thank the people who came to those meetings—and many of them are here in this room—because they taught me about what it's like, or gave some glimpse of what it's like, to be a person with disabilities. Some of the most important lessons I learned from some students. There were two students in particular, Terrence Bishundayal and Sarah Jama from Martingrove Collegiate, which is the most accessible high school in Etobicoke. They came one day and they talked about their day in that school.

Terrence pointed out something. He said that the nice thing about that school is that the corners in the corridors are cut at 45 degrees, which, when you're using an electric wheelchair, makes it much easier to see people coming from another direction so you avoid collisions. The other thing that he pointed out—and I had been a trustee for a few years at this time and I had never noticed it: The front door to that school was not accessible. There was a hot dog stand, and that hot dog vendor is legendary at Martingrove Collegiate. He said that sometimes he had to take his wheelchair down the grassy slope to get to the hot dog vendor, and it was hazardous. I went to the school the next day and I met him. He was sitting in his chair at the top of the steps, and there were snowbanks on either side, so he actually could not get down to the hot dog vendor, and so he had to get one of his friends to go down. This was the front entrance to the most accessible high school in Etobicoke. So we started advocating.

The other thing that I learned through that group and from the disability advocates I'd been working with is the amount of persistence it takes to make change. It took us four years to finally get an accessible ramp on the front entrance of that school, but finally it was done.

The other person who taught me a lot was Sarah Jama. She's the founder of the Disability Justice Network of Ontario. She taught me about something called universal design. Every Ontario should know this term, "universal design." Universal design means that when you're designing a building, you design it so that everybody can use it.

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Just imagine, for example, if you built a building that only had women's washrooms and what that would mean for men who wanted to be employed, potentially, in that building. Where would they go? How would they possibly get employment in that building? So you've got to think. If you're building a building, you've got to make it for everybody, for anybody. Whether you're using a walker or wheelchair, or whether you're walking in, or whether

you have a visual impairment or an auditory impairment, you've got to build a building that makes it possible for everybody to be there.

A big part of the problem that comes from not making our buildings with universal design is the unemployment rate. The employment rate among people with disabilities is only 55%, and it's shameful in this province that we have allowed this to go on. Part of the reason for that, a big part of the reason—and we had a discussion in the committee last week where we were talking about transit—is that our buildings are not accessible and our transit systems are not fully accessible. That's why it's so hard for people to get to work if you have disability.

So when we talk about constructing things, when we're building our subway infrastructure, our buses, we've got to make sure that people with disabilities are going to be able to get to work so that they can have employment and get all the benefits that come with employment, including a life that's not lived in poverty, the social network, all the things you need work for.

The other group that we've been working with over the years, the big issue that we've been focusing on at this disability advocacy group is employment. I mentioned that it's only 55% of people with disabilities; that drops to 26% of people with intellectual disabilities. And that is a real shame.

In Washington state, 87% of people with intellectual disabilities have paid employment versus 26% here in Ontario, which means that 60% of people with intellectual disabilities have the potential to work but we have not designed our society in order to invite them and to make our workplaces welcoming to them. So that's something we really need to focus on, because that's an incredible amount of potential that is being lost, and it's lives that are being disrupted and not being lived to their fullest extent, because of the way that we have designed our society.

Let's see. When the Minister for Seniors and Accessibility was talking about soul-crushing barriers, making inaccessible spaces, making inaccessible transit systems, making inaccessible buildings—these are some of those soul-crushing barriers. We may not think of it because we may not be affected by the design of the buildings that we're looking at, but I would invite all of the members in this House to please listen to people with disabilities. I've learned so much from listening to people like Terrence Bishundayal and Sarah Jama to understand what it means to have a universally designed society where everybody can reach their full potential.

I'm so thankful to the member from Ottawa Centre for bringing forward this motion. I'm absolutely going to support it and I hope the members opposite will support it as well.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Jennifer K. French): Further debate?

Mr. Rudy Cuzzetto: I'm proud to rise here today to speak to the motion of accessibility. As the minister has already noted, this is not the time to introduce more regulations and more red tape that will just create barriers for new economic opportunities. As David Onley himself

said in his report, “the most well-intended rules and regulations sometimes do not get it entirely right.”

I know that the minister is doing a great job working with stakeholders to chart the best path forward to improve accessibility in Ontario. As recognized by Mr. Onley, the built environment continues to be challenging for people with disabilities and for seniors. Our government is taking action on building the environment.

Just last week on May 23, the minister announced that we are partnering with the Rick Hansen Foundation to launch the Rick Hansen Foundation Accessibility Certification program in communities across Ontario. Speaker, the Rick Hansen Foundation is a trusted partner with expertise in this field. With \$1.3 million invested over two years, this program will prepare accessibility ratings of businesses and public buildings, and determine the best way to remove barriers for people with disabilities.

Our investment will see ratings done in approximately 250 buildings across Ontario. This program will complement the work we're doing to reach out and work with businesses and organizations across Ontario, to ensure that they are understanding how they can make their businesses more accessible, and how to comply with the AODA.

To remove barriers on employment, our Employers' Partnership Table is working to support and create new job opportunities for people with disabilities. The table includes 17 members, representing a range of small, medium and large businesses across Ontario. They're now working on developing sector-specific business cases—to hire people with disabilities—that will be shared with businesses across Ontario, to help them see the benefits of employing people with disabilities.

About 50% of people with disabilities have a post-secondary education, yet unemployment remains very high in this community. Even though employers are finding that hiring people with disabilities improves the bottom line and increases productivity, much more work needs to be done to raise awareness. A single step can be a barrier for people with certain disabilities, but so is not having a job when you are ready and willing to work.

Our government will also continue to outreach with people with disabilities, and consult with non-profits and industry groups on how to improve accessibility in Ontario. We will continue to consult with businesses and business associations through the Employers' Partnership Table.

Our goal is to make Ontario open for business for everyone. This is meaningful work that is already under way to improve the lives of people with disabilities. To help businesses better understand the benefits of accessibility, the ministry has taken steps to begin to redesign their website, to make it a more comprehensive one-stop shop on accessibility for the public and businesses, as recommended by Mr. Onley in his report.

In addition to providing resources on accessibility requirements and regulations, we have posted accessibility resources for businesses, to help them understand the

benefits of accessibility and break down barriers for people with disabilities.

A business that commits to accessibility sends a strong message that people with disabilities are welcome. For this reason, it is much more likely to attract people with disabilities and their families. This goes for any and all businesses in Ontario that are providing goods and services to the public.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Jennifer K. French): Further debate?

Ms. Teresa J. Armstrong: It is truly always an honour to rise in this Legislature on behalf of my constituents of London–Fanshawe. It brings me great pleasure today to speak in support of my colleague's bill, the member from Ottawa Centre's motion taking action on accessibility with regard to the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act review by the Honourable David Onley, Ontario's 28th Lieutenant Governor. I had the honour of being in the Legislature when the Honourable David Onley was serving as Lieutenant Governor.

Back in 2005—and that was before I was here—all parties at the time in the Legislature unanimously supported the AODA Act. They actually said, “This is not a partisan issue. It's a non-partisan issue, and we're all on board. We all agree unanimously that this needs to happen, and it needs to happen by 2025.”

Every three years, they appoint an independent reviewer of the progress of what has been going on, on this act. In 2017, Lieutenant Governor David Onley was appointed to review the act and report back on what was happening.

He did his homework. He went out and toured the province, and he spoke to people. Then he obviously came up with a conclusion on what was reported.

That's what we need to do. As many people said, we need to listen to the people who have lived experience with disabilities that are physical but also episodic or non-visual, and not only listen but actually take action. Really, 2025 is coming very quickly.

1400

The next review that's going to happen is in 2020, and as far as I'm concerned, we are behind. I hear the member from the Conservative Party talking about how this is going to be more red tape and it's going to have barriers for more economic opportunities. In order to get to work, there has to be a pathway to get there, so therefore places have to be accessible. I'm sure that people who are capable of working want to go out and do their part; they want to feel valuable and contribute to society. But if you can't get to work because there are stairs and there's no elevator, you can't say, “You don't want to work.” There has to be a logical process of how to get people to work, and first we need to make sure that places of work are all accessible. That makes sense.

I think that the member who spoke earlier has it reversed. This is not a red-tape bill. This is not making it harder for economic opportunities for Ontario. This is actually moving the bar forward to getting Ontario into a really positive economic opportunity for everyone. If we

don't support this bill in the House today, I think we're sending a message to people that it's not a priority. We're saying, “You've got to get to work, and the government side has said that the best social program is a job.” That's what they're saying, but then if you need that to happen, what do you logically believe you need to put in place, what metrics do you need in place, to bring out those outcomes? That's what they forget. Usually what they say doesn't sound good to me. They think it sounds good, but they don't have real steps on how to get there.

Put your money where your mouth is and start making things accessible so then you can have those opportunities for people who have disabilities to explore those jobs that they are so capable of doing and they so want. I hope this government is going to stop thinking so narrow-mindedly when it comes to what they think is best and actually listen to what people are telling them, and then act on that. You've done that in a few places when you've pulled back legislation. We know that you did that recently with land ambulance, public health and child care. This is your opportunity to do the right thing from the beginning, rather than backtracking. I hope they support this bill, Speaker.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Jennifer K. French): Further debate?

Ms. Natalia Kusendova: Thank you for the opportunity to speak to this motion. The challenge with this motion is that it is looking to create more duplication, more red tape and confusion around the built environment. Mr. Onley spoke about the need to take action on the built environment to improve accessibility, and we recognize this.

We've taken real action through our \$1.3-million partnership with the Rick Hansen building certification program, which will see us provide accessibility ratings of an estimated 250 buildings across Ontario. These ratings will not only certify buildings as being accessible, but it will provide a report with directions to buildings about how they can improve their accessibility. This is real action that we are taking now.

David Onley's report calls for action on the built environment. He notes that reviewing the building code is required. When it comes to this motion, calling for a built environment standard just simply doesn't make sense. It will create duplication with the Ontario Building Code and cause red tape and confusion.

Ironically, this motion also calls for greater enforcement of the AODA. When it comes to the issue of enforcement, the Ontario Building Code is as highly enforceable as it gets. Municipal inspectors across the province are already doing this important work, so on the issue of accessibility in the built environment, the building code is the most effective tool that we can use.

The Onley report highlights the importance of coordinating Ontario's accessibility efforts with those of the federal government. As announced in *More Homes, More Choice: Ontario's Housing Supply Action Plan*, the government will harmonize our building code with national codes to open new markets for manufacturers and to bring building costs down.

What we are really here to debate is creating a barrier-free Ontario, and a government cannot do this alone. This is why work on Mr. Onley's recommendations, along with other important initiatives, is ongoing. Our government is working closely with many partners to spread the word about the importance of accessibility.

We partnered with OCAD University's Inclusive Design Research Centre to develop *Our Doors Are Open: Guide for Accessible Congregations*, which was shared and highlighted at the 2018 Parliament of the World's Religions conference. This guide offers simple, creative ideas for different faith communities in our province to increase accessibility during worship services and community events.

We also support some of these partners through a program called EnAbling Change. Some recent examples of EnAbling Change projects include a resource guide produced by the Ontario Business Improvement Area Association called *The Business of Accessibility: How to Make Your Main Street Business Accessibility Smart*. The guide gives helpful tips for businesses on how to become more inclusive and accessible.

We also partnered with the Conference Board of Canada to develop *Making Your Business Accessible for People with Disabilities*, which is a guide that helps small businesses employ and serve people with disabilities.

As Mr. Onley recommended, we are working across ministries to inform a whole-of-government approach advancing accessibility. As part of this work, we are working with ministries to look at their policies, programs and services, and identify areas where we can work together to remove the barriers faced by Ontario's 2.6 million people with disabilities. Speaker, this government is committed to accessibility and improving employment prospects for people with disabilities—

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Jennifer K. French): Thank you. I return to the member for Ottawa Centre, who has two minutes to reply.

Mr. Joel Harden: It's hard to know what to say. I had hoped that there would be some goodwill here and I leave out hope that we may have some support for this motion, a declaration of intent, Speaker, written not by me but written by David Onley in this report, written by experts with lived experience and who know what it's like to live in a province that is not accessible to them—not accessible to them.

When I hear words like "red tape," the hair on the back of my neck stands up because I think about people who can't get into hospitals, can't get into schools. I think about children who are being forbidden the opportunity to learn because our services and systems are not accessible to them. And what makes me even angrier, to be honest, although I am trying to be hopeful and optimistic today, is that we are presiding over a province where people tonight will write off \$45 million in Raptors game expenses, and we as a province are fine with that. We're fine with that. Last week we announced \$1.3 million in a partnership for people with disabilities, which is less, Speaker, than we

pay this government's Premier's private lawyer, Gavin Tighe, in salary.

So what people with disabilities are being told is that they matter less than the corporate folks going to the Raptors game tonight, they matter less than the salary we give the lawyer serving the Premier of this province, and that when they ask for better, they are told they are ruining the economy and that it amounts to red tape. That is a really shameful moment for me in this place.

This motion commits us to action. I'm not allowed to ask for money from this government, but I am asking you, on behalf of my friends who are here today and all over this province, to get off the pot and act.

PLANNING AMENDMENT ACT, 2019

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

Mr. Downey moved second reading of the following bill:

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

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Jennifer K. French): Pursuant to standing order 98, the member has 12 minutes for his presentation.

Mr. Doug Downey: I'm really pleased to be speaking in the House on this issue. It's something that will literally attack red tape and costs for normal, everyday Ontarians. I just want to, for those who don't know, talk about what the Planning Act is and why it exists.

The Planning Act was passed first in 1946. It does a variety of things, but the one thing that it does in particular—and it really took hold in the late 1960s and early 1970s—was control of subdivision of land, control of how you develop land and how you create lots. It's evolved over time in many different variations. There was a time in the late 1960s where they tried to put some controls in so that, quite frankly, more rural areas were under stricter control, so subdivisions couldn't just be built at the whim or at the will of the developers. It would create a lot fabric: It would create where the lots should be, how big they should be and how many lots you could take off a farm, that kind of thing.

1410

There were some quirky little rules in there. What it said was that you can't deal with lands in the same name if they're touching on each other. So what some very clever developers did is what's called checkerboarding. Checkerboarding was taking a chunk of land and dividing it so it looked literally like a chess or checkers board. There were some cases that said, "Look, even if the points of the land touched on each other, you can't do that." So they got a little more sophisticated as the law evolved, and they had to make up some more rules. So it got amended again.

There was a rule back in the 1970s that said that you could actually divide land through a will. I could, through

my will—say I own 50 acres and I want to give a quarter to each of my children, if I had four children. The law would allow that to happen. It comes from times when your children took over your farm or when your children took over your land. It allowed us to pass on land for the use by the next generation, without having them all having to work together on the same piece of land. They could own their own piece and take some pride of ownership in it. But clever people again got involved, and what they did—this actually happened—was they would go to nursing homes and they would transfer property into an individual's name, who they're not related to, and they would pay them to then will it to the original person's children, divided the way they wanted it. They were getting around the rules, skirting around the rules, and dividing land. So they closed that loophole; you can't do that by will anymore. And this has continued to evolve.

The reason I talk about these little glitches and these little tricks is, we haven't had a substantial renovation of the Planning Act in the area of consents for about 20 years, and little quirks have developed as life got more complicated. What Bill 88 does is fix a lot of those little quirks to make sure that it's working the way that you expect it to work, the way that you would intuitively, reasonably think that it would work.

I'll give you some examples, Madam Speaker.

When you have a piece of land, if you want to divide it into two, you would go to the committee of adjustment and ask for a consent to divide it. Municipalities have control over this, with certain rules by the province. You would take one of those pieces of land and you would separate it from its whole. If you kept them in the same names, that's fine; the piece you took away—I'll call it "part A"—part A could be sold or transferred to somebody else. But if you had it in the same name, you couldn't sell or transfer part B, because part A was freed from part B, but part B was still stuck to part A. That doesn't really make a lot of sense. So lawyers spend clients' money doing workarounds on this.

What Bill 88 does is say that if the lot fabric has been approved, you can sell either one first, or transfer either one to your children. It operates the way that you would intuitively think that it should work. That's one of the 23 things amended in the Planning Act in my bill.

A second one that we run into a lot—I guess, when I say we run into it a lot—I am a certified specialist in real estate. There are 24 recognized by the Law Society of Ontario, formerly the Law Society of Upper Canada. So this is stuff that I dealt with for about 20 years with my colleagues. When I came up with some of these ideas, colleagues came out of the woodwork with other ideas, things that were broken, things that weren't working properly, that were prejudicing people, costing them money and costing a lot of time.

Here's a second one: If you own a piece of property and next door it's in Mom and Dad's names, but the other one is just in Mom's name, when Dad dies, those properties join and become one. A concrete example of that—I won't say where, for client confidentiality purposes. I had one

where there were 200 acres, two 100-acre pieces; Mom and Dad's name, and Dad's name. Mom died; those two 100 acres became one 200 acres. The intention was to leave 100 acres to each of the children. But we could not get them re-separated. Because of the rules that are in place, they were stuck. Now those brothers and the families are jointly farming the 200 acres instead of having their own individual 100. Something else the bill does is, it says that we will allow a property—if it's joined only due to the death of an adjoining joint owner, we'll let you keep the original lot fabric.

The reason behind that, the reason we want to do that, is because that lot fabric existed anyway. We're not creating anything new; we're just preserving what was already approved in a previous iteration.

It affects farmers. It affects cottage owners. It affects people who want to buy a couple of lots for their future kids. Again, there are ways around it. We can incorporate a company to hold it, but there are tax implications, and there are all sorts of implications and red tape and costs that otherwise shouldn't happen.

Another area that is a little more complicated—and this is a very technical bill. I'm pleased to have the support of Sid Troister, who quite frankly is the godfather of the Planning Act. He is the lawyer in Ontario that lawyers go to when they have a problem with the Planning Act. He was instrumental in bringing this forward.

Ray Leclair, who is with LawPRO, the insurance company for lawyers, has been very, very helpful and very supportive in developing this.

I have the support of the County of Carleton Law Association, the Insurance Bureau of Canada, the Ontario Federation of Agriculture and several other organizations, because it's solving problems that don't need to exist in the first place.

Madam Speaker, I could run through each example—some are more complicated than others—but let me just say this: If a lender is treated differently than a property owner when it comes to power of selling properties—that was never the intention. It just evolved over time. There are glitches in there that treat different entities differently, and that was never the intention. We should have one set of rules.

In terms of developing properties for condos, there are little pieces that cause them to spend tens of thousands of dollars, and in some cases, upwards of six figures, to avoid problems that nobody intended in the first place.

I've done several consultations. I can tell you, Madam Speaker, I am so proud that I have been copied on 350 emails that were sent to individual lawyers and stakeholders and MPPs. I think almost every MPP in this House received at least one email, and I know some received several, encouraging the MPPs to support this. It's really not a partisan issue; it's a good-governance kind of issue, and it fits right in with the kinds of things we want to do in cutting red tape and simplifying, and taking the costs out of the system.

Madam Speaker, I'm just going to leave it at that. I hope I receive support from the other parties. Certainly, I've

been very open about having conversations and trying to make sure that everybody understands what we're doing for the benefit of the people of Ontario.

I want to thank again Sid Troister, Ray Leclair, the Federation of Ontario Law Associations and all the others who have been so supportive and so helpful in developing this, quite frankly, decades-needed fix to the Planning Act.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Jennifer K. French): Further debate?

Mr. Gilles Bisson: Madam Speaker, I was expecting a little bit longer, but that's fine.

I just want to start off by saying that we will be supporting this particular bill; I believe it's Bill 88. I was going to say Bill 86, but I needed my glasses to make out the difference between "88" and "86."

It is something that has been talked about for some time. I do know that, myself, I have run across this particular situation. I'm not a lawyer or a real estate agent, but as an MPP, I've had people come into my office to deal with this particular issue. And it has been an issue. It has not been a huge one, but for those people who are caught in this particular situation, it can be quite frustrating.

I well understand that what the member is trying to do here is to create some clarity when it comes to how you deal with property such as this. Somebody owns a 600-acre farm or a 400-acre farm and decides to split it into two parts—it's done that way as part of the succession planning about what they're going to do afterwards—and you get caught in this rule that you have in the current legislation, which is problematic because what ends up happening is that both lots have to revert and become one at the time of death.

I think it's different—and I'll just look for a nod on this one. If I remember correctly, if I have sold it and it's in another person's name, then it stays separate. But it's a question of if I have the 600 acres, and I split it into two 300-acre lots—my eldest daughter, Julie, gets one; my youngest daughter, Natalie, gets the other—when my wife and I pass away, it becomes one lot again. It's to get around that, and I can understand it.

1420

I want to say, though, for the record, that the reason I was given by the Ministry of Agriculture when I originally dealt with this—because I dealt with this on a couple of lots up on Highway 11—is that they were saying the original intent was they didn't want the farming land to be divvied up, so that, let's say, agricultural land that was being used for cash crops or for dairy or beef all of sudden becomes a subdivision on the one side and a loss of farmland on the other. That was the idea behind it. I think we need to respect the interests of the property owner in this particular case, and I think that's what you're getting at.

The only thing I would ask, and it would be just by way of a question in this particular debate, is that—this is a private member's bill, and I'm just wondering why the government didn't move on their own bills. Because you've had two bills that, quite frankly, you could have

inserted this into, Bill 66 and Bill 108. This could have been subject matter inside those bills, and I just wonder—there might be a reason and maybe you can explain why. I don't mean that, as a hostile comment. Just why is it that the government didn't choose to put this particular item within one of those two bills? Because they could have easily done that, and that would have been done by now, quite frankly, or it would have been done at least by next week. I wonder why we're having to do it as a private member's bill. I just see that as a friendly question. It would be interesting to know.

It's not something that happens a lot. Quite frankly, most farm lots—farms; I'm not going to make them into lots—most farms are held intact, because farmers have it in their interest to be able to operate a large piece of land to be able to do their business. Be it raising cattle, raising dairy cows or whatever it might be, you want to make sure that you have enough land to be able to do what you've got to do.

Certainly, those who are farmers want to make sure that they maintain their farmland in a way that it's there to be able to sustain their business, because it takes land to be able to do the things that you've got to do in running a farm.

This is not, I don't think, in any way, shape or form meant to be an attack on farmland. This is more a case of, "I'm a farmer; I have a 600-acre lot somewhere as part of my"—because what a lot of people don't realize is that you may be running, let's say, a dairy farm, and you have different pieces of land that may not be coterminous. They might be somewhat separate, because you have grazing land over there, and you cut the cash crop on the other one etc., etc. Well, it might be that your sons or daughters have gone off. One takes over the family farm, and somebody else starts another farm with part of the land that you've already acquired as a mom and dad. This is meant to be able to deal with that, so that the following succession generation, when it comes to farming, is able to say, "Okay, let's figure out how we can split up this farmland in a way that brother A and sister B are able to maintain land in order to stay in the agriculture business."

I just want to say that we will be supporting this legislation. We understand what the intent is, and we see this as a pro-agriculture bill. This is not, hopefully, about development. I don't see it that way, and in that way, of course, we can support this bill.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Jennifer K. French): Further debate?

Ms. Goldie Ghamari: I just wanted to thank the member from Barrie–Springwater–Oro–Medonte for bringing forward this very important piece of legislation, and also thank the member from Timmins for his support as well.

This is one of those pieces of legislation that might not seem very exciting or might not get people jumping up and down, but it's very practical and it's very important. This also goes to our government's promise to reduce red tape and be more efficient. I'm pleased to speak to Bill 88 and I'm pleased to support it, Madam Speaker.

Essentially, Bill 88 delivers on our government's commitment to make life more affordable for Ontarians while at the same time, as I said, eliminating unnecessary red tape by removing costly requirements and aligning the Planning Act with people's expectations. At the end of the day, what this bill will do is it will help leave more money in the pockets of taxpayers. Especially in rural areas, like in my riding of Carleton, it will help with estate planning for farmers and recreational property owners. This is something that I've heard quite a fair bit in Carleton. As you might be aware, Madam Speaker, about 80% of Carleton's geographic land area is rural, so it is quite a significant area there, and this is going to be benefiting a lot of people in my riding of Carleton as well.

On that note, there is actually very broad support for Bill 88, including in the legal community—such as the Federation of Ontario Law Associations and the Ontario Bar Association. There's also support in the agricultural community, with the Ontario Federation of Agriculture, as well as the insurance sector—such as the Insurance Bureau of Canada and LawPRO—and also credit unions.

One of the things that this bill proposes to do is bring some clarity to the Planning Act and to the way things are administered; for example, clarity on exceptions to subsections 50(3) and (5). Most of them will now be in one place. This is actually going to be very helpful for a lot of lawyers, because if you're litigating, the statutory interpretation principles can often impede in the way of clarification. In a situation where you have a Legislature amending a specific piece of legislation in order to bring clarity, that's something that the courts and also lawyers subsequently take into account, because they then see that the purpose of these amendments was to provide clarity and to bring clear and concise meaning to the act. Again, this is a bit of a technical argument, but if you're a lawyer or if this is something that you're familiar with, it's actually very helpful. I'm glad to support this. All I can think of is, why wasn't this done earlier?

Having said that, one of the other changes is, there's not going to be a need to search back for Planning Act contraventions beyond a rolling 20 years. This is actually really big, because the proposed amendments finally create certainty for previous Planning Act breaches older than 20 years without disturbing any court decisions in the interim. This clarity is going to go a long way to helping with the Planning Act in the future and those who are being affected by the Planning Act.

Finally, there's another section where there is going to be some clarity, and that is subsection 50(12), which passed on March 31, 1979, which is actually retroactive and applies to consents given before that date.

Having said that, I just wanted to thank the member from Barrie–Springwater–Oro–Medonte for bringing this important piece of legislation forward. I want to thank the member from Timmins for stating his support. I'm happy to speak to it, I'm happy to voice my support, and I look forward to supporting this bill.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Jennifer K. French): Further debate?

Ms. Suze Morrison: It's certainly an honour to rise in the House today to speak to Bill 88, which is An Act to amend the Planning Act.

This bill amends various sections of the Planning Act as it relates to land transfer for smaller-property owners. If passed, this bill would allow for an owner of a property to sell or transfer a divided parcel of land in whichever order that the owner prefers. Currently, as it stands, if you divide your land by separating it into two lots but keep your land in the same name, you must sell or transfer the severed portion before the retained portion.

This bill would also ease the burden of the transfer of land after a death. The Planning Act currently dictates that in the case of two adjacent properties, where one is owned by an independent owner and the other is jointly owned, in the case of death, the property would be rejoined into one parcel of land. The current regulations would likely stop the individual from re-separating the land back into the two properties. If they are able to separate it into two properties, the process is extremely expensive and burdensome to the owner.

In the instance of a land transfer between neighbours, the proposed amendments would force the transfer of land to be consumed into an existing property, as opposed to a separate parcel of land. Currently, if two neighbours want to move their property line, property owner A removes part of their land to sell to property owner B. This land is now a separate parcel of land, and property owner B can always sell off this parcel, effectively creating three lots when the municipality may have only ever intended there to be two. Under Bill 88, the lot fabric wouldn't be changed without further municipality approval, but the property owners are able to move their property lines.

1430

For many years, it has been recognized among experts in the real estate industry that certain sections of the Planning Act have led to a situation where property owners experience unnecessary and expensive land conveyancing issues. Bill 88 seeks to bring clarity to these exceptions and put them all in one place in order to make things easier for property owners.

When we look at some stakeholder feedback on it, and we talk to the Federation of Ontario Law Associations, they unconditionally support the bill. They go on to state: "The proposed amendments will align the Planning Act with the expectations of the public."

They go on further to say: "We applaud this bill for eliminating unnecessary red tape by removing costly requirements that will leave more money in the pockets of taxpayers"—which, to me, sounds almost like a Conservative bumper sticker; really consistent language use there.

Anyway, we looked at some other stakeholders. We talked to FCT, which is a preeminent title insurance company in Canada, and they say: "Given our mandate to protect the public interest in the course of a real estate transaction, we believe that the proposed amendments to the Planning Act set out in the private member's bill serve the public interest while leaving money in the pocket of taxpayers."

They note that in the issue of the death of a spouse, the current provisions can have unintended consequences of merging two parcels of land, which leads to a substantial cost for the homeowner.

The Insurance Bureau of Canada also supports the bill, as it would provide increased clarity and certainty for consumers.

When we look at the County of Carleton Law Association, they also support the bill, saying that it eliminates unnecessary red tape—a popular slogan, I know, for my Conservative friends across the way. They go on further to say that their members deal with the Planning Act on a regular basis, as part of the daily real estate practice. The proposed amendments will enhance their ability to assist their clients, and make life more affordable—not a bad thing.

As you can see, Speaker, the bill that we have before us today is a necessary housekeeping bill at the end of the day. It's broadly supported by stakeholders in the industry. It clarifies the Planning Act in a way that will be beneficial to consumers and to municipalities, and was developed with strong consultation. It's not a bad bill. The worst that you could say about it is that it's certainly not a sexy bill. It's not flashy. It doesn't have bells and whistles. It's certainly not a box of chocolates with hidden Tide pods and mystery meat, as my colleague from Toronto–Danforth so eloquently used as an analogy in his debate on the fall economic statement. It was a hilarious analogy—I just about died in the House laughing that day—but it's certainly not one I could use today.

Speaker, what I don't understand about this bill, though, is why this government has chosen to siphon off necessary housekeeping amendments to legislation into a private member's bill. Again, it's a good private member's bill; no one is going to challenge that. But at the same time, we have a bill before this House at this very moment that is currently making amendments to the Planning Act, and it's a bill that, quite frankly, is being rammed through this Legislature, with only one day of committee hearings, scheduled for tomorrow, and a truncated debate at third reading. It's my understanding that this government has every single intention of passing that bill, Bill 108, that amends the Planning Act, among several other pieces of legislation, here in the next week or so, before we recess for the session. Meanwhile, there has been no indication from this government that they're ready or willing to prioritize private members' bills up and out of committee, to get them back in front of this Legislature for third reading.

Speaker, if this government was truly interested in eliminating red tape and clarifying important sections of the Planning Act, as this bill seeks to do, I don't understand why these amendments aren't in Bill 108. We literally have the Planning Act open and before us in a government-sponsored bill that will be passed and through this House within days. If they wanted to fast-track these amendments, they could scoop them up into Bill 108 and be done with it.

Again, Speaker, I'm happy to say that we're supporting this bill today. It's a good bill. It's necessary housekeeping

to current legislation. But like I said, if government members across the way were serious about actually getting this done, it would be in Bill 108.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Jennifer K. French): Further debate?

Mr. Will Bouma: It's a pleasure to be able to rise and speak about what I would consider a sexy bill, but then, my head goes in sometimes funny different directions.

When we moved to St. George in 2006, I wanted to get involved in local planning. I'd just taken part in a community leadership course, and there was an election year that year in 2006, and I got on the committee of adjustment. It was interesting to hear the member from Timmins saying that this is a relatively uncommon occurrence. I would respectfully disagree, because dealing with the effects of what we're fixing here in Bill 88 was something that my committee ran into on a very, very regular basis. It was an excellent opportunity to learn about the Planning Act and how things work. Some of these quirks in the Planning Act created headaches for estate planning for so many people in the province of Ontario for so many decades.

I can only say hats off to the member from Barrie–Springwater–Oro–Medonte for his great work on this bill. It would be nice to see this get fast-tracked through there, because this is an issue that continues to compound on a regular basis. So much of what we do here—I would say, over 99%—is dealing with the unintended consequences of well-intentioned legislation and well-intentioned changes. What's wonderful about work like this is that we're just cleaning house in a certain sense, making things work better for everyone in Ontario, and I think it exemplifies what our government is trying to do.

Thank you again for bringing this bill forward. I'm proud to be in support of it, and I'm very impressed that the opposition is voting in favour of this also.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Jennifer K. French): Further debate? Further debate? I recognize the member from Aurora–Oak Ridges–Richmond Hill.

Mr. Michael Parsa: Thank you, Speaker. It's not good to fall asleep behind the wheel.

I'm happy to rise today to speak in favour of Bill 88, put forth by the amazing MPP for Barrie–Springwater–Oro–Medonte. He's certainly an all-star; no doubt about that.

The amendments in this bill are welcome and long overdue. Liberal red tape and burdensome regulations have crippled this province for far too long, but relief has arrived. In rural regions, this bill will help with estate planning for farmers and cottagers. In urban areas, this bill will assist commercial tenants and property owners by clarifying existing rules. Amongst other things, this bill will also clarify rules surrounding consent applications for land allotments and planning, as well as ease other regulations.

Speaker, in and around my riding of Aurora–Oak Ridges–Richmond Hill, there were 11,858 existing homes and property plots for sale in 2018. This accounted for more than \$10 billion in sales in the real estate sector.

Imagine if this bill's amendments were in place. The economic potential of the region would be multiplied.

Real estate professional James McKeon says, "It will save costs for consumers buying and selling real estate, and as such is good for the province."

Speaker, this act also reduces the burden of red tape on institutions like our legal system. The act will deregulate the process of planning adjudication. The act would end the practice of searching Planning Act contraventions from 20 years ago. This creates certainty amongst previous Planning Act breaches without disturbing other court proceedings.

Speaker, this is big—so big that both the Federation of Ontario Law Associations and the Ontario Bar Association endorsed this plan. The County of Carleton Law Association says, "We applaud this bill for eliminating unnecessary red tape ... thus leaving more money in the pockets of taxpayers and reducing bureaucracy."

On this side of the House, we're standing up for Ontarians every day. Amongst many supportive Ontarians is Kady Stachiw, who said, "The changes tabled by Mr. Downey in Bill 88 are common-sense changes that would be in the best interests of Ontarians as they navigate the world of real estate transactions. It would also reduce the legal fees Ontarians face as a result of some of the more convoluted provisions of the Planning Act that would be corrected in this bill." Amending the Planning Act will help make life more affordable, and open Ontario up for business.

Speaker, I'm happy to support this important piece of legislation, and I encourage all members of this House to do so as well. We're delivering for the people of Ontario by removing unnecessary red tape. Once again, promise made, promise kept.

1440

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Jennifer K. French): Further debate?

Mrs. Gila Martow: I'm very pleased to rise today and speak on Bill 88. It's a private member's bill put forth by my colleague who is the MPP for Barrie–Springwater–Oro-Medonte, and it's An Act to amend the Planning Act.

Really, what I like so much about being here—it's just over five years since I first got elected—is that we get to learn so much. We get to learn about things that we wouldn't have maybe discussed or thought about in our previous careers. I have Dr. Bouma sitting in front of me, and he's a fellow colleague; we're both optometrists. Not that we knew each other prior to being here, but oftentimes we speak about things to do with eyes. We were just having a discussion about springtime and dry eyes and things like that.

Today we're discussing subdividing land. I represent the riding of Thornhill. It was a farming community, and there were still farms when I moved to Thornhill 30 years ago, but we don't see too much farming—maybe a little of the backyard variety here and there, but it's not really farmland. It has become extremely urban—maybe too urban for some people's taste. A lot of people have been in Thornhill for decades, and they recall and will still hear

discussions about it. People will talk about how they were offered—one of my neighbours was offered a farm. The houses across the street from me right now backed onto what was a farm back then, and the farmer, the gentleman, went to the homes and said, "Maybe you want to buy and have a little bit more land. I can ask the city." I don't know if that would have flown with the city or not; probably not, Madam Speaker.

What we're discussing today is the ability of people to divide up their land. We can certainly understand why people, if they have, say, three children and a farm that's 300 acres, might want to divide that up 100/100/100. Right now, they have difficulties doing that, because it was put in the Planning Act to protect the farmland, to keep it as one large farm, because I guess people recognized that you can't just keep dividing forever and still keep those farms running. But we want to allow people to have fairness.

I think that we're going to be discussing a bill coming later on today about fairness and choice, and I really see this bill as about providing fairness and choice to landowners in the province of Ontario, creating greater clarity, reducing red tape, saving costs. The lawyers even wrote—I have all kinds of stakeholder comments in front of me from various lawyers. They support this because they recognize that it's a waste of their time and their clients' money.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Jennifer K. French): The member for Barrie–Springwater–Oro-Medonte has two minutes for his reply.

Mr. Doug Downey: Thank you, Madam Speaker. I want to thank the members from Timmins, Carleton, Toronto Centre, Brantford–Brant, Aurora–Oak Ridges–Richmond Hill and Thornhill. I thank you all for wading in and supporting. It is an important thing, and some of us do find it kind of sexy. A real estate lawyer thinks it's kind of cool.

I do want to say to the members from Brantford–Brant and Thornhill that I hope the "eyes" have it. We'll see how that goes.

Madam Speaker, I am thrilled to have this in front of the House and to move this forward. It is something of fairness. I do want to clarify—the member from Timmins did raise a couple of questions that bear answering. One is to reinforce that this does not encroach on municipal powers. This does not change the rules around which you would divide properties. It's just how it happens, so that it maintains that fairness. It takes the cost out of it, reduces the red tape. It's not going to change the rules on when you can subdivide; it's just going to be how it works.

I have one minute. I'm going to explain one more aspect of this bill. It allows me, as a joint owner of property with a sibling who lives in a different province, to begin the process for a severance without that sibling having to sign the initial paperwork. They would certainly have to sign the final paperwork, so there are protections built in, but it reflects the reality that we live in. People aren't always living in the same town when you need to do a process with the municipality.

Madam Speaker, again I encourage those who have questions coming out of this debate to reach out to me. I'm

happy to clarify. I feel very strongly about it, and I'm very confident that it is good governance and that it will solve many problems for people in Ontario.

NANCY ROSE ACT
(PAEDIATRIC HOSPICE
PALLIATIVE CARE STRATEGY), 2019
LOI NANCY ROSE DE 2019
(STRATÉGIE DES SOINS
PALLIATIFS PÉDIATRIQUES)

Ms. Shaw moved second reading of the following bill:

Bill 114, An Act to provide for the development of a provincial paediatric hospice palliative care strategy /
Projet de loi 114, Loi prévoyant l'élaboration d'une stratégie provinciale des soins palliatifs pédiatriques.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Jennifer K. French): Pursuant to standing order 98, the member has 12 minutes for her presentation.

Ms. Sandy Shaw: Thank you very much, Madam Speaker. We are here to debate the Nancy Rose Act, which is an Act to provide for the development of a provincial paediatric hospice palliative care strategy.

This bill is named after my sister Nancy. She died in 1975; she was 17 months old. Nancy was born on May 4—it was in the spring—and I remember vividly the day she was born. You know those bright yellow forsythia that bloom in the spring? They were in full bloom and, in fact, I think of her every time I see those flowers in bloom in the spring.

Nancy really was a baby who was sunnier than any spring day that you can imagine. She had beautiful blonde hair and bright blue eyes and was just a friendly, friendly baby. She was just so happy to see people and be around people. She was just a delight and, in fact, as my father described her, "She was fair lovely." My dad had a Scottish accent; I can't do a Scottish accent.

Sadly, Nancy suffered most of her young life from a very rare form of leukemia. In fact, she was treated here at the Hospital for Sick Children during those years.

I would like to say a few words about my parents, Edward and Patricia. Their strength of character and their integrity is an inspiration to me and to my brothers and sisters: my sister Mimi, who is here with me today; my brother, Edward; and our youngest sister, Penny. Also, my daughter, Madeline, and my young son, Thompson—not so young—are here as well, and my partner, Ted. My parents continue to be an inspiration to all of us.

They made sure that Nancy's brief life was filled with love, filled with a happy family and filled with the love of wonderful parents that they had. She participated in everything that we did as a family. We went on vacations together and we have wonderful memories of our short, brief but yet so wonderful time that we had with Nancy.

I remember the day that she died very vividly. It was a long time ago—I was about 14—but the memory is very, very clear. We knew that she had had some treatment and my parents had made the very difficult decision to stop

treatment, so that we knew essentially that it was the end of life for Nancy. But the day that she died, I remember asking to stay home from school and I remember her just crying and crying. She was just crying endlessly, and there was nothing my parents could do to soothe her, to get her to stop crying. In fact, my mother was winding a music box that was the one thing that would often calm her down, and it broke in my mom's hands. It was just this ominous sign that this was going to be a terrible, terrible day.

I remember at some point my parents bundling Nancy up into some blankets, they got in the car and they were driving her down to the hospital. I later learned—sort of overhearing, really, from conversation—that Nancy died in my mom's arms on the way to the hospital. For so many years, I often wondered, "Why did they need to rush her to the hospital?" They knew that it was end of life, and I wasn't sure why this was the case.

When I was talking to my parents very recently about the decision to move this Nancy Rose Act forward, they shared with me that the reason at the time that they were rushing to the hospital is that when they called the hospital that they thought Nancy might be dying, they were advised that it would probably be important for them to get there before she died because, at that time—it's changed now—there would have been a requirement to have an autopsy, and my parents wanted to spare that last indignity for Nancy.

So when I was looking into creating this bill and moving this bill forward, I often thought about, all these years later, that my parents could have used that information, they could have used that support that they needed to face this unimaginable tragedy, and that, had they known, they might have made other plans so that Nancy's death would have been more peaceful for all of us, for all the family members.

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This happened 40 years ago—I think 44 years ago; and most people, including myself, would be surprised to learn that our province still doesn't have a truly comprehensive and funded strategy for pediatric palliative care.

There are five centres of pediatric excellence across the province, and in my riding, Hamilton is home to one of those, McMaster's Children's Hospital. It's actually the second-busiest hospital in the province. But again, there is no coordinated strategy and no actual funding for this strategy, so this bill hopes to change that.

There are three important things to know about the Nancy Rose Act. The most important thing is that what we're asking for is equity of access. When families are facing these kinds of unimaginable decisions, unimaginable tragedy, they want to be close to home. They want to be near home when they're treating their family. And while there are these five centres of excellence, there are really only three pediatric palliative care homes in Ontario. They're located in Toronto, Milton and Ottawa. I'm proud to say that executive director Megan Wright from Roger Neilson House is joining us here today; in addition, Rauni Salminen from Emily's House is here as well. Those are two of the few pediatric hospices that we have in the

province. I can't underscore how great the need is. There's a study that said that 80% of children who could benefit from pediatric palliative care are not receiving it.

I'd also like to talk not just about access—that you are in a province where you can physically access care; I think it's important to talk about the quality of care. It's very, very and critically important to understand that pediatric palliative care is fundamentally different than palliative care for adults. Children are young; they're developing. Oftentimes, children don't have the ability to express their concerns, their fears, their hopes, even their pain, and these are the kinds of decisions that parents have to make on behalf of their children. That's one of the reasons that it makes it so difficult.

The other is that medical care providers may have some experience in dealing with adult deaths and palliative care for adults, but—gratefully, because it's relatively rare that children die—often in small and rural communities, you have health care providers who are overseeing the death of a child, and this is not something they were trained in or prepared to do. So that is something we would like to change.

Finally, while there is no comprehensive strategy, we do have these dedicated, incredible health care providers and doctors who are doing the heavy lifting on behalf of the government. There is the Provincial Paediatric Palliative Care Steering Committee, which has put together a comprehensive strategy. I would like to again say that we're honoured here today to have Dr. Mark Greenberg, who is the co-chair of the provincial palliative care strategy committee, joining us. As well, we have Dr. Adam Rapoport, who's the medical director for the pediatric advanced care team at the Hospital for Sick Children. They, among others, have done the incredible work that we need to come up with a strategy.

Applause.

Ms. Sandy Shaw: Thank you. It's my hope that a committee will be struck—in fact, this work that they have done could form the ministerial committee to oversee this work.

Finally, we need to talk about the family supports, including mental health supports, that families need. When families receive the worst possible news they could ever receive the unspeakable—they need to know that help will be there for them when they need it. Parents have said to me that often they feel that they're living in isolation, and they have difficulty seeking the kinds of supports they need because they're not there. Just imagine, day after day, looking after your other children and facing the sheer terror of the knowledge that your child might or will die. We need to make sure that we have the supports there for them.

Pediatric palliative care is trying to fill this gap. Dr. Lysecki put it so eloquently when he said that palliative care is intended to help so that we can “fill that child and their family's life with as much richness and beauty as possible in the short time that that child may have on this earth. And that includes up until end-of-life care.”

I'm asking everyone here, regardless of political stripe, to come together and fill this gap in pediatric care. This is

beyond partisan politics. This is essentially a moral obligation. We need to work together to ensure that their children have access to the care and comfort they need in their final moments. The thing that parents can hope for is that their children, when they do pass, when they die, do so in a way that is peaceful and painless. We need to make sure that that is the case. This is a mercy and a human kindness we need to offer. Really, as a society, this absolutely should be our highest priority.

Madam Speaker, I'd like to close by talking about the fact that, as Dr. Greenberg so eloquently put it, bereavement doesn't go away; it lasts forever. There are paintings and poems and songs that talk about, essentially, the eternal grief that families and parents suffer when they lose a child. There's an elegy by Dylan Thomas. It's a refusal to mourn the death of a child. The expression of grief there is so profound.

I also think about Holden Caulfield. I'm sure we all had to read *Catcher in the Rye* in high school; maybe I'm dating myself. Holden Caulfield was a teenager who was grieving the death of his young brother, who, ironically, died from leukemia. Because he was so young, he had difficulty expressing his grief. His wish, really, was to be nothing more than the catcher in the rye, whose sole job was to save children from falling over a cliff.

Madam Speaker, I'd like to end today with a quotation that is on Nancy's grave marker. It's from a poem, *On the Death of a Fair Infant Dying of a Cough*, and it was written by John Milton in the 1600s. Here is that elegy:

O Fairest flower, no sooner blown but blasted,
Soft silken Primrose fading timelessly.

Thank you very much, Madam Speaker. I hope that we can support this bill.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Jennifer K. French): Further debate?

Mr. John Fraser: I want to say thank you to the member from Hamilton West—Ancaster—Dundas for bringing forward this important piece of legislation and for her courageous remarks. Memories of our brothers or sisters or children who have passed too soon last a long time.

As you know, I've had the pleasure of being able to support palliative care work in this province and to work with really great people to advance palliative care and hospice care in this province. Some of them are here in the gallery. I'm really very honoured to have been able to work with them.

We came through a journey in our family. Obviously, my father was much older—a palliative care journey with him, and he passed. That journey, as the member described her own journey, had its peaks and valleys. What happened was, almost nine months to the day after my father passed away, our first grandchild was born. It got me to thinking, because when Vaughan was to come into the world, we were very ready for Vaughan: “Here's where you're going to go to school. Here's how we're going to do the nursery. We're all going to be ready. We're

waiting.” Everybody is ready for us coming into the world, but at the end of life we’re not ready, and they’re both opposite ends of the same string. What happens when the beginning of life and the end of life are this close? That’s an incredible challenge.

I had the pleasure of working, in the last government, on something that’s called a perinatal hospice. I want to talk about this right now, because it’s: What do you actually do when you find out—because you’re a high-risk pregnancy or your pregnancy isn’t viable, or your child might not likely survive. In many places, when you get that diagnosis and you get that news, that’s what you get. Then you’re left on your own, trying to figure out what to do. That’s just incredibly wrong. That’s just not the right thing.

Perinatal hospice, which I know that the government is continuing to support—and I encourage them to continue to support it—is going on at three locations. One of them is Roger’s house, and Emily’s House—Roger Neilson House; I’ve got to get it right. It’s doing incredible work. It’s saying to people, “That baby is a baby, no matter what stage they’re at.” That has meaning inside the family, and it helps people make choices. It helps people have an ability to mourn that loss. That child lived at some point, and people need the ability to be able to mourn, to be able to be with that person, as you so described. Your sister, Nancy Rose: She’s just a big part of the family.

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Anything that we can do in regard to making sure that people have choices and support and know what’s in front of them, and that we support them not just as health care professionals but as a community—that’s what this whole movement is all about. It’s not about hospitals and hospices; it’s about people taking care of each other. It’s about people realizing that we need each other at these points. We can work as hard as we do in this Legislature—and I’m so happy that all parties talk about this, that all parties are advocates for this, because it gives hope that it’s going to keep moving forward. But we can’t take our foot off the gas.

We did some things in the budget in 2016 that I was really proud of. But the first thing I thought when we were going out was, “What’s next?” We always have to be going to the “what’s next.” How do we improve perinatal hospices? Is there something else that we need to do for parents of children who are going to have a shorter life, who are going to pass away, that we can do to support them, that we can do to celebrate those lives, that we can do to remove the pain that’s there, the pain that children have, the pain that families have? That’s what everyone in the gallery does on a daily basis. It’s really, really important.

I just want to thank the member again. A beautiful tribute to your sister. Thank you very much for doing this.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Jennifer K. French): Further debate.

Mr. Mike Harris: I just wanted to say to the member across the way: very moving words. I wanted to thank her for such a wonderful tribute to her sister.

I’m happy to be participating in second reading debate on Bill 114 today, the Nancy Rose Act. Myself and my colleagues on the government benches are speaking in favour of this bill because it is in keeping with our vision of providing quality care to Ontarians at all stages of life. We are a government that wants the best for our patients receiving care across the province and one that wants to hear what they have to say.

It is within the scope of our mandate to improve palliative care for all of those receiving it as well as providing it in the province of Ontario. The proposal for a pediatric hospice palliative care strategy and a palliative care advisory committee therefore speaks to the current agenda and provides an opportunity to reflect on the progress we have made thus far. Our government has demonstrated its commitment to improving the quality of care being provided across the province through the investment priorities that we have set out.

For starters, each year, we are providing over \$3 million of support for 20 pediatric residential hospice beds in Toronto, Milton and Ottawa. I would like to thank some representatives from those hospices and hospitals for being here today.

The Minister of Health and Long-Term Care has also been working closely with the Ontario Palliative Care Network in gaining insight on how we can best improve our system. The minister has heard from the industry and she has acted with their input. I was very pleased with our government’s announcement in December highlighting a plan to build 193 new hospice care beds across Ontario. This will be very beneficial to the constituents of my riding and to those seeking quality care in all regions of the province.

Madam Speaker, our government’s recent investments have also expanded access to hospice care closer to home. In September 2018, I was more than happy to personally confirm the Ontario government’s commitment of up to \$2 million for Hospice of Waterloo Region’s new Gies Family Centre at its groundbreaking ceremony. This is an incredible project in north Waterloo which will deliver 10 new hospice beds, made financially possible by all levels of government joining with generous contributions from private individuals.

Many of those who are in need of palliative care prefer to be cared for in a home setting. We want to improve the quality of the health care provided in this province, while also combatting overcrowding in our hospitals. Investing in hospice care accomplishes both of these objectives. By investing in hospice beds, we are expanding the treatment of sick children across this province while opening more hospital beds for those in need of acute care.

Madam Speaker, our party stressed the importance of supporting our front-line health care workers in the last election. This message rang true with the average Ontarian because they realized just how integral a role these health care workers play in providing some of the services that matter most to us.

Under the previous government, our health care system was bloated with administrative costs. Our government, on

the other hand, has worked swiftly to fix this. With the passing of Bill 74, The People's Health Care Act, we are consolidating health care services, coordinating multiple provincial health care services under a single agency: Ontario Health. One reason we are doing all of this is because we realize that what we save in administrative costs, we can reinvest towards those front-line services and workers who are going to make the biggest impact. Every dollar saved is another dollar that can potentially be spent towards the men and women really making the palliative care system run.

There is a range of providers delivering palliative care and end-of-life care to Ontarians, including primary care physicians and nurse practitioners; home care nurses and personal support workers; long-term-care-home nurses and personal support workers; of course, hospice nurses and personal support workers; therapists and social workers in a variety of care settings; and non-clinical volunteers in a variety of care settings.

Each day, those on the front line do their utmost to perform to the highest standards in the face of challenging and unpredictable circumstances. We need to support these providers in the most effective and efficient way possible. Anything we can do as a government to better understand the needs of those in the industry and the challenges they face, I look kindly upon.

As a father of five, I feel for any parent who has to see their child receiving serious treatment. I know for certain that while serving in this House, I'm going to do anything I can to advance policies that increase the quality of care that is available to children who are terminally ill.

We have an interest in seeing to it that we are setting the palliative care industry up for success and that we are responsive to its needs. Our government is a government that listens. We are open to accepting the merits of any idea, no matter its origin, as long as it can help improve the way things operate.

The government has set for itself ambitious targets across all policy fronts. A 25% red tape reduction in our first term is ambitious and—sorry; when I say “my five kids,” it really resonates. We'll go off script, I think, for the rest of this.

I just really want to thank the member for bringing this forward because it is something that we really do need to be paying attention to here in the province. I've had a chance to work with Hospice Waterloo quite a bit over the last year and I've gotten to know a lot of the people there very well, and they're doing really fantastic work. I really do hope that we can move this agenda forward. When we talk about kids, it's tough.

I know I'd never want anything like what happened to you—any family to have to go through that. I just wanted to commend you for bringing this forward. Hopefully, we'll get a little bit of a chance to chat later on and share a hug.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Jennifer K. French): Further debate?

Mr. Sol Mamakwa: Meegwetch, Madam Speaker. I rise today to speak on Bill 114, the Nancy Rose Act to

create a pediatric hospice palliative care strategy in Ontario.

When we talk about children, when we talk about kids in any system—I'd just like to thank my colleague for speaking up for the children in Ontario, but also the professionals who are here to provide that voice. What she is doing is providing a voice for the voiceless, for these very young children. I wanted to say that piece.

General palliative care should be upheld as it incorporates physical, psychological, social and spiritual care elements to improve the quality of life for patients with illnesses at the end of life.

I'll speak on this bill from an equity and equality perspective, but also from the Indigenous perspective.

This process becomes even more important as we talk about it when a child is involved. While there is a great deal of diversity across, for example, Indigenous communities across Ontario, there are common beliefs we share that relate to both the end of life and how we care for our children.

1510

In 2016, the Southwest Ontario Aboriginal Health Access Centre found that the majority of Indigenous peoples currently die in urban hospitals and long-term-care homes. Indigenous people, including children, across Ontario are living with life-limiting illnesses and wish to receive palliative care at home or in their community where they can be surrounded by family, friends, culture and their spirituality. These children and families have the right to have fair and equitable access to high-quality, culturally safe palliative care, which they currently do not receive. I know sometimes that this need is very amplified when we're dealing with a child or youth with a life-limiting illness.

The report also recommends that the service providers working with Indigenous palliative care clients and families be educated about the complexity of Indigenous health issues, Indigenous rights to self-determination and health, and to be trained on Indigenous histories and cultural safety.

The intent of this bill is to create a strategy for equitable access—equity—to high-quality pediatric hospice palliative care across Ontario. This bill is to ensure that we have, again, full access to care and provide the comfort that the children need in their final moments, and I'm very, very happy to support it. Again, my colleague, I thank you for allowing me to share these thoughts today. Meegwetch.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Jennifer K. French): Further debate?

Mr. Sam Oosterhoff: It's an honour to be able to speak to this today. I want to begin by commending the member for Hamilton West—Ancaster—Dundas for bringing forward this bill, the Nancy Rose Act, An Act to provide for the development of a provincial paediatric hospice palliative care strategy.

Speaker, I have worked a great deal myself on this since coming to this House, along with the member from Ottawa South, who I must commend for being an advocate for this ever since I arrived. I've tabled three times my legislation,

now in its latest reiteration, Bill 3, the Compassionate Care Act, on creating a hospice palliative care strategy. This strategy, I believe, is so, so important when it comes to addressing the patchwork of care that we have here in the province of Ontario. We really do see, also, in areas across the north and in rural Ontario, the lack of access to hospice palliative care, and specifically in this particular area.

I want to tell the member something that the member for Ottawa South told me the first time I brought my bill on hospice palliative care forward in 2017. He said, “You’ve just begun this battle today. Now that you’ve placed yourself on this path of fighting for palliative care, this will never end and you will always be an advocate for this.” As he mentioned, there is always going to be another issue that comes up where you need to fight to improve access and to increase access.

We have seen a lot of positive changes, even since I’ve been here, and I want to also thank the member for that. When he was serving in government—when I first came here—we had 350 beds in hospice palliative care. Today, we have over 800. Our government announced a couple of hundred in December, but your government, to give credit where credit is due, also announced.

But this bill is also really important because it brings attention to an oversight, and that’s pediatric hospice palliative care. We talk a lot about palliative care, and we almost always, I think, think of seniors or those who are adults. I had a chance to visit Roger Neilson House in Ottawa, and I was struck—but recently, it has taken on a whole new light for me. I don’t believe many of you in this House know this, but last November—and your story really rang so true—my niece was diagnosed with leukemia as well. She’s two years old. She’s very, very little. The thought of having to see her go into something like this—her neutrophils go up and down, she gets blood transfusions and everything and she’s getting chemo. Hopefully she will be good, and I pray every day she will be.

But yes, what that brought up also for me, what you’re talking about today, is those little children and those youth. We think about palliative care broadly and of those who are seniors, but we need to be having these types of conversations, so thank you for bringing that conversation to this place. I’m going to be supporting it wholeheartedly. I know my colleagues will be as well. I thank you for that advocacy.

It can be so easy in this place—you know, I sat on Thursdays in opposition; I was one of the closer members, so I always sat here on Thursdays. But Thursdays, I found, in private members’ business, was often the time when there was the least amount of partisanship and the least amount of ideology that came to the fore. I find often it’s in these moments, in these backbencher moments, where we’re able to bring forward the issues that are so personally important, that we hear a lot of the most meaningful stories and we hear also about the personal impact that that legislation has.

I know we debate a lot of different bills in this House, and we can speak to all of them from a personal perspective, and we do. But I know I very much value, and I did

also value in opposition, Thursday afternoons, because of the fact that, like you’ve done today, we can speak and bring forward pieces of the legislation that might fall by the wayside—I don’t think always intentionally. In fact, I would say it’s not intentionally that these types of issues fall by the wayside; it’s more often oversight than anything else. Thank you for raising that as an area of concern and something that we need to do better on.

I do also want to really quickly mention—I’m a bit of a bean counter; I’m sorry about that. I always want to be careful of taxpayer dollars. I think this is really an excellent area where we can improve access to health care while also improving access to health care in a way that protects taxpayer dollars. I’m a big advocate for palliative care in general, because you see so many people who are dying in hospital beds, where they should not be dying, costing taxpayers \$1,500 to \$2,000 a day. I know it sounds kind of brazen, but the reality is that it’s better to be able to have a meaningful experience in a hospice palliative care, at \$400 to \$600 a day, where you’re surrounded by compassionate care and you’re being supported in a meaningful way. I think we should be having a lot more access to palliative care for a variety of different reasons, but I think it’s also because we need to ensure that we change our health care system, to get away from hospitalization and thinking that everyone needs to be thrown in to a hospital all the time and that that’s the best place for them. We need to be looking at hospices, including pediatric hospices.

Again, thank you for being willing to share your family’s story and for your advocacy on this. I’m proud to support it, and I look forward to seeing my colleagues joining me in doing so.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Jennifer K. French): Further debate?

Ms. Marit Stiles: I want to start by thanking the member for Hamilton West–Ancaster–Dundas. She and I have spoken quite a lot over the last few weeks about this bill and how it came about and, I also want to mention, about the things she has personally learned through the process of developing this important legislation. I think this is, as others have already noted, an example of the truly good and important work that we can accomplish here together, learning from lived experience, learning from the experience of others, and making legislation and making policy that works better for everyone.

Madam Speaker, I know—for those of us, especially as parents, but for anyone—that no one wants to lose a child. I think, for many of us, it’s fair to say that we don’t even want to think about it. We don’t want to think about it and we don’t want to talk about it, because it’s so unimaginable and painful. But one thing is for certain, and that is that heartbroken families facing a loss of little ones deserve all the support that we can muster.

1520

In the short time I have to speak, I want to bring forward the words of those whose experiences do inform this bill. The member from Hamilton West–Ancaster–Dundas was kind enough to share with me some letters she had

received, and I want to take a moment to read from one of those letters. Valerie McDonald, who wrote the letter I'm going to read from and who is the co-chair of the family advisory council for the provincial pediatric palliative care steering committee, is in fact here in the members' gallery. Welcome, and thank you for being here today.

Ms. McDonald's middle daughter, Natalie, died at only nine years of age. I'm going to read from her letter. She says:

"Although she received excellent medical care during the active phase of her treatment, we were not referred to palliative care when it became clear that her treatment was not working. We wanted Natalie to be at home but we had to cobble together appropriate medical, financial and emotional supports. Our home care team was overwhelmed and unprepared to care for a dying child. There was no one to contact when problems arose, as they always do, on weekends and late at night. After Natalie died, all the services we did have vanished, leaving us to figure out how to support her grieving siblings while we were shattered ourselves.

"Although there are only small numbers of children who need palliative or end-of-life care each year in Ontario, the impact of caring for a dying child has an inordinate, long-term effect on their families. While there are some centres of excellence that offer comprehensive, coordinated pediatric palliative care, many families are unable to access even the most basic services."

I think, if I may say, what struck me about this, after having heard the member's story about her own family and her sister, Nancy Rose, and their situation, was how little things have changed, how striking it is how little has changed.

I want to conclude, Madam Speaker, by saying that, having heard the perspectives of this parent and these families and the perspective of my colleague and our colleagues present, I trust that all members will understand the deep importance of this legislation and support the Nancy Rose Act.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Jennifer K. French): Further debate?

Ms. Sara Singh: It is a true honour to rise here today and support the work that our member from Hamilton West–Ancaster–Dundas is doing. I'd just like start off by congratulating you on turning what was a tragedy for your family into something very powerful and productive for the rest of this province so that no family should endure what yours did. Thank you so much for doing that work.

I am really proud to support Bill 114, which would require that the province develop a pediatric hospice palliative care strategy here in our province, with the goal of providing equity in these services, again, across the province. As we heard from many of the speakers earlier, there are only three pediatric palliative care homes in Ontario, located in Toronto, Milton and Ottawa.

I think about families in rural communities. I think about families in my own community of Brampton and how difficult it must be for them to access life-saving services for their children.

I know the importance of palliative care because of my own experience with my older brother. While he was not a child receiving pediatric care, I can definitely attest to the difficulties we experienced as a family in getting the right palliative care to extend his life and to ensure that he could be brought home every day and spend that time with us. I can only imagine what it feels like to have a small child and have to drive across the 400-series highways in order to get the blood transfusions you need to keep your son or daughter alive for just few more minutes, and how difficult and challenging that must be for families here in this province. I think it's really important that we are addressing what is a clear gap in our palliative care strategy here in this province and making sure that families can get the support they need.

I was really also pleased to see that this bill takes into consideration the impacts that palliative care has not only on the person who is toward the end of their life but also their family. This bill ensures that not only will people or children who require palliative care get the supports they need, but also that their family members get the support they need. These can be very difficult and trying times for a family. It is often their siblings or parents who are dealing with the brunt of this news. To learn that we're going to include mental health support in this bill and ensure that those families will get the support during and also after this situation that their family is going through is very, very powerful.

I'm really happy to hear that the government will be supporting our private member's bill, brought forward by our member from Hamilton West–Ancaster–Dundas. I think it is time that we do this for families here in this province. Families deserve better. We haven't heard from the government a clear indication that this was a part of their plan, part of the budget. A lot of concerns that we've been hearing from the dissolution that's happening around the LHINs is where families will be able to access these palliative care services, so I think a strategy like this allows us to let families here in this province know that we are listening, we are caring and we are taking these concerns seriously. We are putting forward a proactive strategy that will not only take into consideration adults and their needs in palliative care, but clearly the needs of children, who are the most vulnerable, frankly.

It was astonishing for me to learn that we actually didn't have a strategy in place. So I really do congratulate the member for finding a problem here and presenting a solution. I'm really happy that this government will be supporting it.

Thank you again, and thank you to everyone who is here with us in the gallery today. We appreciate it.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Jennifer K. French): The member for Hamilton West–Ancaster–Dundas has two minutes for her reply.

Ms. Sandy Shaw: As we all know, we disagree about a lot in this House. In fact, the member for Kitchener–Conestoga and I are more likely to heckle each other than we are to hug it out. But today, I learned that you're a father of five, and I didn't know that. This is exactly the

kind of time in the House when we see each other's humanity. I really am so heart-warmed to hear that the government side is prepared to support this bill.

I would also like to thank the member from Niagara West for the work you've done on this issue till now. I offer you my hope, my best wishes and prayers for your niece. Really, I only hope for the best for your niece.

I also would like to say that it's really important that we make sure we include an Indigenous lens. We talked about equity of access and the challenges that we have. The barriers are only exacerbated even more so in other communities.

To the member from Ottawa South: Again, thank you so much for your support and the work you have done. Also, to my colleague members who have shared their stories—we are a close team here. We really are a bonded unit. This has been an emotional time for all of us, and I want to thank you all for all of the support and love that you've shown me and that you show one another.

On behalf of my family, on behalf of our caucus, on behalf of all the bereaved families and parents out there, we thank you for your support. It has been mentioned a number of times that once you understand the need, once you move into this issue, palliative care, especially for children—it's something you can't leave behind. I feel in some way that I've found a connection that I didn't know was missing in my life. Some of the members who are here—I think it has maybe been 24 hours since I met some of you, and I know that this will be a lifelong relationship and a lifelong commitment as we move forward to make sure that no families in this province have to suffer this. I thank you for your support.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Jennifer K. French): The time for private members' public business has expired.

ACCESSIBILITY FOR PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Jennifer K. French): We will deal first with ballot item number 73, standing in the name of Mr. Harden.

Mr. Harden has moved private member's notice of motion number 68. Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? I heard a no.

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

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

In my opinion, the nays have it. We will deal with this vote after we have finished the other business.

PLANNING AMENDMENT ACT, 2019

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

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Jennifer K. French): Mr. Downey has moved second reading of Bill 88, An Act to amend the Planning Act. Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? I declare the motion carried.

Second reading agreed to.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Jennifer K. French): Which committee?

Mr. Doug Downey: The Standing Committee on Finance and Economic Affairs, please.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Jennifer K. French): Is it the pleasure of the House that that indeed is the committee? Are we agreed? Agreed.

NANCY ROSE ACT (PAEDIATRIC HOSPICE PALLIATIVE CARE STRATEGY), 2019 LOI NANCY ROSE DE 2019 (STRATÉGIE DES SOINS PALLIATIFS PÉDIATRIQUES)

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Jennifer K. French): Ms. Shaw has moved second reading of Bill 114, An Act to provide for the development of a provincial paediatric hospice palliative care strategy. Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? I declare the motion carried.

Second reading agreed to.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Jennifer K. French): Ms. Shaw?

Ms. Sandy Shaw: The Standing Committee on Finance and Economic Affairs.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Jennifer K. French): Is the House agreed? Okay.

ACCESSIBILITY FOR PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Jennifer K. French): I'm actually going to seek direction from the table. Is it a five-minute bell right now? Okay.

Call in all the members. This will be a five-minute bell.
The division bells rang from 1531 to 1536.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Jennifer K. French): Mr. Harden has moved private member's notice of motion number 68. All those in favour, please rise and remain standing until recognized by the Clerk.

Ayes

Armstrong, Teresa J.	Hassan, Faisal	Sattler, Peggy
Begum, Doly	Hatfield, Percy	Schreiner, Mike
Bell, Jessica	Karpoche, Bhutila	Shaw, Sandy
Berns-McGown, Rima	Lindo, Laura Mae	Singh, Gurratan
Des Rosiers, Nathalie	Mamakwa, Sol	Singh, Sara
Fife, Catherine	Mantha, Michael	Stiles, Marit
Fraser, John	Morrison, Suze	Tabuns, Peter
Glover, Chris	Natyshak, Taras	West, Jamie
Harden, Joel	Rakocevic, Tom	Yarde, Kevin

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Jennifer K. French): All those opposed, please rise and remain standing until recognized by the Clerk.

Nays

Anand, Deepak	Harris, Mike	Parsa, Michael
Baber, Roman	Hogarth, Christine	Pettapiece, Randy
Babikian, Aris	Jones, Sylvia	Phillips, Rod

Bailey, Robert	Kanapathi, Logan	Piccini, David	Fee, Amy	Mulroney, Caroline	Wai, Daisy
Bethlenfalvy, Peter	Karahalios, Belinda C.	Rasheed, Kaleed	Ghamari, Goldie	Oosterhoff, Sam	
Bouma, Will	Ke, Vincent	Roberts, Jeremy	Gill, Parm	Pang, Billy	
Calandra, Paul	Khanjin, Andrea	Sabawy, Sheref			
Cho, Raymond Sung Joon	Kramp, Daryl	Sandhu, Amarjot			
Cho, Stan	Kusendova, Natalia	Sarkaria, Prabmeet Singh			
Coe, Lorne	Lecce, Stephen	Skelly, Donna			
Crawford, Stephen	Martin, Robin	Smith, Dave			
Cuzzetto, Rudy	Martow, Gila	Thanigasalam, Vijay			
Downey, Doug	McDonell, Jim	Thompson, Lisa M.			
Dunlop, Jill	McKenna, Jane	Tibollo, Michael A.			
Fedeli, Victor	Miller, Norman	Triantafilopoulos, Effie J.			

The Clerk of the Assembly (Mr. Todd Decker): The ayes are 27; the nays are 52.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Jennifer K. French): I declare the motion lost.

Motion negatived.

Report continues in volume B.

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF ONTARIO
ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE DE L'ONTARIO

Lieutenant Governor / Lieutenante-gouverneure: Hon. / L'hon. Elizabeth Dowdeswell, OC, OOnt.

Speaker / Président: Hon. / L'hon. Ted Arnott

Clerk / Greffier: Todd Decker

Deputy Clerk / Sous-greffier: Trevor Day

Clerks-at-the-Table / Greffiers parlementaires: Tonia Grannum, Valerie Quioc Lim, William Short

Sergeant-at-Arms / Sergente d'armes: Jacquelyn Gordon

Member and Party / Député(e) et parti	Constituency / Circonscription	Other responsibilities / Autres responsabilités
Anand, Deepak (PC)	Mississauga—Malton	
Andrew, Jill (NDP)	Toronto—St. Paul's	
Armstrong, Teresa J. (NDP)	London—Fanshawe	Deputy Opposition House Leader / Leader parlementaire adjointe de l'opposition officielle
Arnott, Hon. / L'hon. Ted (PC)	Wellington—Halton Hills	Speaker / Président de l'Assemblée législative
Arthur, Ian (NDP)	Kingston and the Islands / Kingston et les Îles	
Baber, Roman (PC)	York Centre / York-Centre	
Babikian, Aris (PC)	Scarborough—Agincourt	
Bailey, Robert (PC)	Sarnia—Lambton	
Barrett, Toby (PC)	Haldimand—Norfolk	
Begum, Doly (NDP)	Scarborough Southwest / Scarborough-Sud-Ouest	
Bell, Jessica (NDP)	University—Rosedale	
Berns-McGown, Rima (NDP)	Beaches—East York / Beaches—East York	
Bethlenfalvy, Hon. / L'hon. Peter (PC)	Pickering—Uxbridge	President of the Treasury Board / Président du Conseil du Trésor
Bisson, Gilles (NDP)	Timmins	Opposition House Leader / Leader parlementaire de l'opposition officielle
Bouma, Will (PC)	Brantford—Brant	
Bourgouin, Guy (NDP)	Mushkegowuk—James Bay / Mushkegowuk—Baie James	
Burch, Jeff (NDP)	Niagara Centre / Niagara-Centre	
Calandra, Paul (PC)	Markham—Stouffville	
Cho, Hon. / L'hon. Raymond Sung Joon (PC)	Scarborough North / Scarborough-Nord	Minister for Seniors and Accessibility / Ministre des Services aux aînés et de l'Accessibilité
Cho, Stan (PC)	Willowdale	
Clark, Hon. / L'hon. Steve (PC)	Leeds—Grenville—Thousand Islands and Rideau Lakes / Leeds—Grenville—Thousand Islands et Rideau Lakes	Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing / Ministre des Affaires municipales et du Logement
Coe, Lorne (PC)	Whitby	
Coteau, Michael (LIB)	Don Valley East / Don Valley-Est	
Crawford, Stephen (PC)	Oakville	
Cuzzetto, Rudy (PC)	Mississauga—Lakeshore	
Des Rosiers, Nathalie (LIB)	Ottawa—Vanier	
Downey, Doug (PC)	Barrie—Springwater—Oro-Medonte	
Dunlop, Jill (PC)	Simcoe North / Simcoe-Nord	
Elliott, Hon. / L'hon. Christine (PC)	Newmarket—Aurora	Deputy Premier / Vice-première ministre Minister of Health and Long-Term Care / Ministre de la Santé et des Soins de longue durée
Fedeli, Hon. / L'hon. Victor (PC)	Nipissing	Chair of Cabinet / Président du Conseil des ministres Minister of Finance / Ministre des Finances
Fee, Amy (PC)	Kitchener South—Hespeler / Kitchener-Sud—Hespeler	
Fife, Catherine (NDP)	Waterloo	
Ford, Hon. / L'hon. Doug (PC)	Etobicoke North / Etobicoke-Nord	Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs / Ministre des Affaires intergouvernementales Premier / Premier ministre
Fraser, John (LIB)	Ottawa South / Ottawa-Sud	
French, Jennifer K. (NDP)	Oshawa	Third Deputy Chair of the Committee of the Whole House / Troisième vice-présidente du comité plénier de l'Assemblée législative

Member and Party / Député(e) et parti	Constituency / Circonscription	Other responsibilities / Autres responsabilités
Fullerton, Hon. / L'hon. Merrilee (PC)	Kanata—Carleton	Minister of Training, Colleges and Universities / Ministre de la Formation et des Collèges et Universités
Gates, Wayne (NDP)	Niagara Falls	
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	
Gretzky, Lisa (NDP)	Windsor West / Windsor-Ouest	First Deputy Chair of the Committee of the Whole House / Première vice-présidente du comité plénier de l'Assemblée
Hardeman, Hon. / L'hon. Ernie (PC)	Oxford	Minister of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs / Ministre de l'Agriculture, de l'Alimentation et des Affaires rurales
Harden, Joel (NDP)	Ottawa Centre / Ottawa-Centre	
Harris, Mike (PC)	Kitchener—Conestoga	
Hassan, Faisal (NDP)	York South—Weston / York-Sud— Weston	
Hatfield, Percy (NDP)	Windsor—Tecumseh	Second Deputy Chair of the Committee of the Whole House / Deuxième vice-président du comité plénier de l'Assemblée législative
Hillier, Randy (IND)	Lanark—Frontenac—Kingston	
Hogarth, Christine (PC)	Etobicoke—Lakeshore	
Horwath, Andrea (NDP)	Hamilton Centre / Hamilton-Centre	Leader, Official Opposition / Chef de l'opposition officielle
Hunter, Mitzie (LIB)	Scarborough—Guildwood	
Jones, Hon. / L'hon. Sylvia (PC)	Dufferin—Caledon	Solicitor General / Solliciteure générale
Kanapathi, Logan (PC)	Markham—Thornhill	
Karahalios, Belinda C. (PC)	Cambridge	
Karpoche, Bhutla (NDP)	Parkdale—High Park	
Ke, Vincent (PC)	Don Valley North / Don Valley-Nord	
Kernaghan, Terence (NDP)	London North Centre / London- Centre-Nord	
Khanjin, Andrea (PC)	Barrie—Innisfil	
Kramp, Daryl (PC)	Hastings—Lennox and Addington	
Kusendova, Natalia (PC)	Mississauga Centre / Mississauga- Centre	
Lalonde, Marie-France (LIB)	Orléans	
Lecce, Stephen (PC)	King—Vaughan	Deputy Government House Leader / Leader parlementaire adjoint du gouvernement
Lindo, Laura Mae (NDP)	Kitchener Centre / Kitchener-Centre	
MacLeod, Hon. / L'hon. Lisa (PC)	Nepean	Minister of Children, Community and Social Services / Ministre des Services à l'enfance et des Services sociaux et communautaires Minister Responsible for Women's Issues / Ministre déléguée à la Condition féminine
Mamakwa, Sol (NDP)	Kiiwetinoong	
Mantha, Michael (NDP)	Algoma—Manitoulin	
Martin, Robin (PC)	Eglinton—Lawrence	
Martow, Gila (PC)	Thornhill	
McDonell, Jim (PC)	Stormont—Dundas—South Glengarry	
McKenna, Jane (PC)	Burlington	
McNaughton, Hon. / L'hon. Monte (PC)	Lambton—Kent—Middlesex	Minister of Infrastructure / Ministre de l'Infrastructure
Miller, Norman (PC)	Parry Sound—Muskoka	
Miller, Paul (NDP)	Hamilton East—Stoney Creek / Hamilton-Est—Stoney Creek	
Mitas, Christina Maria (PC)	Scarborough Centre / Scarborough- Centre	
Monteith-Farrell, Judith (NDP)	Thunder Bay—Atikokan	
Morrison, Suze (NDP)	Toronto Centre / Toronto-Centre	
Mulroney, Hon. / L'hon. Caroline (PC)	York—Simcoe	Attorney General / Procureure générale Minister of Francophone Affairs / Ministre des Affaires francophones
Natyshak, Taras (NDP)	Essex	
Nicholls, Rick (PC)	Chatham-Kent—Leamington	Chair of the Committee of the Whole House / Président du comité plénier de l'Assemblée Deputy Speaker / Vice-président
Oosterhoff, Sam (PC)	Niagara West / Niagara-Ouest	

Member and Party / Député(e) et parti	Constituency / Circonscription	Other responsibilities / Autres responsabilités
Pang, Billy (PC)	Markham—Unionville	
Park, Lindsey (PC)	Durham	
Parsa, Michael (PC)	Aurora—Oak Ridges—Richmond Hill	
Pettapiece, Randy (PC)	Perth—Wellington	
Phillips, Hon. / L'hon. Rod (PC)	Ajax	Minister of the Environment, Conservation and Parks / Ministre de l'Environnement, de la Protection de la nature et des Parcs
Piccini, David (PC)	Northumberland—Peterborough South / Northumberland—Peterborough-Sud	
Rakocevic, Tom (NDP)	Humber River—Black Creek	
Rasheed, Kaleed (PC)	Mississauga East—Cooksville / Mississauga-Est—Cooksville	
Rickford, Hon. / L'hon. Greg (PC)	Kenora—Rainy River	Minister of Energy, Northern Development and Mines / Ministre de l'Énergie, du Développement du Nord et des Mines Minister of Indigenous Affairs / Ministre des Affaires autochtones
Roberts, Jeremy (PC)	Ottawa West—Nepean / Ottawa-Ouest—Nepean	
Romano, Ross (PC)	Sault Ste. Marie	
Sabawy, Sheref (PC)	Mississauga—Erin Mills	
Sandhu, Amarjot (PC)	Brampton West / Brampton-Ouest	
Sarkaria, Prabmeet Singh (PC)	Brampton South / Brampton-Sud	
Sattler, Peggy (NDP)	London West / London-Ouest	
Schreiner, Mike (GRN)	Guelph	
Scott, Hon. / L'hon. Laurie (PC)	Haliburton—Kawartha Lakes—Brock	Minister of Labour / Ministre du Travail
Shaw, Sandy (NDP)	Hamilton West—Ancaster—Dundas / Hamilton-Ouest—Ancaster—Dundas	
Simard, Amanda (IND)	Glengarry—Prescott—Russell	
Singh, Gurratan (NDP)	Brampton East / Brampton-Est	
Singh, Sara (NDP)	Brampton Centre / Brampton-Centre	Deputy Leader, Official Opposition / Chef adjointe de l'opposition officielle
Skelly, Donna (PC)	Flamborough—Glanbrook	
Smith, Dave (PC)	Peterborough—Kawartha	
Smith, Hon. / L'hon. Todd (PC)	Bay of Quinte / Baie de Quinte	Minister of Economic Development, Job Creation and Trade / Ministre du Développement économique, de la Création d'emplois et du Commerce Government House Leader / Leader parlementaire du gouvernement
Stevens, Jennifer (Jennie) (NDP)	St. Catharines	
Stiles, Marit (NDP)	Davenport	
Surma, Kinga (PC)	Etobicoke Centre / Etobicoke-Centre	
Tabuns, Peter (NDP)	Toronto—Danforth	
Tangri, Nina (PC)	Mississauga—Streetsville	
Taylor, Monique (NDP)	Hamilton Mountain	
Thanigasalam, Vijay (PC)	Scarborough—Rouge Park	
Thompson, Hon. / L'hon. Lisa M. (PC)	Huron—Bruce	Minister of Education / Ministre de l'Éducation
Tibollo, Hon. / L'hon. Michael A. (PC)	Vaughan—Woodbridge	Minister of Tourism, Culture and Sport / Ministre du Tourisme, de la Culture et du Sport
Triantafilopoulos, Effie J. (PC)	Oakville North—Burlington / Oakville-Nord—Burlington	
Vanthof, John (NDP)	Timiskaming—Cochrane	Deputy Leader, Official Opposition / Chef adjoint de l'opposition officielle
Wai, Daisy (PC)	Richmond Hill	
Walker, Hon. / L'hon. Bill (PC)	Bruce—Grey—Owen Sound	Minister of Government and Consumer Services / Ministre des Services gouvernementaux et des Services aux consommateurs
West, Jamie (NDP)	Sudbury	
Wilson, Jim (IND)	Simcoe—Grey	
Wynne, Kathleen O. (LIB)	Don Valley West / Don Valley-Ouest	
Yakubski, Hon. / L'hon. John (PC)	Renfrew—Nipissing—Pembroke	Minister of Natural Resources and Forestry / Ministre des Richesses naturelles et des Forêts
Yarde, Kevin (NDP)	Brampton North / Brampton-Nord	
Yurek, Hon. / L'hon. Jeff (PC)	Elgin—Middlesex—London	Minister of Transportation / Ministre des Transports

**STANDING COMMITTEES OF THE LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY
COMITÉS PERMANENTS DE L'ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE**

Standing Committee on Estimates / Comité permanent des budgets des dépenses

Chair / Président: Peter Tabuns
Vice-Chair / Vice-président: Wayne Gates
Stan Cho, Jill Dunlop
Wayne Gates, Randy Hillier
Stephen Lecce, Gila Martow
Jane McKenna, Judith Monteith-Farrell
Lindsey Park, Randy Pettapiece
Peter Tabuns
Committee Clerk / Greffier: Timothy Bryan

Standing Committee on Finance and Economic Affairs / Comité permanent des finances et des affaires économiques

Chair / Président: Stephen Crawford
Vice-Chair / Vice-président: Jeremy Roberts
Ian Arthur, Stephen Crawford
Doug Downey, Sol Mamakwa
David Piccini, Kaleed Rasheed
Jeremy Roberts, Sandy Shaw
Donna Skelly
Committee Clerk / Greffier: Timothy Bryan

Standing Committee on General Government / Comité permanent des affaires gouvernementales

Chair / Président: Dave Smith
Vice-Chair / Vice-présidente: Natalia Kusendova
Jessica Bell, Chris Glover
Christine Hogarth, Logan Kanapathi
Daryl Kramp, Natalia Kusendova
Amarjot Sandhu, Mike Schreiner
Dave Smith, Jennifer (Jennie) Stevens
Daisy Wai
Committee Clerk / Greffière: Julia Douglas

Standing Committee on Government Agencies / Comité permanent des organismes gouvernementaux

Chair / Président: John Vanthof
Vice-Chair / Vice-président: Taras Natyshak
Roman Baber, Rudy Cuzzetto
Amy Fee, Vincent Ke
Andrea Khanjin, Marie-France Lalonde
Taras Natyshak, Rick Nicholls
Jeremy Roberts, Marit Stiles
John Vanthof
Committee Clerk / Greffière: Jocelyn McCauley

Standing Committee on Justice Policy / Comité permanent de la justice

Chair / Président: Parm Gill
Vice-Chair / Vice-président: Aris Babikian
Roman Baber, Aris Babikian
Nathalie Des Rosiers, Jill Dunlop
Parm Gill, Lindsey Park
Ross Romano, Prabmeet Singh Sarkaria
Sara Singh, Monique Taylor
Kevin Yarde
Committee Clerk / Greffière: Jocelyn McCauley

Standing Committee on the Legislative Assembly / Comité permanent de l'Assemblée législative

Chair / Présidente: Jane McKenna
Vice-Chair / Vice-président: Vijay Thanigasalam
Robert Bailey, Rima Berns-McGown
Lorne Coe, Michael Coteau
Mike Harris, Faisal Hassan
Jane McKenna, Christina Maria Mitas
Sam Oosterhoff, Gurratan Singh
Vijay Thanigasalam
Committee Clerk / Greffière: Valerie Quioc Lim

Standing Committee on Public Accounts / Comité permanent des comptes publics

Chair / Présidente: Catherine Fife
Vice-Chair / Vice-présidente: Peggy Sattler
Toby Barrett, Catherine Fife
Goldie Ghamari, Michael Gravelle
Jim McDonell, Norman Miller
Christina Maria Mitas, Suze Morrison
Michael Parsa, Peggy Sattler
Kinga Surma
Committee Clerk / Greffier: Christopher Tyrell

Standing Committee on Regulations and Private Bills / Comité permanent des règlements et des projets de loi d'intérêt privé

Chair / Président: Kaleed Rasheed
Vice-Chair / Vice-président: Will Bouma
Will Bouma, Paul Calandra
Lorne Coe, Stephen Crawford
Mitzie Hunter, Laura Mae Lindo
Paul Miller, Billy Pang
Kaleed Rasheed, Amarjot Sandhu
Jamie West
Committee Clerk / Greffier: Eric Rennie

Standing Committee on Social Policy / Comité permanent de la politique sociale

Chair / Présidente: Nina Tangri
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Deepak Anand, Doly Begum
Jeff Burch, Amy Fee
John Fraser, Joel Harden
Belinda C. Karahalios, Robin Martin
Sheref Sabawy, Nina Tangri
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