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Lundi
3 juin 2019

Speaker: Honourable Ted Arnott
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Président : L'honorable Ted Arnott
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CONTENTS / TABLE DES MATIÈRES

Monday 3 June 2019 / Lundi 3 juin 2019

INTRODUCTION OF VISITORS / PRÉSENTATION DES VISITEURS

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott).....	5459
Ms. Jill Dunlop.....	5459
Ms. Judith Monteith-Farrell	5459
Hon. Victor Fedeli	5459
Ms. Jill Andrew.....	5459
Mr. Mike Harris	5459
Mr. Ian Arthur.....	5459
Mr. Stan Cho.....	5459
Mr. Chris Glover	5459
Mr. Parm Gill.....	5459
Mme Marit Stiles	5459
Mr. Roman Baber	5459
Hon. Lisa M. Thompson	5459
Ms. Bhutla Karpoche	5459
Hon. Bill Walker.....	5459
Mr. Paul Calandra	5460
Mr. Stephen Crawford.....	5460
Hon. Jeff Yurek	5460
Ms. Jane McKenna	5460
Ms. Christine Hogarth.....	5460
Mrs. Robin Martin.....	5460

Birth of member's grandchild

Hon. John Yakabuski	5460
---------------------------	------

Anniversary of attack on the Golden Temple

Mr. Gurratan Singh.....	5460
-------------------------	------

Wearing of pins

Hon. Michael A. Tibollo	5460
-------------------------------	------

ORAL QUESTIONS / QUESTIONS ORALES

Land use planning

Ms. Andrea Horwath.....	5460
Hon. Steve Clark	5460

Health care funding

Ms. Andrea Horwath.....	5461
Hon. Christine Elliott	5461

Addiction services

Ms. Andrea Horwath.....	5462
Hon. Christine Elliott	5462

Beverage alcohol sales

Ms. Jane McKenna.....	5463
Hon. Doug Ford	5463

Education funding

Ms. Marit Stiles.....	5463
Hon. Lisa M. Thompson	5464

Children's services

Mme Nathalie Des Rosiers.....	5464
Hon. Caroline Mulroney	5464
Hon. Jeff Yurek.....	5465

Fire near Pikangikum First Nation

Mr. Dave Smith.....	5465
Hon. Greg Rickford.....	5465

Smoking cessation

Mme France Gélinas	5466
Hon. Christine Elliott	5466

Infrastructure funding

Mr. Mike Harris	5466
Hon. Monte McNaughton	5466
Mr. Lorne Coe.....	5466

Government advertising

Mr. Taras Natyshak	5467
Hon. Greg Rickford	5467

Forest industry

Mr. Ross Romano.....	5467
Hon. John Yakabuski	5467

Legal aid

Ms. Sara Singh	5468
Hon. Caroline Mulroney	5468

Protection of privacy

Mr. Kaleed Rasheed.....	5469
Hon. Bill Walker	5469

Conservation authorities

Ms. Judith Monteith-Farrell	5469
Hon. Doug Ford	5469
Hon. John Yakabuski	5470

Notice of dissatisfaction

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott).....	5470
------------------------------------	------

Visitors

Hon. Steve Clark	5470
Miss Monique Taylor	5470
Mr. Vincent Ke.....	5470

INTRODUCTION OF VISITORS / PRÉSENTATION DES VISITEURS

Ms. Sara Singh	5470
Ms. Jennifer K. French.....	5470

MEMBERS' STATEMENTS / DÉCLARATIONS DES DÉPUTÉS

Violence against Indigenous women and girls

Mr. Sol Mamakwa.....	5470
----------------------	------

Gilbert Francis Whittamore	
Mr. Paul Calandra	5471
Menstrual products	
Ms. Marit Stiles	5471
Royal Canadian Legion Branch #136—Milton	
Mr. Parm Gill	5471
Climate change	
Mr. Peter Tabuns	5471
Filipino Heritage Month / Mois du patrimoine philippin	
Mme Nathalie Des Rosiers	5472
Lansdowne Children's Centre	
Mr. Will Bouma	5472
Correctional services	
Miss Monique Taylor	5472
Seniors' Month	
Ms. Natalia Kusendova	5472
Basketball	
Mr. Stan Cho	5473

INTRODUCTION OF BILLS / DÉPÔT DES PROJETS DE LOI

Municipal Representation and Restructuring Protection Act, 2019, Bill 121, Ms. Horwath / Loi de 2019 visant à protéger les municipalités contre des modifications en matière de représentation et de restructuration municipales, projet de loi 121, Mme Horwath	
First reading agreed to	5473
Ms. Andrea Horwath	5473
Fairness for Road Users Act (Contraventions Causing Death or Serious Bodily Harm), 2019, Bill 122, Ms. French / Loi de 2019 sur l'équité envers les usagers de la route (contraventions ayant causé un décès ou des blessures corporelles graves), projet de loi 122, Mme French	
First reading agreed to	5474
Ms. Jennifer K. French	5474

MOTIONS

House sittings	
Hon. Sylvia Jones	5474
Motion agreed to	5474

PETITIONS / PÉTITIONS

Autism treatment	
Mme France Gélinas	5474

Injured workers	
Ms. Bhutla Karpoche	5474
Homeopathy	
Mr. Toby Barrett	5474
Education funding	
Ms. Marit Stiles	5475
Beverage alcohol sales	
Mr. Stephen Crawford	5475
Indigenous affairs	
Ms. Catherine Fife	5475
Education funding	
Mr. Paul Miller	5475
Education funding	
Mr. Tom Rakocovic	5476
Education funding	
Mr. John Vanthof	5476
Library services	
Mr. Michael Mantha	5476
Health care funding	
Mme France Gélinas	5476
Toronto Transit Commission	
Ms. Bhutla Karpoche	5476
LCBO	
Ms. Sandy Shaw	5477
Curriculum	
Mme France Gélinas	5477

ORDERS OF THE DAY / ORDRE DU JOUR

Time allocation	
Hon. John Yakabuski	5477
Ms. Jane McKenna	5478
Mr. Gilles Bisson	5480
Mr. David Piccini	5485
Mr. Michael Mantha	5488
Mme Goldie Ghamari	5489
Mr. Percy Hatfield	5490
Mr. John Vanthof	5491
Ms. Bhutla Karpoche	5492
Vote deferred	5493
Time allocation	
Hon. Bill Walker	5493
Mr. Will Bouma	5493
Mr. Kevin Yarde	5495
Mr. Stephen Crawford	5496
Mme France Gélinas	5498
Mr. Rick Nicholls	5500
Vote deferred	5501

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF ONTARIO

Monday 3 June 2019

ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE DE L'ONTARIO

Lundi 3 juin 2019

The House met at 1030.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Let us begin this morning with a moment of silence for inner thought and personal reflection.

Let us pray.

Prayers.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): This being the first sitting Monday of the month, I wish to acknowledge this territory as a traditional gathering place for many Indigenous nations, most recently the Mississaugas of the Credit First Nation.

This morning we have with us in the Speaker's gallery the Fairbank Public School junior choir, from the riding of Toronto–St. Paul's, to help us to sing O Canada.

Singing of O Canada.

INTRODUCTION OF VISITORS

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Before I ask the members to introduce their guests, I would like to introduce some special guests in our visitors' gallery. We have with us in the Speaker's gallery today a US delegation representing the Midwestern Legislative Conference, which is an interparliamentary association to which the assembly is a key partner. Senator Jim Stamas of Michigan, who is the vice-chair of the Midwest-Canada committee, is accompanied by Mike McCabe and Ilene Grossman of the MLC executive office. Please join me in warmly welcoming our guests to the Legislative Assembly.

Applause.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Also in the Speaker's gallery this morning is a former member from the 31st through the 39th Parliaments, Norm Sterling. He is joined by his wife, Joan Sterling, and the family of his grandson, page Jackson Stearns: Jarrod Stearns, Rhonda Neulander and Jordan Stearns. Welcome to Queen's Park. We're delighted to have you here.

Ms. Jill Dunlop: I would like to introduce the parents of the page from Simcoe North, Ariana Rizzo: Elizabeth Van Houtte and her father, Dennis Rizzo. Thank you for being here today and for visiting Ariana.

Ms. Judith Monteith-Farrell: I would like to welcome to Queen's Park today students and educators from the Thunder Bay Christian School. I hope they have a great day.

Hon. Victor Fedeli: I want to welcome Andrea Maldonado and Jose Inguñiz from my riding, who are here for a tour of Queen's Park.

Ms. Jill Andrew: First off, I'd like to say thank you to Fairbank school for singing O Canada—the best singers in Toronto.

Joining us in the members' gallery today, we are proud to have the family of legislative page Declan Fowler from our riding of Toronto–St. Paul's. We've got the father, Greg Fowler. It's very nice to see you. We've got the brother, Henry Fowler, and of course, we've got big shout-outs to mom, Pamela Millar. Welcome to the Legislature.

Mr. Mike Harris: It's an honour and a pleasure today to be able to welcome the family of our page captain today, Sadee Zister. They're all the way from New Hamburg. I believe there are 10 of them in the gallery today, so a warm welcome from the Legislature.

Mr. Ian Arthur: Speaker, I know you already did this introduction. But Jackson, the page captain today, is from Kingston and the Islands, so I would also like to welcome Rhonda, Jarrod, Jordan, Joan and Norm to the Legislature. Thank you so much for coming.

Mr. Stan Cho: I just want to welcome my friend Mike Cudi, who is best known in Willowdale for painting a giant mural last year reminding people to vote. Welcome to the Legislature.

Mr. Chris Glover: It's my pleasure to welcome to the House today a retired Toronto Star education reporter, Louise Brown; her husband, Jerry Johnson; and their friends Tom Scanlan and Sharon Scanlan.

Mr. Parm Gill: I want to recognize and congratulate my constituency assistant, Evan, who got married over the weekend to Paula. He's already back at work this morning. I want to congratulate both Evan and Paula, and I want to wish both of them all of the very best.

M^{me} Marit Stiles: Je suis heureuse de présenter Germain Collinge, un résident de Davenport, ainsi que ses parents Cécile Collinge et Jean Rouleau, en visite du Québec aujourd'hui. Bienvenue à Queen's Park.

Mr. Roman Baber: I'd like to introduce Angela Brandt and the Brandt family, constituents from the riding of York Centre. Welcome.

Hon. Lisa M. Thompson: I'd like to welcome home Jack, Ella and Davis—it's a warm, virtual welcome—if you're watching with Grandma.

Ms. Bhutla Karpoche: I'd like to welcome the students and teachers of High Park Alternative, who are here at Queen's Park for a tour.

I'd also like to give a warm welcome to Rebecca Holland, a constituent and a volunteer in my office.

1040

Hon. Bill Walker: It's my pleasure to introduce Anji Cottrill, mother of page captain Maisie Cottrill, from Tara in the great riding of Bruce–Grey–Owen Sound. Welcome to Queen's Park, and enjoy your day.

Mr. Paul Calandra: I would like to introduce a constituent of mine, Sir Knight Nicholas Quadrini, who received his fourth degree in the Knights of Columbus just yesterday, Mr. Speaker. Welcome to Queen's Park.

Mr. Stephen Crawford: I'm pleased to introduce to the Legislature Oakville constituent Al Durk. Welcome to the Legislature, Al.

Hon. Jeff Yurek: I would like to introduce Martin Haalstra, here from the riding. Welcome. Enjoy question period.

Ms. Jane McKenna: I want to give a warm welcome to Nancy and Adrian Markowiak—I hope I said that right—from Burlington today. I look forward to meeting with you after.

Ms. Christine Hogarth: I'd like to introduce three friends who are visiting from Sudbury: Rainer Berens, Noreen McChesney and Hannah Berens. Hannah is enjoying politics. This is her first day at Queen's Park, so I wish her well on her tour today.

Mrs. Robin Martin: I just wanted to recognize and acknowledge my friend Janet McDougall, who is in the public gallery.

BIRTH OF MEMBER'S GRANDCHILD

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): A number of members have informed me that they wish to raise a point of order. I'll start with the Minister of Natural Resources and Forestry.

Hon. John Yakabuski: Thanks very much, Speaker. It's my pleasure to inform the House that on Friday evening before I drove home, I got a text from my wife to let me know that we were welcoming our 10th grandchild, a granddaughter: Anya Wiebke Mundt Chipping, at 7:26 p.m., seven pounds, 10 ounces and 20 inches long. God bless.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Congratulations.

ANNIVERSARY OF ATTACK ON THE GOLDEN TEMPLE

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): I understand that the member for Brampton East has a point of order.

Mr. Gurratan Singh: I believe we have unanimous consent for a moment of silence, Mr. Speaker. Some 35 years ago, 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 and into more than 40 other gurdwaras across Punjab, killing thousands of innocent worshippers. This attack has left a permanent impact on the Sikh community across the world and here in Ontario. I ask for the unanimous consent of this House for a moment of silence to remember the thousands of innocent lives who were lost in those devastating and terrible attacks. Lest we forget.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): The member for Brampton East is seeking unanimous consent of the House for a moment of silence in remembrance of the victims of the tragedy 35 years ago in Punjab. Agreed? Agreed.

The House observed a moment's silence.

WEARING OF PINS

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Minister of Tourism, Culture and Sport, I understand that you have a point of order you would like to raise.

Hon. Michael A. Tibollo: Good morning, Mr. Speaker. In 2010, the Legislature for the province of Ontario passed Bill 103 declaring June Italian Heritage Month. In commemoration of that, I'm asking for unanimous consent today for everyone to wear a pin marking the beginning of Italian Heritage Month. I'm also letting everyone know that we'll be raising the flag at noon today outside the Legislature. Everyone is welcome to attend.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): The Minister of Tourism, Culture and Sport is seeking the unanimous consent of the House to allow members to wear a pin in recognition of Italian Heritage Month. Agreed? Agreed.

ORAL QUESTIONS

LAND USE PLANNING

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): It is now time for oral questions, and I recognize the leader of the official opposition.

Ms. Andrea Horwath: Speaker, before I start, though, I just want to say a big thank you to first responders in the Ottawa area, who made sure that people were safe. As the storms were happening on Sunday, they made sure that folks were safe and took care of people's concerns. It's been a tough go in the Ottawa area, and the challenges on the weekend were yet another difficulty that first responders had to deal with—and people of Ottawa-Vanier as well. I think our hearts go out to everyone, and thanks to everyone as well.

Speaker, my question is for the Premier. Earlier this morning, I laid out details of legislation that would ensure municipalities don't have changes to their governance imposed on them without consultation or their consent. Sadly, that hasn't been the reality in Ontario over the last year, as the Premier made clear when he cancelled elections in Peel and Toronto, even if it meant bypassing the Constitution and using the "notwithstanding" clause.

My question is, what guarantees do Ontarians have that the Premier won't be doing this again?

Hon. Doug Ford: Minister of Municipal Affairs.

Hon. Steve Clark: Our government values our municipal partners, and we have had, and will continue to have, a very robust consultation with our stakeholders, including the Association of Municipalities of Ontario. I'm looking forward to our monthly meeting at the AMO MOU table next week, and I look forward to continuing to meet with our partners. The regional governments have a meeting this Friday. I look forward to engaging with them. I just finished meeting with LUMCO a couple weeks ago, as most people in the House realize.

Again, Speaker, our government is committed to consulting with our municipalities. We've proven, through the

AMO MOU table, that we're able to have a very robust discussion. We'll continue to do so, Speaker.

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

Ms. Andrea Horwath: Well, Speaker, this year, the Premier attempted to impose retroactive cuts to municipal services, ranging from school breakfast programs to paramedics, which is actually why the minister had to meet with LUMCO—so that he could backtrack on those odious decisions.

This week, he's ignoring municipal concerns about Bill 108, his scheme to let developers override municipal planning and environmental regulations. Letters rejecting Bill 108 continue to pour in from municipalities across the province. I can't imagine LUMCO wouldn't have something to say about it.

Will the government listen to Ontario's municipalities this time and cancel the regressive changes proposed in Bill 108?

Hon. Steve Clark: Speaker, I made it clear to the members of LUMCO that we would hope that all 444 municipalities would look to find efficiencies to help that level of government work more effectively and deliver services as best they can to their constituents.

But I want to correct the record in terms of our consultation. We consulted widely on Bill 108 and our More Homes, More Choice: Ontario's Housing Supply Action Plan. We received over 2,000 submissions, and 85% of those submissions came from the general public. In terms of our regional government review, we received, I believe, in excess of 5,000 submissions from the public through our online portal.

We continue to consult with municipalities, and we've indicated, Speaker, that in terms of Bill 108 on the community benefits authority, we will continue to consult with municipalities. We will continue to sit across the table from them and get their advice on how to proceed in that section.

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

Ms. Andrea Horwath: The government is once again running roughshod over Ontario's municipalities with Bill 108. They've had just one day of hearings and refuse to expand those hearings while municipalities continue to send in concerns by letter to this very day, Speaker. From Durham to Brampton to South Frontenac to Aurora, municipalities are passing resolutions asking the government not to move forward with legislation that will revert back to the old OMB model.

But the Premier, of course, isn't listening. He won't extend deadlines for comments. He won't offer any more time for committee hearings. He continues to stonewall Ontario municipalities at every turn and refuses to engage in a meaningful consultation.

1050

Why is the government once again shutting out Ontario's municipalities and not considering what they have to say?

Hon. Steve Clark: Again, Speaker, in terms of the community benefits charge, that's exactly what we've

indicated. We've indicated that we are going to be consulting municipalities on the formula that ultimately is presented. Again, we've consulted municipalities. We've consulted the general public.

But, Speaker, we have to realize why we tabled Bill 108, the More Homes, More Choice Act. For too long, government has stood in the way of creating affordable housing options for people in this province. We're in a housing crisis in this province, and we had to do something. We can no longer have government standing in the way. We have to work with all of our partners, whether they be non-profits, whether they be the home builders in this province, or our municipalities.

Make no mistake, Speaker: We're going to continue to consult, but we need more housing and more choice now. We can't wait another minute.

HEALTH CARE FUNDING

Ms. Andrea Horwath: My next question is also to the Premier, but I have to say that there's a crisis in housing affordability, and this government is not solving it with their ramming through of Bill 108.

Tomorrow we'll have a long-awaited opportunity to hear—

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Stop the clock. Government side, come to order.

Start the clock.

Ms. Andrea Horwath: Tomorrow we'll have a long-awaited opportunity to hear from the Minister of Health as the Standing Committee on Estimates gets a chance to review the Ford government's scheme for health care spending cuts, but perhaps the Premier can get the ball rolling for us today. The Financial Accountability Office tells us that Ontario's health budget will be decreased by \$2.7 billion over the next two years. Can the Premier tell Ontarians how many more patients will be stacked up in hallways as a result of these cuts to our health care system?

Hon. Doug Ford: Minister of Health.

Hon. Christine Elliott: As the leader of the official opposition knows, we made a promise to the people of Ontario last year during the last election campaign that we were going to end hallway health care, we were going to increase the number of long-term-care beds and we were going to make sure that we created patient-centred health care, and that's what we're doing. We have actually added \$1.3 billion to the health care budget for this year. That's going to be expended in a variety of ways, but we want to make sure that we're going to end hallway health care; that's one of our key promises.

Right now we have over 1,000 patients a day receiving health care in hospital hallways, storage rooms and other places that are not acceptable—not for patients and not for providers. We're going to end that. We are increasing spending because we know that is an important policy and an important concept that the people of Ontario expect us to continue. Health care and education are those two key policies, and that's what we're going to deliver on.

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

Ms. Andrea Horwath: Well, Speaker, I might want to remind the government that their last election campaign claimed that they were going to make cuts but they weren't going to touch health care or education. So much for that.

In fact, the independent Financial Accountability Office was crystal clear in their report. Again, the Financial Accountability Office is independent. It's not government spin. It's a person and a group of people who work for the public without any bias. What they said is that the Ford government is proposing to cut health spending to a level that Ontario has only seen once in 40 years: during the Mike Harris government of the 1990s. During that time, Ontario families saw 6,000 nurses fired and 28 hospitals closed.

Has the cut-first, plan-later government prepared any analysis whatsoever of how this round of cuts will impact front-line health services and staff?

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Stop the clock. Government side, come to order.

Start the clock. Minister to reply.

Hon. Christine Elliott: Well, I certainly want to be clear to the people of Ontario what's actually happening here: We are increasing health care spending by \$1.3 billion as a result of this budget.

The Financial Accountability Officer: I have no quarrel with the report that he has prepared. I would suggest, though, that some of the suggestions that he has made with respect to cuts are actually accounting differences.

What has happened is that some of the funds that were accounted for that appeared to come out of the cancer screening budget have actually been transferred to Cancer Care Ontario. So there are differences in the accounting, but the actual overall amount has increased: \$1.3 billion more going into health care this year.

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

Ms. Andrea Horwath: Well, Speaker, it seems to me, when a government wants to refute an independent officer of the Legislature, they rely on accounting differences, just like the previous government did. Now this government is playing the same game. The reality is, there is \$2.7 billion over two years being cut from our health care budget. That's what this government is doing.

The Financial Accountability Office is clear: Our health care system is facing reckless cuts—cuts to children's mental health, cuts to cancer screening, cuts to hospital budgets. You can't claim to be ending the hallway health care crisis when you're following the lead of the Mike Harris Conservatives who created it and the Liberals who made it worse.

When will this Premier come clean about what he's cutting?

Hon. Christine Elliott: Again, let me be clear to the leader of the official opposition: We are increasing health care spending by \$1.3 billion—\$1.3 billion, an increase. The suggestion with respect to cancer screening, I've already explained; that has been transferred to Cancer Care Ontario.

With respect to children's mental health and addictions, again, that is money that was promised: \$58 million was promised by the previous Liberal government. That was a fantasy budget, as we all know. There was no money there. There is money in this budget. We have spent \$18 million of that. The rest of the \$40 million was never actually used because it didn't exist. We are spending money that actually exists, in increasing the health care budget by \$1.3 billion this year.

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Stop the clock. The member for Waterloo must come to order. The member for King–Vaughan must come to order. All the members must come to order.

Start the clock. Next question.

ADDICTION SERVICES

Ms. Andrea Horwath: My next question is also to the Premier. But I've got to say, nobody believes this government anymore. Talk about a fantasy budget: They had to roll back half their budget just a week ago.

Last Friday, Stats Canada revealed that for the first time in 40 years, the life expectancy of Canadians is declining, and the blame for that rests with the opioid crisis. Can the Premier explain why, given the depth of this crisis, the government closed overdose prevention sites and is blocking efforts to establish them in communities where they're desperately, desperately needed?

Hon. Doug Ford: The Minister of Health.

Hon. Christine Elliott: This government does take the opioid crisis very seriously. That is why, when we did our review of the overdose treatment sites last summer and into the fall, we took a look at what was actually happening in the centres. That's why we repurposed them to become consumption and treatment sites. Because of course it's important to save lives, to make sure that people that are overdosing receive the care that they need. That's important. But the other part of it is to help them get the treatment that they need. They were not getting the treatment that they needed in the previous centres. That's why we're repurposing them. We have opened 15 sites. There are six more yet to be opened. We are reviewing the applicants under very, very strict circumstances to make sure that they are going to be able to provide that assistance.

But they can't do everything within the consumption and treatment services sites. That's why, as part of the \$3.8 billion that we have promised that we will spend over the next 10 years on both mental health and addictions services—

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

Ms. Andrea Horwath: Speaker, while the government talks about responding to this crisis, their actions on addictions and mental health speak louder than words: closing overdose prevention sites; a \$330-million cut to mental health funding; a \$69-million cut to children's mental health.

Over 1,000 Ontarians died of an overdose last year alone. Why is the government moving backwards as this crisis continues to grow and get worse?

1100

Hon. Christine Elliott: I think it's important to look at the facts of the situation. We have pledged, and we are spending, \$1.3 billion more on health services this year in the province of Ontario, including \$174 million more on mental health and addiction services. That is for this year, and that is annualized funding that's going to continue year after year after year.

We are taking the opioids crisis very seriously. That is why we have set up 15 consumption and treatment services sites: to help people with overdoses, but also to help them, when they are ready, to go into therapy, to get the services that they need.

That is not all of the work we have to do. There is more that's going to come from that \$174 million: more detox beds, and more community and social services, getting people the help they need in the community so that they don't need to be in crisis, in those situations—to make sure they can get the help that they need, to get the services they need.

We are going to make sure that we do that. We are reviewing more sites. I think it's important to note that we have opened—

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

BEVERAGE ALCOHOL SALES

Ms. Jane McKenna: My question is for the Premier. It has been almost a year now since the people of Ontario voted for change. Our government hit the ground running and hasn't stopped since. It will be a year this Friday. We can now say more than ever to the people of Ontario: promises made, promises kept.

We scrapped the cap-and-trade carbon tax. We're cutting red tape and creating good jobs. We're putting money back in people's pockets through tax relief for families with children and for lower-income workers in the province.

Following the introduction of the Bringing Choice and Fairness to the People Act last week, could the Premier inform the House of what else our government is doing to fulfill the promises we made to the good people of Ontario?

Hon. Doug Ford: I want to thank the member from Burlington for the question and for all the great work she does in Burlington. I was there this weekend; it was so good.

Through you, Mr. Speaker: We made a promise to the people of Ontario, and we plan on keeping our promises, as we have kept all our promises all the way since last year. It has almost come up to be a year.

We're going to put beer and wine in the corner stores and the big box stores and more grocery stores. I was thinking of our visitor from the United States. He's probably sitting up there thinking, "You've got to be kidding

me. You don't have beer in a grocery store? You don't have wine?" I want to say to our friend from the United States: We're the only jurisdiction in the entire world that had a sweetheart deal from the previous Liberal government, the Liberal lobbyists that made millions of dollars off the backs of the taxpayers, that increased the cost of beer at the Beer Store.

We're going to make sure that people have the convenience, when they hold a barbecue, to be able to go into the store and actually buy a case of beer—

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

Ms. Jane McKenna: Thank you to the Premier for his response. It is exciting to hear how our government is committed to expanding the sale of beer and wine. We all know that consumers, small businesses and local breweries all stand to benefit.

The Retail Council of Canada says that expanding the market could create up to 9,000 new jobs and add \$3.5 billion to Ontario's GDP. It will introduce a much-needed competition that will help lead to lower costs for consumers. It will provide convenience to responsible adults, and support growth in our small businesses, from Burlington all the way to Belleville and beyond.

Clearly, the status quo is unacceptable. Could the Premier explain why bringing fairness to the people is so important to us?

Hon. Doug Ford: I want to thank the member for the question once again. You've heard our all-star Minister of Finance say this, and I'll say it again: This isn't about just beer and wine. It's not just about choice and convenience. This is about fairness. It's about fairness to the people. It's about fairness to the retail folks that are out there working all day, all night.

Most people don't realize that the Beer Store isn't owned by the government. It's owned by three global giants—three global giants that don't worry about the people in Ontario. They're worried about putting money in their pockets. That's what they're worried about. We're worried about the convenience—and isn't it amazing, Mr. Speaker? Just imagine—and we aren't going to do this, but just imagine if all the NDP ridings opted out. Their constituents would be going crazy if they ever opted out. But we aren't going to do that because we're going to make sure we give your constituents a—

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

EDUCATION FUNDING

Ms. Marit Stiles: This question is for the Premier. Last week, Adrienne Roberts received a notice that her employment as a teacher at Grand Erie District School Board will be terminated on August 31, another sad outcome of this government's cuts to education. After Adrienne posted her layoff notice on Twitter, the Premier's office tweeted back, "Condolences." Then they blamed the school board for playing politics.

The Premier's cuts to education and, frankly, their scheme to jam up to 40 kids in secondary classes means Adrienne

will be just one of thousands of teachers without a job by the end of this government's term. Let's be clear: She has no choice. There is no fairness and there are no choices for these teachers.

Is the Premier finally ready to admit that his cuts to classrooms will mean teachers lose their jobs?

Hon. Doug Ford: Minister of Education.

Hon. Lisa M. Thompson: Every day, I am pleased to stand up in this House and talk about how we are moving forward and making sure that our government continues to display actions and guarantee to people across Ontario that the learning environment in the classroom is our number one priority.

Let's take a look at some other information that we're hearing: 100% of Toronto Catholic District School Board high school teachers will have a job in September. In Lambton-Kent, we heard specifically that 82 teachers with the Lambton Kent District School Board who were rumoured to be out of work by the next school year will be brought back in 2019. We've also learned that other school boards that are choosing to fearmonger actually need to take a step back. We've asked school boards across this province to work with us. But, unfortunately, we have just learned that the Toronto District School Board, instead of investing money in the classroom, is investing money in their own administrative—

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

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

I remind the members, when the Speaker stands up, you have to sit down.

Supplementary question?

Ms. Marit Stiles: Back to the Premier—and I should just start by saying that the minister actually needs to be corrected on that item, because in fact she's doing a great disservice to the Toronto District School Board. She knows perfectly well that did not happen and it is not happening.

First, the Premier blamed parents for skewing the results of this million-dollar education survey—

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): I have to ask the member to withdraw that unparliamentary comment.

Ms. Marit Stiles: Okay. Withdrawn.

First, the Premier blamed parents for skewing the results of his million-dollar education survey. Then he blamed students who oppose his plans, calling them "pawns." Then he blamed teachers and education workers, calling them "union thugs." Now this government is desperate to pin the blame on school boards, anything to avoid taking actual responsibility for the deliberate chaos they are causing in our schools.

1110

Why won't the Premier just be straight with Ontarians and admit that this plan means fewer resources, fewer class options and fewer jobs for teachers?

Hon. Lisa M. Thompson: Do you know what I can not believe, Mr. Speaker? It's that we saw first-hand, right here in this House, that the member opposite is choosing to support a school board that is not putting money into the classroom and supporting teachers on the front line. The

fact of the matter is that she is absolutely spinning her wheels, because facts matter, and only when the Toronto District School Board got caught last Thursday because media started inquiring did they choose to cancel the contract. Facts matter, and you better stick with the facts because you're not getting anywhere else.

At least four previous audits and external reviews have identified procurement issues with the Toronto District School Board over the years. Speaker, I absolutely appreciate—

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

CHILDREN'S SERVICES

Mme Nathalie Des Rosiers: Ma communauté d'Ottawa a encore été touchée, alors je voulais juste remercier les services ambulanciers qui ont dû encore être appelés en fin de semaine.

Ma question est pour la procureure générale. In Canada, courts have recognized that jurisdictional disputes between the federal government and the provincial government should not be borne by children. Jordan's Principle, upheld by the courts, tells us that all First Nations children should have equal access to government services, and the first government who comes into contact with a child should respond to their needs. Children should not be denied while governments bicker about who should pay.

This government has cancelled the Transition Child Benefit for children of refugees, and the Attorney General has said that she believes that it's the federal government that has the obligation to care for these children. The Convention on the Rights of the Child says that any government must look after children on its territory, irrespective of the status of their parents. Is she holding children hostage in her ongoing battle with the federal government?

Hon. Caroline Mulroney: I thank the member opposite for the question. Our government is committed to helping the most vulnerable in our society, and we have continued to do that within my ministry. I'm not sure where the member opposite's question was going—it was a bit circuitous—but I can tell you that with respect to funding for legal aid services, we are continuing to call on the federal government to meet its responsibilities.

Mr. Speaker, the previous government spent billions and billions of dollars on interest expense that it could have spent on helping our most vulnerable in our society: our children, our newcomers to Canada. We are committed to getting it right. We are committed to ensuring that the supports that we do provide to the most vulnerable in our society are sustainable. We are taking the time to speak with them. We are taking the time to look closely at the books, to make sure that we are providing the necessary supports, so that when they need them 10 years from now, the government is still able to provide them, instead of paying down even more money in interest expenses.

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

Mme Nathalie Des Rosiers: The children in transition program was a small program. The government's own

numbers said that 16,000 children a month were being helped by them, and they needed that to have access to food and clothing. The Premier said last Friday “free the beer” as a good slogan, but I think “feed the children” is also a very good slogan.

The need for this program is compounded by the cuts to legal aid for refugees, because it will take longer for families to actually have access to their status. Does the minister not see that the cumulative effect of no representation and no assistance for these children will jeopardize their start in Ontario and their ability to later become productive members of our society? Does she not see that this will be a black mark on our reputation, to wage a war with the federal government on the backs of children? Will she commit today to tell her colleagues to reinstate the children in transition program?

Hon. Caroline Mulroney: The Minister of Transportation.

Hon. Jeff Yurek: Thanks again for that question. Our government for the people is moving forward with social assistance reforms that are going to restore dignity, encourage employment and empower the province’s most vulnerable to get back to a path towards self-reliance.

We are not going to be implementing the changes to the Transition Child Benefit to First Nations in Ontario Works. We will not be implementing it that way. However, Mr. Speaker, we need to make changes. The Transition Child Benefit provided roughly an average of 16,000 recipients with a total expenditure of \$67 million. Refugee claimants account for almost 50% of the total Transition Child Benefit expenditure but only made up 35% of the recipients.

We need to ensure that we’re able to provide a program to the children of this province in order for them to be supported wholly, and that’s what we’re doing. We are going to continue with the Ontario Child Benefit program to ensure there’s equal access to get the government support they need. Filing your taxes allows you to access the Child Benefit program, and we’ll be increasing the investment by 30—

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

FIRE NEAR PIKANGIKUM FIRST NATION

Mr. Dave Smith: My question is for the Minister of Indigenous Affairs. Late last week, our government was made aware of a dire situation in northern Ontario. A wildfire began to spread near Pikangikum First Nation. On May 29, at 1:30 a.m., the community declared a state of emergency because the flames and smoke were coming dangerously close to the community. Our government was ready to mobilize the necessary supports for Pikangikum during this crisis. Quick action is incredibly important when a community is threatened by wildfire. Can the minister please tell the members of this House about how our government came to the aid of the people of Pikangikum First Nation?

Hon. Greg Rickford: I think the first thing we should say is thank you to the leadership in Pikangikum. Chief

Amanda Sainnawap and, frankly, the Ministry of Natural Resources and Forestry, our pilots and workers on the ground with the Ministry of Transportation of Ontario at the runway there kept it going.

We’re pleased to report that 1,600 people have been evacuated through the Department of National Defence’s Hercules planes and some of our own, as well as a couple of commercial operators who chipped in. Those people are now out in host cities—in Timmins, Cochrane, Smooth Rock Falls, Thunder Bay, Dryden, Sioux Lookout and Winnipeg—and coordinated efforts on the ground with other officials from other ministries here in Ontario are making sure that those people are getting the care and follow-up that they deserve.

We’re very pleased with the response. It was a bit frantic Thursday after the initial pass from the Hercules, but things have gone smoothly since then.

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

Mr. Dave Smith: I’d like to thank the Minister of Indigenous Affairs for that response. I’d also like to thank the Minister of Natural Resources and Forestry for deploying the fire crews to keep this fire at bay. I’d like to thank the Minister of Indigenous Affairs for taking such a strong leadership role to coordinate municipalities that were able to house those who were being evacuated from Pikangikum.

During these challenging emergency situations, it’s imperative that our government communicates effectively with partners and support providers who play important roles in emergency responses. In this case, it became clear that an evacuation was going to be necessary. Can the minister please tell the members of this House more about our role in helping vulnerable members of the community reach safety?

Hon. Greg Rickford: It’s true that an open line of communication was established very quickly. I’ve had a couple of conversations with leadership on the ground and Grand Chief Alvin Fiddler to make sure that community members that were evacuated found a safe place in various cities across northern Ontario, northwestern Ontario and into Manitoba and that they were well taken care of.

We appreciate the Provincial Emergency Operations Centre and some of my staff in particular in Indigenous Affairs Ontario. On Thursday afternoon, we assumed a coordinating role to ensure that all ministries across our government were involved in making sure that suppression activities through the Ministry of Natural Resources and Forestry were going on, and that the community continued to have a smooth and steady evacuation. There was an hour of maintenance required every time one of those Hercules landed on the strip, Mr. Speaker.

1120

This was just an incredible exercise in a short period of time. We remain committed to the threat that while the fire is suppressed, smoke could turn back on the community. We’ll be ready to evacuate any other people that the chief sees fit.

SMOKING CESSATION

M^{me} France G elinas: Ma question est pour le premier ministre. Last week, the Minister of Health and Long-Term Care announced more unnecessary cuts to front-line health care resources by abruptly cutting funding for a program to help youth quit smoking. Leave the Pack Behind, as it is called, is a very successful, evidence-based smoking cessation program for youth. It is a \$1-million-a-year investment that pays huge dividends.

Mr. Speaker, tobacco kills 50% of its users. One in two smokers dies from their addiction. This health promotion program supports our health care system. It supports young Ontarians by helping them quit smoking and develop healthier habits. Why is the Premier cutting such an important program?

Hon. Doug Ford: Minister of Health.

Hon. Christine Elliott: I thank the member very much for the question. It is very important to help youth and other people who wish to quit smoking to do so, but I think it is important to note that no one pulled funding on this. What actually happened was that the previous government had given them a one-year program that they decided not to continue with, and we continued with that. So there's no pulling of funding; there's no cutting involved here. This is just something that wasn't renewed. It wasn't renewed under the previous government and it's continued with us.

But it is important to make sure that there are programs that are there to help young people who want to quit smoking. We still have a number of programs out there: the STOP Program at CAMH, the Ottawa Model for Smoking Cessation at the University of Ottawa Heart Institute, and the Smokers' Helpline, which any Ontarian can access regardless of age or location, among many others that could I go into in the supplemental.

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

M^{me} France G elinas: Speaker, the \$1 million to the Leave the Pack program has been in place for 19 years. It is very effective, and the funding is not flowing this year. It has flowed for the last 19 years. The Canadian Lung Association released a report a few days ago that says that the government is not doing enough to reduce tobacco use. It talks about the troubling rate of young people starting to vape. For the first time in decades, the smoking rates are going up, not down.

So what does this government do? Well, it passes legislation that allows tobacco companies to directly market vaping products to the public on school campuses or across the street from high schools. Marketing is very effective. In my riding, 50% of high school students—none of them over the age of 18—are vaping. Why is the Premier making it easier for tobacco companies to sell their vaping and smoking products to young people in Ontario?

Hon. Christine Elliott: Once again, it's important to note that the original program the member referred to started to be wound down in 2017, and that has continued. But, again, it's important to realize and recognize that there are many other programs that are out there to help

young people and anyone who wishes to stop smoking. In addition to the ones that I've already mentioned to you, there are the public health units' STOP on the Road, the Smokers' Helpline I referred to, Lakehead University's Moving On to Being Free, Cancer Care Ontario's Aboriginal Tobacco Program, Aboriginal health access centres' Healthy Eating Active Living, Ontario Federation of Indigenous Friendship Centres' Urban Aboriginal Healthy Living program, as well as the work that's being done at CAMH.

So there are a number of programs out there. They are available for people across Ontario who wish to stop smoking, so we encourage anybody who is interested to be in contact with one of those programs for that assistance.

INFRASTRUCTURE FUNDING

Mr. Mike Harris: My question is for the Minister of Infrastructure. Our government is committed to putting the people at the centre of every decision we make, and we are protecting what matters most. In my riding, and across Ontario, health and safety matters. The minister has spent hours on the road announcing great projects across rural Ontario, and he has seen first-hand the critical road and bridge infrastructure that our communities needed most. While Ontario launches the most ambitious infrastructure program in history, Prime Minister Justin Trudeau is saying the province is not at the table, and I am baffled by this criticism.

Would the minister please tell us about what our government is doing for rural Ontario?

Hon. Monte McNaughton: Thank you to the member for that excellent and very important question. I echo the member's concern for crucial health and safety projects across rural and northern Ontario. Trudeau's comments are simply baffling, Mr. Speaker. To say we are stalling on our infrastructure commitments is dead wrong. As the Auditor General, Senate and Parliamentary Budget Officer have all said, the federal record on the infrastructure file is poor. In fact, billions of dollars went missing under Justin Trudeau's watch.

Mr. Speaker, we have our priorities straight in Ontario. While the federal Liberals are focused on the election season, I'm focused on the construction season. Thus far, we've nominated 49 rural and northern road and bridge projects to Ottawa, and do you know what, Mr. Speaker? Not a single one has been approved by Justin Trudeau. In Kitchener–Conestoga, this includes the Glasgow Street South bridge in the township of Woolwich.

Our government was at work on Sunday to put the people first; I'm calling on Justin Trudeau to reflect this commitment and approve these projects—

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

Supplementary? The member for Whitby.

Mr. Lorne Coe: Thank you, Speaker, and thank you, minister, for that excellent answer.

When it comes to vital infrastructure investments, it's important that we get it right. As a caucus, we're encouraged by the constant flow of great announcements from

the Minister of Infrastructure. For my riding, the most important has been crucial transit infrastructure that allows my constituents to travel safely.

Speaker, our government was elected on a mandate to open Ontario for business and to get this province moving. Despite having nominated five GTA transit projects that my constituents desperately need, the federal government chooses to pick a fight instead of picking up a shovel.

Would the Minister of Infrastructure tell us more about how we're putting this province back on track and helping municipalities get moving?

Hon. Monte McNaughton: Thank you very much to the member for that great question.

Mr. Speaker, for months we've heard the federal government ask us to send them projects for approval. They even said that Ontario's priorities were their priorities. On May 15, we nominated our 54th project to the federal government; the ball is clearly now in their court.

These are important projects. We have now nominated five GTA transit projects, which will require a combined \$28.5 billion, of which we are committing \$11.2 billion. This is funding for five new transit infrastructure projects in the GTA, including the Ontario Line, the Yonge North extension, the Bloor-Yonge enhancement project, the three-stop Scarborough subway extension and the Smart-Track station program.

The Liberals are desperately trying to change the channel from their scandal-plagued government in Ottawa. Mr. Speaker, my message to Justin Trudeau is clear: Put your money where your mouth is. We want Justin Trudeau to join us in getting Ontario moving.

GOVERNMENT ADVERTISING

Mr. Taras Natyshak: My question is to the Premier. Speaker, families watching the Raptors this week on TV had a lot to cheer for, but when the commercial breaks came they also had a lot to jeer, seeing that their money was wasted on the government's latest partisan ad campaign.

Speaker, can the Premier tell us how much the taxpayers of Ontario are paying for the prime-time advertising spot?

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Order. Deputy Premier?

Hon. Christine Elliott: To the Minister of Energy.

Hon. Greg Rickford: If there's one thing that we know, the taxpayers are paying somewhere north of \$3.5 million for the federal government to send postcards to everybody that they'd be getting a \$307 net benefit from this job-killing, regressive carbon tax. Now isn't that something, Mr. Speaker?

1130

We heard from Air Canada that they have not even begun to see how much of an impact this tax is going to have on the price per ticket.

We were at a meeting last week down in Chatham—a great MPP down there, standing up for folks—and in our industrial conservation initiative consultations on the price

of electricity, all the talk was about this job-killing carbon tax—why it's contributing, for example, to the highest cost per kilogram of chicken for chicken farmers.

We won't stand for that, Mr. Speaker. The people of Ontario deserve to know how much this tax is costing them.

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): The opposition has to come to order.

Supplementary question?

Mr. Taras Natyshak: The Premier and the minister seem to forget the money that pays for these ads is not their money. It belongs to the people of the province.

The same Premier who says that there's no money to keep teachers in the classroom, to help children with autism or to end hallway medicine finds plenty of cash when it's time to get his partisan campaign ads on the air. How can the Premier tell children with autism to wait for treatment or tell seniors who are in a hallway that that's good enough for them while he's authorizing multi-million-dollar ad buys for his own partisan purposes?

Hon. Greg Rickford: Last week, we had an opportunity to identify just exactly how much this tax was going to be costing health care in Essex, Mr. Speaker. Let's take a look at Windsor West's Ground Effects. They make automotive products here, and the estimated add-on by suppliers in 2019 as a result of this job-killing carbon tax is \$1.5 million in 2019, aggregate to \$3.9 million in 2022. Add on the \$3.5 million that the federal government has spent to send their postcards around, I suspect the people in Essex are getting a little bit anxious about how much this tax is really going to cost them.

That's why, Mr. Speaker, this question is sticking around. We're going to make sure that at those pumps, there's a sticker to remind the people of Essex and across the province of Ontario how much this job-killing, regressive carbon tax is costing them, their families, our businesses and our employers.

FOREST INDUSTRY

Mr. Ross Romano: My question is for the Minister of Natural Resources and Forestry. Our government is committed to making Ontario open for business and open for jobs. Across northern Ontario, thousands of Ontarians and their families depend on the forestry sector to put food on the table. The forestry sector harvests a truly renewable resource. Workers in this sector are excellent stewards of our natural resources, planting an average of 68 million trees every year through reforestation efforts.

Last week, the minister was in Timmins and Hearst meeting directly with industry and other stakeholders. Can the minister please update the House on what he is hearing from stakeholders, as we rebuild the forestry sector in Ontario?

Hon. John Yakabuski: I thank the great member from Sault Ste. Marie for the question. We had a great trip to Hearst and Timmins last week. It's encouraging to see the great work being done as the sector continues to innovate.

Last Thursday, I had the opportunity to tour Columbia Forest Products' plywood mill in Hearst where our government's investment of \$3.2 million over the next five years will help create and retain nearly 350 well-paying jobs in that community. Later in the day, I took part in our final forestry round table with stakeholders from the broader forestry sector. This was the final one as we develop a new provincial forestry strategy, and I look forward to speaking more about the feedback we received from stakeholders in the supplementary. We are behind forestry in the Ford government.

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

Mr. Ross Romano: Thank you to the minister for that excellent answer. I know that he has been working very hard on the development of a new provincial forestry strategy, having held round tables all across the province. After 15 years of the previous Liberal government favouring special interest groups and neglecting the hard-working Ontarians who make their living in the forestry sector, it is encouraging to see that the sector is confident in our government's plan to make Ontario open for business and open for jobs.

Now that the forestry round tables have been completed, can the minister please update the House on what he has heard from the sector through the process of developing a new provincial forestry strategy?

Hon. John Yakabuski: I thank the member for the supplementary as well. We have heard from the forestry sector about how the previous government viewed their sector as a sunset industry that was on its way out. We believe that the best days for forestry are ahead.

We've heard of the crucial need for forestry access roads. I was pleased to announce earlier this year that we are continuing funding of \$54 million a year for that program.

The biggest challenge facing this industry is access to wood, access to wood and access to wood—the three biggest problems. Our new forestry strategy that we develop is going to address that so that the forestry of tomorrow will be a forest industry that people's children will be able to get good jobs in. We are not ignoring it. It is a great industry, and its best days are ahead of it if the government is doing the right things.

LEGAL AID

Ms. Sara Singh: My question is to the Deputy Premier. The cuts to Legal Aid Ontario will prevent the most vulnerable Ontarians from accessing justice here in our province. These cuts hit communities that struggle the most—individuals our province should actually be helping.

For example, the South Asian Legal Clinic of Ontario, which serves clients across the province, including in my city of Brampton, worked on behalf of a client named Safia, a tenant who has had significant mental health and physical health disabilities. Her landlord was actually trying to evict her from her unit. Without legal support, Safia would have been evicted, leading to homelessness. But because of support through the legal aid clinic, Safia

was able to stay in her unit, and the Landlord and Tenant Board ruled in her favour. They've actually modified her unit since then to accommodate her disability.

Speaker, why is the Premier making it impossible for Ontarians like Safia to receive the legal aid they need?

Hon. Christine Elliott: To the Attorney General.

Hon. Caroline Mulroney: Over the last five years, Mr. Speaker, we saw the prior government spending more and more money without seeing the results that the people who need the services and the Ontario taxpayer should expect. We have to make sure that legal aid is focused on providing legal representation, to get legal advice to those people who need it, when they need it and where they need it.

Legal aid this year will have a budget of over \$400 million, and even more if the federal government pays its fair share for the services that it's responsible for.

Legal aid has also stated very clearly that front-line services will continue to remain strong, so people like Safia will be able to go to the South Asian Legal Clinic and get the services she needs.

Mr. Speaker, lawyers may not welcome this era of accountability at legal aid—

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

Ms. Sara Singh: The Premier has repeatedly promised that no job losses will happen to front-line services, but that simply is not true, despite even what the Attorney General is saying here in this House today. This province's legal aid lawyers, legal workers and support staff now find their jobs actually on the chopping block, Mr. Speaker. Low-income Ontarians receive legal aid because of the work that these individuals do for the most vulnerable people here in our province.

Community legal aid clinics already operate on slim budgets, and they are running their operations as effectively and efficiently as they possibly can. Even minor budget cuts will mean job losses and reduction of front-line services, again, to the most vulnerable people here in our province.

Will the Premier reverse these cruel and devastating cuts to legal aid before it's too late?

Interjection.

Ms. Sara Singh: He's telling us no, so we'll make sure we get that on the record. No, the Premier will not reverse the cuts.

Hon. Caroline Mulroney: Mr. Speaker, I have been very clear. Those people in Ontario who need and cannot afford legal representation will be able to continue to go to legal aid and get those front-line services. Our government is committed to ensuring that those legal services are there for those who need them, when and where.

The Ministry of the Attorney General is working very closely with legal aid itself, with clinics and with stakeholders across the justice sector to make sure that legal aid is providing legal representation in the most efficient way possible.

Hundreds of millions of dollars are being spent on legal aid. Ontario taxpayers now know that it's being done in an

efficient way while we are still ensuring that those who need legal representation will be able to get it.

Legal aid is doing great work to ensure that the clinic and the representation that people are seeking is available—and they will continue to do so. The NDP should stop telling people that they will not be able to get those services, because they will continue to be able to go to legal aid and get the legal representation they need.

1140

PROTECTION OF PRIVACY

Mr. Kaleed Rasheed: My question is to the Minister of Government and Consumer Services. Last week, the minister announced at the open government summit in Ottawa the results of our government's public consultation on our data strategy.

Mr. Speaker, I've heard from many Ontarians about the importance of protecting their personal data, as we live in a world that is increasingly driven by the use of data. More than ever before, data is used not only by businesses, but also by governments, to ensure the public is receiving the services they need in a timely fashion.

Recognizing this, it is of paramount importance that our government develop a provincial data strategy that protects Ontarians' privacy. I know that our government has been listening to Ontarians on this issue. Mr. Speaker, could the minister please outline the key findings of our government's public consultation?

Hon. Bill Walker: Through you, Speaker, I want to thank my honourable colleague for his question and the great representation on behalf of the people of Mississauga East–Cooksville.

Our government recognizes that the tremendous economic potential of emerging data technologies needs to be balanced with thoughtful and robust protections for the privacy and personal data of all Ontarians. We believe that Ontarians deserve to know and consent to how their data is collected and used, and by whom.

Through public consultations on our government data strategy, we heard that 79% of respondents believe that data about people and businesses in Ontario need stronger protection. We heard that a majority of respondents indicated they would like the government to responsibly share more of its own data with businesses to help them create new jobs, products and services for Ontarians, and we heard a majority of respondents also believe sharing data among ministries will help streamline and improve interaction between citizens and government.

These results make it clear that while citizens understand the benefits of sharing data, our provincial data strategy must ensure personal privacy is paramount, and we are committed to doing just that to the best of our ability.

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

Mr. Kaleed Rasheed: I would like to thank the minister for his response. I'm very pleased to hear that our government is taking a proactive approach to protecting Ontarians.

The federal government has recently released their Digital Charter. It is disappointing that the federal government has taken their entire four-year mandate to take action on this important issue, one that took our government only 10 months to address.

One example that shows Canadians need clear rights and protection is smart cities. Smart cities are not new. In fact, they are being developed across Ontario, but these smart cities are moving forward without a policy framework. Last fall, the Auditor General reminded our government that a policy framework is needed to guide future development of smart cities in Ontario.

Could the minister outline our government's smart city framework and how we will balance the needs of business and government while protecting Ontarians' data?

Hon. Bill Walker: My colleague from Mississauga East–Cooksville raises a very important point: Smart cities are not new. In fact, they're being developed across Ontario, including right here in Toronto. That is why we are developing a framework that will require smart cities and the companies that create them to:

- guarantee that Ontarians' privacy and personal data are protected, managed responsibly and kept secure;

- put people first by ensuring that Ontarians are the primary beneficiaries and valued partners in the opportunities created by the project;

- create responsible and good governance systems that are democratic, accountable and transparent;

- enact leading best technical practices that ensure chosen technologies use open software and open standards, and are secure, interoperable, locally procured, flexible, durable and scalable; and

- educate the public on the risks associated with the project and provide meaningful opportunities for local residents to participate and engage in the creation of the smart city.

Mr. Speaker, this will ensure our province is open for business, while protecting Ontarians.

CONSERVATION AUTHORITIES

Ms. Judith Monteith-Farrell: My question is for the Premier. Last week, the government put cuts to municipalities on the back burner, but as we speak, retroactive cuts to conservation authorities are still going ahead. The ravages of climate crisis are evident all around us, and conservation authorities are trying to respond to record flooding in our watersheds with less resources than they had before. These cuts put communities at risk.

When will this government reverse cuts to the Natural Hazard Management Grant project, protect communities, and increase funding for all the vital work that conservation authorities do?

Hon. Doug Ford: Through you, Mr. Speaker: I want to thank the member for her question. I guess that when they were lounging around the pool on the weekend, my Minister of Natural Resources was actually out working his back off with conservation authority officers. My min-

ister decided to give me a call on—I believe it was Saturday, Minister? —and put me on the phone with two conservation officers—

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Order.

Hon. Doug Ford: Can you hold my time for a minute?

Mr. Speaker, he called me up. I answered the phone, like I try to, no matter who calls. I pick it up, and it was the minister on the phone. He passed the phone to the two conservation officers. I spoke to each one individually. They are as happy as punch with this government. They thanked me profusely over and over again for doing the great work. We're going to be getting more conservation officers. I'll tell you, they absolutely love this government.

I love those conservation officers. They do a great job. They're out there working hard—

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

Ms. Judith Monteith-Farrell: This is to the Premier as well: Conservation officers are not the same as conservation authorities. Conservation authorities have had their funding cut. I don't know if you know the difference.

Another program that has been cut is the Summer Employment Opportunities youth employment program. Its funding has been cut by the Ministry of Natural Resources. This program helps conservation authorities employ and mentor youth, and young people gain relevant experience for their careers. Why did this government cut the youth employment program?

Hon. Doug Ford: Minister of Natural Resources.

Hon. John Yakabuski: I thank the Premier for taking that call from my conservation officers the other day.

I say to the member: Thank you for the question, but we have spoken about this before. We have asked conservation authorities to focus on their core mandate, not the mission creep that they have brought upon themselves over the last number of decades. We have said, "Focus on why you were brought into this province in the first place."

The province's funding averages about 8% to conservation authorities of their total funding. In some cases it's less than 2.5%.

But let's talk about what has been going on in some of them. As the Auditor General pointed out, there was one conservation authority where their administrative spending went up by 48% while watershed services was down by 18%. That's why we're saying to conservation authorities, "Get back to what the purpose of why you were initiated in the first place. Concentrate on your core mandate and look for some savings"—

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Thank you. That concludes the time for question period this morning.

NOTICE OF DISSATISFACTION

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Pursuant to standing order 38(a), the member for Davenport has given notice of her dissatisfaction with the answer to her question given by the Minister of Education concerning the loss of teacher jobs. This matter will be debated tomorrow at 6 p.m.

VISITORS

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

Hon. Steve Clark: Thanks, Speaker. I want to introduce to you and through you to members of the Legislative Assembly representatives from my Girls Government from the riding, along with representatives from Girls Inc. Welcome to Queen's Park.

Miss Monique Taylor: I wasn't able to do some introductions earlier, so I beg your indulgence. Some autism parents and advocates are with us once again today: Angela Brandt, Amy Moledzki and her son Jacob, and Stacy Kennedy.

I would also like to give a warm welcome to some friends who have joined us from Simcoe North today. I know that one of my colleagues has introduced them already, but like I said, they're friends: Elizabeth Van Houtte, Dennis Rizzo and Zoe Rizzo are the family of our page Ariana Rizzo, and they are joined by their friend Riley Marwick. Welcome to Queen's Park.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): The member for Don Valley North, on a point of order.

Mr. Vincent Ke: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My guests just came to the House. Welcome to Queen's Park.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): There being no deferred votes, this House stands in recess until 1 p.m.

The House recessed from 1150 to 1300.

INTRODUCTION OF VISITORS

Ms. Sara Singh: I would like to introduce—they will be joining us later in the gallery—a former professor of mine, Miriam Anderson, who teaches the women and politics course at Ryerson University. I was coincidentally also a teaching assistant in that course. She is going to be joined by 50 students from that class as well. They'll be here to take in the proceedings but also chat with me and learn a little bit about my journey.

Ms. Jennifer K. French: I am pleased today, as I table a private member's bill, to welcome Brian Burnett, also known as Gazoo, from the Bikers Rights Organization. He's their regional vice-chair. Welcome to Queen's Park.

MEMBERS' STATEMENTS

VIOLENCE AGAINST INDIGENOUS WOMEN AND GIRLS

Mr. Sol Mamakwa: Meegwetch, Speaker. This morning, the National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls presented their final report. I would like to thank and honour the thousands of people who came forward to share their truth-telling stories with the commission. I'm sure it was not easy for them to speak about their sisters, mothers and friends who were murdered or who disappeared and never came home. I thank you all for the advocacy.

What was heard over and over again, Mr. Speaker, is that Indigenous women and girls have been subject to colonial violence for generations. The policies of colonization and genocide that were imposed on our people are treated as normal. The inquiry clearly defines these policies as genocide. Over and over again, families and survivors shared their stories of genocide against Indigenous women and girls. Families turned to a system for help in achieving justice for their relatives, and there was no help.

I ask everyone to hear the calls for justice and honour them. I call on my colleagues and all Ontarians to speak out against racism and misogyny and to hold yourselves to account. Learn about the true history of Canada and Ontario. It's not enough to accept the report from the inquiry and say that you will listen. Our people expect action and real systemic change. Meegwetch.

GILBERT FRANCIS WHITTAMORE

Mr. Paul Calandra: The life of Gilbert Francis Whittamore stands as an inspiration for all Canadians. His passing on May 19 serves as a reminder of how much difference a single life can make. An immigrant from England who served bravely in the Royal Canadian Air Force, Gilbert Francis trained as a pilot and flew for the Coastal Command during the Second World War.

Upon his return home to Canada, he graduated from the University of Guelph, where he studied agriculture. He went on to found Whittamore's berry farm, the business that bears his name and operates even today. Over the decades, Whittamore's has famously provided high-quality food products for sale, jobs for people in our community and a wonderful destination for families looking for fun together outdoors.

Gilbert Whittamore was a beloved individual and an iconic symbol of a generation of Canadians whose commitment, dedication and work ethic helped build a great province and a great nation. He was not just a soldier and a farmer, but an entrepreneur and an innovator. I hope young people across Ontario will continue to look to him and his accomplishments for motivation as they build their own lives and families.

He and his wife, Evelyn, raised four children. They remain an important part of our community in Markham-Stouffville.

I offer my condolences to Mr. Whittamore's children, Mike, Frank, David and Katherine. It has been my privilege to know and work with Mike and Frank over the past decade. Gilbert and Evelyn had many wonderful grandchildren, including Zak, who was a great volunteer on my last campaign.

My thoughts go out to the Whittamore family for the services that they have contributed and will continue to contribute to our community.

MENSTRUAL PRODUCTS

Ms. Marit Stiles: Menstruation is a normal biological function experienced by half of the population. Yet for too

many students here in Ontario, a lack of access to menstrual products can lead to embarrassment, shame and missed days at school. Surveys have shown that 34% of people who menstruate have had difficulty affording menstrual products, and social attitudes and gender discrimination too often force young people to hide their menstrual products or lie about having their period.

For these reasons, the government of British Columbia has moved to ensure that all students can access free menstrual products in schools. Closer to home, the Waterloo Region District School Board has announced it will do the same, recognizing the real problem of period poverty.

I'm proud to have tabled a motion this week to tackle these issues, one that calls on the government of Ontario to provide free menstrual products in school washrooms. Today, I invite all members of the House to help put an end to the stigma and shame surrounding menstruation and to support student health and well-being here in Ontario.

ROYAL CANADIAN LEGION BRANCH #136—MILTON

Mr. Parm Gill: Last weekend, the Royal Canadian Legion Branch 136 in Milton celebrated their 90th anniversary. I'm a proud member of that branch and proud to have been able to take part in the parade and ceremonies.

Branch 136 was chartered on May 21, 1929, and moved to their current location on Charles Street, downtown Milton, in 1939.

The celebrations took place on Friday through Sunday, starting with their traditional fish fry and karaoke competition, with a parade to the cenotaph on Sunday.

During the celebrations, I had an opportunity to meet with members who proudly served Canada, and I thanked them for their service.

Today, Branch 136 has close to 600 active members, all of whom uphold the Legion's mandate, which is to protect the rights and interests of all veterans. Over the 90 years, this branch has contributed millions of dollars to community causes and can always be counted on to help organize or host community events. I'm proud that our government has committed to helping Legions across our great province so that they can continue to support our service personnel and their families.

I'd like to thank the branch president, Don Hipwell, and the volunteers and members who put together such a great celebration.

CLIMATE CHANGE

Mr. Peter Tabuns: It's becoming clearer that the unfolding climate crisis will affect us in ways and at times that we don't expect. Just last week, the newly elected Premier of Alberta, Jason Kenney, had to cancel a speech celebrating his attack on climate action. The reason? The smoke from the climate-stoked forest fires north of Edmonton was too thick. Such irony, my friends; such irony.

Here in Ontario, for too long when we've talked about adapting to climate change, we focus on infrastructure: roads, buildings and bridges. All of that is fine, but it's inadequate. Increasingly, the crisis with our climate is going to manifest itself in terms of health impacts: more lung disease, more heart disease, more invasive diseases like Zika and Lyme disease, and more psychological problems—anxiety, depression and addiction—because of the uncertainty of life and because people will be displaced. People will have to leave their homes because their homes are flooded or under threat of fire. We are going to have to change our health care system, not just our infrastructure.

It's time for this government to act on the climate crisis and it's time for this government to take account of the changes needed in the health care system to make sure that people are properly protected and looked after.

FILIPINO HERITAGE MONTH MOIS DU PATRIMOINE PHILIPPIN

M^{me} Nathalie Des Rosiers: Today, it's a pleasure to rise to recognize June as Filipino Heritage Month, as recognized by the House of Commons on June 30, 2018.

Environ 340 000 Canadiens d'origine philippine habitent en Ontario. Ce mois est important parce que le 12 juin marque la journée de l'indépendance des Philippines.

In the Philippines and across the world, June 12 is celebrated in recognition of the independence of the Philippines from Spain in 1898. In December 2017, my colleague from across the aisle, now the Minister for Seniors and Accessibility, introduced Bill 185, An Act to proclaim the month of June as Filipino Heritage Month, which was supported by all three parties. I'd like to congratulate my colleague and continue to celebrate this month today.

1310

I want to take a moment to thank Alicia Natividad, the president of my riding association in Ottawa–Vanier, for being a staunch advocate for the recognition of Filipino Heritage Month by the province and the Law Society of Ontario. I would like to add my voice to the calls for the province and the Law Society of Ontario to recognize this month as Filipino Heritage Month.

Ottawa's Filipino population has grown 20%, and Tagalog is the fastest-growing language in Canada. We should be proud of all the contributions of our friends from the Filipino community. I had the pleasure to go and see them at the church, witness the great dances, dance a little bit myself, and was really happy to see and celebrate how much we owe them to be part of our great community.

LANSDOWNE CHILDREN'S CENTRE

Mr. Will Bouma: It's my pleasure to rise in the House today and talk for a little bit about Lansdowne Children's Centre in Brantford. It's truly a remarkable place that does remarkable things.

On Saturday, May 11, Brantford–Brant hosted the 15th annual charity motorcycle ride for Lansdowne Children's Centre. Lansdowne provides services for 2,600 children with special needs in our community. The money raised through the ride helps to fund recreational and other support groups for these children.

It was certainly a sight to behold and hear: Over 300 bikers gathered at the civic centre and then, guided by a police escort, two by two they headed out. This year, a new one-hour route of approximately 75 kilometres was introduced, which passed by the Lansdowne centre, with supporters holding banners and cheering on the riders. It wove through Brantford, down into Caledonia and Hagersville, and then made its way back to Brantford, raising over \$62,000 for this worthwhile cause.

A special thank you to everyone who rode, pledged, volunteered and sponsored. This yearly event pulls together the community in a wonderful way, involving businesses, volunteers and riders from both the riding and outside the riding with the common goal of helping children.

CORRECTIONAL SERVICES

Miss Monique Taylor: Today I would like to bring attention once again to the ongoing crisis at the Hamilton–Wentworth Detention Centre, which is located in my city. It's been nearly 11 months since the coroner's inquest into the overdose deaths of eight prisoners at the centre. Since this inquest, eight more have died and several more have been taken to the hospital for overdose treatment. Their families have had enough, and they're demanding that this government implement the coroner's 62 recommendations. The families are increasingly frustrated with this government's inaction—inaction that could cost more lives. All they want is to make sure that what happened to their loved ones does not happen to anyone else.

Let's be frank, Speaker: We have a crisis in our communities. People do not have access to rehabilitation and other services that would help them overcome addiction. In the first six months of 2019, paramedics have responded to over 350 overdose calls. All of last year, they responded to 450 calls. Between May 20 and May 26, there were 38 suspected overdoses in Hamilton emergency rooms. This is a crisis.

There is no death penalty in Canada, but those who enter our correctional system seem to have easy access to opioids and no support system. Inmates or not, they still have a right to live with safety and dignity.

SENIORS' MONTH

Ms. Natalia Kusendova: In the month of June, we celebrate our seniors. Seniors are our parents, grandparents, friends and neighbours. In Ontario, we are tremendously grateful for all the contributions our seniors have made and continue to make to our province and our country. They have worked so hard their entire lives to build our province up across all sectors, and even in their

retirement, they continue to contribute generously of their time and provide great value to our society.

In my time as MPP, I have seen seniors working hard everywhere, volunteering at local hospitals, in not-for-profits, at cultural festivals and community centres, even in political campaigns. Some of my most avid campaigners were seniors, including Shirley and Dave Bray and Pani Lucyna Oswiecimska. My team would not have been the same without them.

This year's Seniors' Month theme is "Now's the time to Start Something New," which highlights how aging does not prevent any of us from leading fulfilling lives and how it is never too late to start a new project. During this month, we recognize our seniors for bringing great wisdom, knowledge and experience to everything that they do. Today, our province is home to 4.6 million seniors, and every day 400 more people become seniors in Ontario.

Speaker, I was thrilled to welcome the honourable Minister for Seniors and Accessibility to my riding of Mississauga Centre this past month, and was so proud to stand beside him when we announced a \$3-million investment into the Seniors Community Grant Program. This funding will help hundreds of non-profit community organizations to develop local supports and programs for seniors. Minister Cho himself is a senior, and I am fortunate to call him my mentor, colleague and friend.

On behalf of the government of Ontario, I'd like to wish all seniors a happy Seniors' Month.

BASKETBALL

Mr. Stan Cho: It's hard to believe it's June—despite what the weather feels like outside. June is certainly a very busy month, and that's the case in Willowdale, where our community is not just watching basketball; they're gripped with Raptors fever, as is the case across the rest of this great country of ours.

A couple of weeks ago, I had the opportunity to visit the local YMCA where I grew up and my dad still takes his executive showers every morning—well, he calls it a workout, actually. I had the pleasure of playing basketball with some of the youth volunteers aged 18 to 24 who run really great programs at our local YMCA, helping some of the more vulnerable youth participate in sport. Through basketball, they've certainly kept a lot of the kids there busy and active, and that, of course, benefits them in the many parts of their daily lives.

Mr. Speaker, it has been 361 days, and I've certainly learned a lot in this Legislature, but I learned something that day playing basketball, and that is that I am not 20 years old anymore. I've got to tell you, these kids were dunking all over me, and it was really hard to watch. I've got to give a shout-out to them. We're going to be having them in the Legislature when we resume. I want to say hi to them because I said I would, and I want to tell them to keep up the great work. It's something truly special that they're doing over there, and I'd like to thank them.

Of course, I'd like to also add: Go, Raptors, go. We got this. We're going to game 7.

INTRODUCTION OF BILLS

MUNICIPAL REPRESENTATION AND RESTRUCTURING PROTECTION ACT, 2019

LOI DE 2019 VISANT À PROTÉGER LES MUNICIPALITÉS CONTRE DES MODIFICATIONS EN MATIÈRE DE REPRÉSENTATION ET DE RESTRUCTURATION MUNICIPALES

Ms. Horwath moved first reading of the following bill:

Bill 121, An Act to afford municipalities certain protections with respect to legislative changes affecting their Governance and Structure / Projet de loi 121, Loi offrant certaines protections aux municipalités en ce qui concerne les modifications législatives touchant leur gouvernance et structure.

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

First reading agreed to.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): I will ask the Leader of the Opposition to provide a brief explanation of her bill.

Ms. Andrea Horwath: This bill is more necessary than ever in the province of Ontario because it sets out a declaration by the province endorsing the principle that its relationship with municipalities should be based on mutual respect, consultation and co-operation.

The bill provides that the province shall not introduce legislation containing a provision that would result in changes to municipal representation or in municipal restructuring unless there has been public notice and public consultations in the affected municipalities, and the affected municipalities have passed bylaws approving the change.

The bill also ensures that regulations containing changes to municipal representation shall not be made under any act unless the same conditions of public notice and consultations and municipal approval are met.

FAIRNESS FOR ROAD USERS ACT (CONTRAVENTIONS CAUSING DEATH OR SERIOUS BODILY HARM), 2019

LOI DE 2019 SUR L'ÉQUITÉ ENVERS LES USAGERS DE LA ROUTE (CONTRAVENTIONS AYANT CAUSÉ UN DÉCÈS OU DES BLESSURES CORPORELLES GRAVES)

Ms. French moved first reading of the following bill:

Bill 122, An Act to amend the Highway Traffic Act to create an offence of contravention causing death or serious bodily harm / Projet de loi 122, Loi modifiant le Code de la route pour ériger en infraction le fait d'avoir causé un décès ou des blessures corporelles graves pendant la commission d'une contravention.

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

First reading agreed to.

1320

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Will the member for Oshawa please give the House a brief explanation of her bill?

Ms. Jennifer K. French: Thank you, Speaker. This bill amends the Highway Traffic Act. If a person causes or contributes to causing an accident which causes death or serious bodily harm and, at the time, the person was contravening the Highway Traffic Act or its regulations, then the person is guilty of an offence. The court may sentence the person to a fine of up to \$50,000 or to imprisonment for up to two years or both. The court may also suspend the person's driver's licence or permit.

We all know bad things can happen on the roads when people violate the Highway Traffic Act. However, in the event that someone dies or is significantly injured, there is not a significant penalty that results. This bill increases penalties if someone on the road breaks a driving law and hurts or kills someone.

MOTIONS

HOUSE SITTINGS

Hon. Sylvia Jones: I move that, pursuant to standing order 6(c)(i), the House shall meet from 6:45 p.m. to 9:30 p.m. on Monday, June 3, 2019, for the purpose of considering government business.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Ms. Jones has moved that, pursuant to standing order 6(c)(i), the House shall meet from 6:45 p.m. to 9:30 p.m. on Monday, June 3, 2019, for the purpose of considering government business. 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.

Mr. Gilles Bisson: 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

AUTISM TREATMENT

M^{me} France Gélinas: I would like to thank Sara Kitlar-Pothier from the Northern Ontario Autism Alliance, who organized a petition blitz in Coniston. So all of those petitions are from people from Coniston in my riding, and they read as follows:

"Support for Autistic Children in Ontario....

"Whereas every autistic child in Ontario deserves access to evidence-based therapy so that they can meet their potential;

"Whereas the capped funding system is based on age and not the clinical needs of the child;

"Whereas the program does not ensure access to services for rural and francophone children;

"Whereas the new Ontario Autism Program does not provide additional funding for travel costs;"

They "petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to direct the Ministry of Children, Community and Social Services to ensure access to an equitable, needs-based autism services for all children who need them."

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

INJURED WORKERS

Ms. Bhutla Karpoche: On June 1, we marked Injured Workers' Day, so in honour of that I'd like to table a petition titled "Workers' Comp is a Right.

"Petition to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas about 200,000 to 300,000 people in Ontario are injured on the job every year;

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

I fully support this petition, will affix my signature to it and give it to page Jackson to send to the Clerks.

HOMEOPATHY

Mr. Toby Barrett: My petition is to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario.

"Whereas the government is creating a new super Ontario health system;

“Whereas the College of Physicians and Surgeons state, in increasing numbers, patients are looking to complementary medicine for answers to complex medical problems, strategies for improved wellness, or relief from acute medical symptoms. Patients may seek advice or treatment from Ontario physicians, or from other health care providers. Patients have the right to make health care decisions that accord with their own values, wishes and preferences. This includes decisions to pursue complementary/alternative medicine either as an adjunct to conventional medicine, or instead of conventional medicine;

“Whereas the results demonstrate that homeopathy can effectively integrate or, in some cases, substitute allopathic medicine;

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

“Petition in support of homeopaths, regulated health professionals mandated to be included in each and every team being created for the new Ontario health system.”

I sign this petition.

EDUCATION FUNDING

Ms. Marit Stiles: I’m pleased to present the following petition on behalf of my constituent Ligia Oliviera. It reads as follows:

“Stop Ford’s Education Cuts.

“To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“Whereas Doug Ford’s new education scheme seeks to dramatically increase class sizes starting in grade 4;

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

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

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

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

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

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

I support this petition. I’m happy to affix my signature to it, and I’ll be handing it along to page Gia to table with the Clerks.

BEVERAGE ALCOHOL SALES

Mr. Stephen Crawford: I have a petition entitled “Bring Beer and Wine to Corner Stores (End the Beer Store Monopoly).

“To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“Whereas the government for the people was elected on a mandate to make life more affordable for Ontarians; and

“Whereas currently the Beer Store is owned by multinational brewers not the government of Ontario as some people would believe; and

“Whereas the previous Liberal government handed these global giants a sweetheart deal putting multinational profits ahead of the people of Ontario; and

“Whereas the people of Ontario are responsible consumers and adults can be trusted to make responsible personal decisions;

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

“Terminate the current contract with the Beer Store global entities and expand beer and wine sales to corner and convenience stores.”

I will sign this and give it to page Patrick.

INDIGENOUS AFFAIRS

Ms. Catherine Fife: This petition is not about beer. It is called “Stop the Cuts to Indigenous Reconciliation.

“To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“Whereas Ontario is situated on the traditional territory of Indigenous peoples, many of whom have been on this land since time immemorial;

“Whereas in 2015 the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada released its final report: ‘Honouring the Truth, Reconciling for the Future’ which made 94 recommendations or ‘Calls to Action’ for the government of Canada;

“Whereas reconciliation must be at the centre of all ... decision-making;

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

“—continue reconciliation work in Ontario by implementing the recommendations of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission;

“—reinstate the Ministry of Indigenous Relations and Reconciliation;

“—work with First Nations leaders to sign cooperative, government-to-government accords;

“—support TRC education and community development,” such as summer writing sessions for truth and reconciliation; and

“—support Indigenous communities across the province,” such as “cleaning up Grassy Narrows.”

It’s my pleasure to bring this petition to the floor of the Legislature, to affix my signature and give it to page Maisie.

1330

EDUCATION FUNDING

Mr. Paul Miller: “To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“Whereas Doug Ford’s new education scheme seeks to dramatically increase class sizes starting in grade 4;

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

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

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

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

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

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

I agree with this and will affix my signature, and I will give it to Patrick.

EDUCATION FUNDING

Mr. Tom Rakocevic: It’s my pleasure to read out a petition that came from a wonderful young leader named Cicely Campbell, a student at Westview Centennial Secondary School. It reads as follows:

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

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

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

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

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

I certainly support this, will be signing it and giving it to page Monica.

EDUCATION FUNDING

Mr. John Vanthof: “To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“Whereas students in Ontario pay some of the highest tuition fees in the country and carry the heaviest debt loads, even with the recently announced 10% reduction; and

“Whereas many students will now be forced to take on more loans rather than previously available non-repayable grants; and

“Whereas the Ontario government has failed to take action on the chronic underfunding of colleges and universities; and

“Whereas students must have an autonomous voice that is independent of administration and government to advocate on our behalf; and

“Whereas the proposed ‘Student Choice Initiative’ undermines students’ ability to take collective action;

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

“—provide more grants, not loans;....

“—increase public funding for public education;

“—protect students’ independent voices; and

“—defend the right to organize.”

I fully agree with the students from Nipissing University and other parts of Ontario, and affix my signature and give it to page Amelia to give to the Clerk.

LIBRARY SERVICES

Mr. Michael Mantha: I want to thank the good people of Gogama, Timmins, Sudbury, Azilda, Chelmsford, Mattagami First Nation, Chapleau, Milton, Cochrane, Petawawa, Kimberley, Flesherton, Priceville, Markdale, Neustadt, Durham and Pembroke.

The petition is entitled “Support Ontario Public Libraries....

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

“(1) To reverse the 50% funding cuts to the Southern Ontario Library Service and Ontario Library Service—North agencies and reinstate provincial funding for these services to at least the 2017-18 funding level; and

“(2) To maintain the operating grant funding for all Ontario libraries.”

I wholeheartedly agree with this petition and present it to page Sadee to bring down to the Clerks’ table.

HEALTH CARE FUNDING

M^{me} France Gélinas: I would like to thank Krista Trafford from my riding for collecting those petitions. It reads as follows:

“Whereas during arbitration with the Ontario Medical Association, the Ontario government proposed to limit public funding for injection treatments provided in community clinics, for patients with chronic pain, to four injections per visit to a maximum of four visits per patient, per year;”

They “petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to prevent the passage of this proposal by the Ministry of Health that will severely restrict the availability of this necessary medical treatment and may result in the closure of community clinics that treat patients with chronic pain.”

I will sign this petition and give it to my good page Patrick to bring to the Clerk.

TORONTO TRANSIT COMMISSION

Ms. Bhutila Karpoche: I’d like to thank my constituents who signed this petition outside High Park station during a transit canvass one morning. It reads as follows:

“Keeping Transit Public: Stop the Subway Sell-Off.

“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.”

As a transit rider myself, I couldn’t agree with this more. I affix my signature to it.

LCBO

Ms. Sandy Shaw: To the Legislative Assembly, I have a petition entitled “Support the LCBO.

“Whereas the LCBO in 2017-18 transferred dividends of \$2.12 billion to the Ontario government, which were invested in the public services” that we care about, “like health care, highways and colleges...; and

“Whereas the LCBO is a socially responsible retailer that ensured the safety of our communities in 2017-18 by challenging” almost 14 million “transactions over concerns of intoxication, underage purchase or second-party purchase; and

“Whereas the LCBO raised \$11 million in charitable donations in 2017-18 for MADD Canada, children’s hospitals, the United Way and local charities;

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

“To direct government to keep alcohol sales in public hands in order to protect our young people and communities and to ensure the profits are invested in our public services.”

We previously submitted this petition with 5,800 signatures. More are coming in. I fully support this. I will affix my name, and I will be giving it to Monica to take to the table.

CURRICULUM

M^{me} France Gélinas: This comes from David Young from Garson, in my riding.

“Whereas the 2015 health and physical education curriculum was based on extensive province-wide consultation with parents, caregivers, educators, health and education experts;

“Whereas cancellation of the sexual health component of the 2015 health and physical education curriculum would place students at risk by withdrawing instructions on naming body parts and learning about responsible decision-making and consent, gender expression and gender identity, sexuality, sexual health, growth and development, LGBTQ issues and healthy views of body image;

“Whereas repealing the 2015 curriculum would not stop classroom issues arising for which students need factual, evidence-based and age-appropriate answers to support their understanding of healthy behaviour and healthy decision-making;

“Whereas the majority of parents support the 2015 health and physical education curriculum;

They “petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

“That the Minister of Education not repeal the sexual health component of the 2015 health and physical education curriculum.”

This comes from the Rainbow board in Sudbury and has 264 signatures.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

TIME ALLOCATION

Hon. John Yakabuski: I move that, pursuant to standing order 47 and notwithstanding any other standing order or special order of the House relating to Bill 115, An Act to amend the Liquor Control Act with respect to the termination of a specified agreement, the Speaker shall put every question necessary to dispose of the second reading stage of the bill without further debate or amendment and at such time the bill shall be ordered—

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): I have to call the minister’s attention to this: He missed a clause that he was supposed to read.

1340

Interjection.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Order.

I recognize again the Minister of Natural Resources and Forestry.

Hon. John Yakabuski: Thank you, Speaker. It’s a good thing I have my glasses.

I move that, pursuant to standing order 47 and notwithstanding any other standing order or special order of the House relating to Bill 115, An Act to amend the Liquor Control Act with respect to the termination of a specified agreement, when the bill is next called as a government order, the Speaker shall put every question necessary to dispose of the second reading stage of the bill without further debate or amendment and at such time the bill shall be ordered for third reading, which order may be called that same day; and

That, when the order for third reading of the bill is called, one hour shall be allotted to the third reading stage

of the bill, with 20 minutes apportioned to the government, 20 minutes to Her Majesty's loyal opposition, 10 minutes to the Liberal Party independent members and 10 minutes apportioned to the Green Party independent member. At the end of this time, the Speaker shall interrupt the proceedings and shall put every question necessary to dispose of this stage of the bill without further debate or amendment; and

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

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

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Mr. Yakabuski has moved government notice of motion number 65.

Further debate?

Ms. Jane McKenna: It gives me great pleasure to rise in this House today and speak in support of Bill 115, the Bringing Choice and Fairness to the People Act. Our government has tabled this legislation to improve alcohol choice and convenience for consumers and to create more opportunities for businesses, to stand up for the little guy and to keep more beer profits in Ontario, Madam Speaker.

As we have said repeatedly, during the election campaign as well as in government, the time has come to respect adult consumers. Our government remains committed to our promise to expand beer and wine to corner stores, big-box stores and more grocery stores. To do that, we need to get beer sales in Ontario out of the control of the Beer Store.

Bill 115, if passed and proclaimed, will terminate the previous government's unfair agreement with the Beer Store. The end of this agreement will allow this government to expand alcohol sales across the province to corner stores and, more importantly, to more grocery stores, where people go to fill their refrigerators and pantries.

We are also committed to protecting the taxpayer and growing the economy. The unfair agreement with the Beer Store puts the interests of three large global breweries ahead of Ontario consumers, taxpayers and small businesses. It's a bad deal for people in Ontario who want more choice and convenience, and it's deeply unfair to businesses who want to compete in this sector.

The report prepared by Ken Hughes, Ontario Special Advisor for the Beverage Alcohol Review, helped inform our deliberations. It details the inconvenience and unfairness of the current system for everyday people. The report identified the agreement with the Beer Store and its private owners as the primary obstacle to achieving a more fair and convenient alcohol retail system in Ontario. I quote from the report:

"Many of the current challenges with alcohol retail in Ontario stem from the 2015 Master Framework Agreement signed by the previous government, the Beer Store and the three large global brewers who own it.... Because of it, many small businesses are shut out of alcohol retail, and the economic benefits that could come from an expanded market."

Ontario's government for the people is determined to improve choice and convenience. It is our hope that the multinational brewers who own the Beer Store will put the interests of the customers and Ontarians first and join with us as we build a modern system that opens up more places to buy beer. We would welcome their participation in creating a new model that also allows small businesses to grow and create jobs.

The facts speak for themselves, and most of us in this chamber are very familiar with them. First, the Beer Store is owned and controlled primarily by three large multinational corporations. Molson owns 51%, Labatt owns 45% and Sleeman owns 4%. Craft beer sales account for less than 2% of sales at the Beer Store—I couldn't believe it when I pulled that stat up—but they make up over 10% of sales at the LCBO and over 15% at the grocery store. Madam Speaker, can you believe that? The Master Framework Agreement gives the Beer Store the exclusive rights to sell 12- and 24-packs in most of their local markets, forcing consumers to buy from the Beer Store if they want to purchase in bulk.

Ontario has fewer stores that can sell alcohol than any other province when compared against population size. There are over 8,000 retail stores in Quebec selling alcohol but fewer than 3,000 in Ontario. I've got to tell you that when I was pulling up these stats, I was just blown away. A recent report by the Retail Council of Canada suggests that simply by increasing the number of alcohol retailers to the national average, Ontario would see 9,100 jobs created. Let me repeat that: 9,100 jobs created. It also noted that, before taxes, the price of a case of 24 in Ontario is still 8.3% higher than in Quebec.

If this legislation passes, it means that we will be able to pick up a case of beer for a barbecue while we're buying our burgers, buns and salad at the grocery store. Isn't that unbelievable? This is about only having to make one trip to one store, saving your time and your money—and we all know how valuable our time is.

I would like to quote from Ken Hughes's report because it's very enlightening, especially for some members whose memory is perhaps not quite as long as mine:

"Ontario has a once-in-a-generation opportunity to make meaningful change that will allow small businesses to flourish and create jobs while providing choice and convenience for the purchase of beverage alcohol. Over the past 92 years, successive governments have incrementally let rules, loopholes, institutions, and special interests develop a near-monopoly beer distribution system that primarily benefits a few larger brewers. Now is the chance to create a system built for the consumer, for the citizen, for the people.

"First, in the short term, we must create as many opportunities as possible using the flexibility we already have to allow businesses to provide choice and convenience by expanding the number of LCBO agency stores and allowing beverage alcohol to be sold in more grocery stores.

"Second, the citizens of Ontario have long suffered under an anti-competitive, anti-consumer beer distribution

system controlled by some of the largest beer companies in the world. Nowhere else in the world is a consortium of the largest global brewers given effective control over 70% of the beer retail market, including the exclusive right to sell 12- and 24-packs. The system has been so advantageous to the big brewers that their Canadian subsidiaries, Molson and Labatt, have become integral and highly profitable parts of these global companies. However, that near-monopoly has come at a cost to consumers in Ontario. It has severely restricted choice and convenience for consumers, and in fact, Ontario currently has the fewest number of outlets per capita selling beverage alcohol of any province in Canada. The current situation is not fair to consumers, or to smaller craft beer entrepreneurs, innovators and job creators....

“We have a great opportunity to celebrate, enhance”—

Ms. Catherine Fife: Point of order.

1350

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Lisa Gretzky): Stop the clock, please. I recognize the member for Waterloo on a point of order.

Ms. Catherine Fife: Thank you very much, Madam Speaker. I note that we are debating the time allocation, and according to standing order 23(b)(i), the member must be speaking to the time allocation, the limitation of debate, not the actual bill.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Lisa Gretzky): Thank you for that point of order.

I'm going to remind the member from Burlington that you're to be speaking to a time allocation motion, so try and tie your comments back to that, please.

Back to the member for Burlington.

Ms. Jane McKenna: Thank you, Madam Speaker. I'm just explaining why we have time allocation.

“These businesses help build Ontario's identity and create jobs in many smaller communities. Together, these businesses are becoming a new powerhouse in many communities, right across the province.

The Beer Store “near-monopoly is made worse by the fact that in most TBS locations the shopping experience is virtually the same as it was nearly a century ago—the product is kept behind a wall and customers select from logos.” Despite a \$100-million investment “since 2015, the overall customer experience remains virtually unchanged. Despite the shopping experience, consumers must go to TBS locations to return their empties and get their deposit back. Their exclusive rights to collect empties is inconvenient for consumers.

“Nowhere else in the world does a government give the biggest beer companies special privileges at the expense of consumers and the rest of the industry. The existing” Master Framework Agreement “negotiated by the previous government is a terrible deal for Ontario consumers and small businesses.” If we eliminate it by passing Bill 115, we can “save Ontarians hundreds of millions of dollars every year by creating more opportunities for one-stop shopping. The Ministry of Finance estimates the value of time saved by being able to buy alcohol while shopping for other items could be up to \$250 million per

year.” I couldn't believe that—\$250 million per year. “Opening additional retail outlets would also make it easier for craft beverage manufacturers to connect with consumers,” grow their businesses “and create jobs....”

“The continued inconvenience and unfairness of Ontario's beverage alcohol system is by design. For 92 years, Ontario's system has been based on three fundamental beliefs: first, that the best way to reduce and prevent social harm and health risks related to alcohol consumption is to make purchasing and consuming alcohol awkward or inconvenient; second, a belief that adults can't be trusted to make their own decisions around responsible alcohol consumption; and third, that private sector retailers, with the exception of a small group of insiders, do not have the capacity to balance market competition and social responsibility.”

I'm paraphrasing here now, because it's important to be clear that it's no longer okay to regulate and hassle people “for their own good” as it was in the mid-20th century. We “believe that the role of government isn't to inconvenience the public and force everyday Ontarians to drive long distances to buy legal products that should be available closer to home.” We “believe that competition leads to healthier markets, and that the private sector has just as deep an interest in social responsibility as everyone else.” We also “understand that in 2019 there are better ways for governments to reduce the harm of alcohol consumption than giving a retail monopoly to a select few.”

This has been a sweet deal for too long, but in the spring of 2019, Madam Speaker, the beer monopoly era in Ontario is drawing to a close.

Today, the Beer Store “dominates Ontario's retail landscape for beer. With 450 stores, TBS accounts for 70% of volume beer sales across the province”—70%. It also “limits the total number of new beverage alcohol outlets to 450.”

We, the people, are tired of the Beer Store's approach to customer service and marketing. “Ontario's 2015 review of beer retailing described the” Beer Store “customer experience as ‘basic.’ The Washington Post recently described TBS as having ‘all the charm of a cold-storage warehouse.’” That sounds about right. The reality is, we've become used to warehouse beer shopping.

The craft breweries, who are really disadvantaged by the Beer Store model, offer an interesting and vast variety of local alternatives. They are marketing their product in pubs and restaurants by educating servers about the quality and styles of beer. The result is, as craft beer becomes more interesting, the consumer is becoming more sophisticated.

By moving to a more open retail, the net impact would increase the provincial GDP by \$3.5 billion annually. The Retail Council of Canada “further estimates that increasing retail outlets could potentially create up to 9,100 new jobs,” and this government has just—what is it?—175,000 that we've just—

Interjections.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Lisa Gretzky): Stop the clock, please. There's a lot of side conversations going on

on both sides of the House. I'm having a difficult time listening to the member who has the floor. I'm not sure how she's even able to concentrate with the amount of noise going on. I'm also going to ask that all members stop with the crosstalk across the floor at each other. Thank you.

Back to the member for Burlington.

Ms. Jane McKenna: Thank you so much, Madam Speaker. I'll just repeat the last line as I'm wrapping up here.

The Retail Council of Canada "further estimates that increasing retail outlets could potentially create up to 9,100 new jobs," which I'm sure everyone in here is extremely excited about, "or 2.3 jobs per licensed store."

The Beer Store no longer serves the interests of Ontario and, as such, we need to break the monopoly that is being enforced by the Master Framework Agreement.

Thank you so much for the opportunity in here today, and I look forward to continuing the debate.

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

Mr. Gilles Bisson: Well, Madam Speaker, what do you say? This is just one of these debates. There are all kinds of pressing issues in this province that we need to deal with. For example, there are children out there who have lost their IBI therapy, right? There are things that we can turn our attention to and that we're able to deal with so that we can make life better for individuals.

We've got reserves all across northern Ontario, and we have reserves in southern Ontario as well where you can't drink the water out of the tap. We're going to get fixated on making sure that we can make beer more available, and we have to use time allocation to get there? I just think this really speaks to the misguided thought of this government when it comes to what's a priority.

If you wanted to move beer out of Brewers Retail and you wanted to put it into corner stores—which are not corner stores, which I'll get to in a minute—that's one thing. But there is a Master Framework Agreement that still has about seven years left to go on it and that is signed in such a way that says that if the Legislature tries to undo this agreement by way of law, by a legislative act or by way of regulation, they're going to get sued. And once you get sued, it's not only through the master agreement, Madam Speaker; it's also in regard to the various trade agreements that Canada is party to when it comes to Europe, when it comes to the United States and when it comes to the Pacific Rim.

All of these beer companies—the government is right: They're multinational companies and they have redress under those trade agreements to be able to go after their losses. So we're going to get sued by the multinational companies, and we're going to have to pay somewhere—I don't know. They're saying it could be as much as \$100 million, and we're going to have to deal with redress through the various trade agreements, all so Mr. Ford can say, "Hey, everybody, look over here. We have beer. Don't look at autism. Don't look at what's going on in hospitals. Certainly don't look at what's going on with

water on reserves. Beer. Beer over here. Everybody look." That's what these—

Interjection.

Mr. Gilles Bisson: I know. I've seen your posts. I'd be ashamed, my God. You're beermongers. I don't see anything wrong with beer. I like to drink a beer like anybody else.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Lisa Gretzky): I'm just going to remind the member for Timmins that his comments go through the Chair and not directly across the floor.

Interjection.

Mr. Gilles Bisson: Madam Chair, I was to speak about a beer; of course, I was going to speak about you. But my point is, I like a beer like anybody else, Madam Speaker, but there are far more pressing matters that this Legislature and this government have to pay attention to.

This is nothing but diversion. The government is trying to find something that they see as populist that is going to allow people to look at something else while they're doing things like reducing funding to mental health, reducing funding to supports for children—not only IBI and ABA, but when it comes to various programs that fall under the Ministry of Health, such as smoking cessation. When it comes to the downloading they're doing to municipalities, which will drive our municipal tax bills up, Mr. Ford is the biggest tax giver, because the downloading that he's giving is going to raise our municipal taxes. All of that's going on and these guys are out there saying, "Everybody look over here. We're going to have beer, beer, beer, beer." We're going to get sued.

1400

So I say to the government across the way, the government, by way of this time allocation motion, is advancing a bill that is contrary to everything a real, true business person should feel. A true business person understands that once you've signed a contract, you've signed a contract, and that provides for stability in the marketplace. When you have a Conservative government who says, "Oh, we're really good business people. We know how to do things because we're Conservatives, we're business people," and you're out there cancelling contracts and being sued by everything from beer companies to energy companies to you name it, you've really got to say to yourselves, "What kind of Conservatives are you?"

A true Conservative would understand that one of the biggest things you have to do in an economy is to provide stability. You've got to let the investor know, once they open the door and they walk into your jurisdiction, that there is stability. There are rules, and we live according to the rule of law and contract law. This government is making a mockery of that. They're time-allocating a bill that is going to facilitate Ontario being sued and making us less stable as an environment to invest and do business in.

I just say this: Coming from Conservatives? Can you imagine, Madam Speaker, if it was us, the New Democrats, who were to do this? They would be up on their feet and they'd be howling, quite rightfully so. But New

Democrats would never—we wouldn't do it. Why would you break an agreement with the private sector that has been signed?

There is a whole other debate about, do you want to have beer in corner stores? There's a whole other debate. That is something that some people are for and some people are against. I particularly think that's not the direction we should go, but that's not what I think is the real problem with this legislation and the problem with what we're time-allocating. It's that what this government is doing is setting up Ontarians to have to pay for their diversion. While everybody is over here looking at beer, beer, beer, we're being sued by the private sector, by multinational corporations, because this government is mucking around in contract law and they're breaking agreements that were signed between the province of Ontario and the private sector.

When a person who is investing in a jurisdiction like Ontario says, "I can't trust the government to respect the contract," that is not good for investment in Ontario. You're not only setting bad precedent for today; you're also setting bad precedent for tomorrow. It has always kind of been the covenant that once a government comes to office they have the ability to change legislation. Government A is in power for a number of years; they get defeated, and then government B comes into place and they pass legislation that is different and counter to what the other government does. Everybody is used to that. But nobody comes in and breaks up contract law. That's just something you don't do. Why would any government put itself in the position of breaking a contract signed with the private sector, or anybody else, in order to be able to do that? For what? Because they want a diversion, they want a distraction?

Here are some things that we could be doing rather than doing what the government is doing by way of this time allocation motion with this particular act that deals with the sale of beer in places outside the Brewer's Retail. I think of my good friend, Mr. Mamakwa, the member from Kiiwetinoong; I think of my friend from Algoma-Manitoulin; I think of M. Bourgooin up in Mushkegowuk-James Bay, and other members who represent First Nations. You can't even drink the water out of the tap. They have been under boil-water advisories not for a year, not for two years, but in some cases 25 years.

Ms. Sandy Shaw: That's a priority.

Mr. Gilles Bisson: Now, there is a priority. If anybody wants to drink something, it should be water, at the very least.

Why don't we take the time to draft legislation that puts in place some standards that the federal government has to follow when it comes to the quality of drinking water on reserve? We kind of can do that now by regulation, but there are other things that we could do. Why don't we, as a province, look at what role we can play when it comes to providing safe drinking water on reserves?

What about those children who have autism who used to get IBI and ABA therapy provided by agencies within our area? In my case and in your case and the member

from Algoma-Manitoulin's, it's Hands. That's the name of the organization. But now, as a result of what the government did, those children, in about four months' time, are going to be losing their IBI therapy, because you are not going to buy the IBI therapy you need for \$5,000 to \$20,000.

The government says, "Oh, don't worry. We're consulting." This is the government that goes, "Shoot. Ready. Aim." That's what they did with this particular legislation. They didn't bother looking at what was going to happen to the kids, when they made the decision. They should have had the consultation before they actually made the decision, and then implement the decision based on the consultation. But did they do that?

This time allocation brings us in a direction that is very dangerous. It's bad enough that the government time-allocates legislation out of second reading into committee for a day or two, like they did with Bill 108. But now we've got bills that are being introduced in the House, and we have a situation where now the government is saying, "We're going to have a bill that is going to skip the committee process entirely." This bill is not going to committee.

If the government is so proud of what it's doing—they were out all last weekend, taking pictures in convenience stores and talking about the great job they were doing with beer. Take the time to go out and sell what you're doing to the public. Allow the bill to go to committee, and allow those people who are interested, for and against the bill—and I'll tell you, you will get people who will come and speak in your favour. There are people who want beer at the Circle K or the Petrocan or wherever it might end up, because there are not a lot of independent convenience stores, as there used to be before. Some people like that; I understand that. But you have to allow the mothers of MADD driving to show up.

I lived in Montreal when I was 15. I'm from Ontario; I grew up in Ontario. But my cousin lived in Montreal, and I used to go spend my summers there. I was 15 years old, buying beer in a corner store. It was that easy, right? And you're going to tell me that's not going to happen in Ontario, that you're not going to have some store where somebody wants to sell beer and closes their eyes to the 15-, 16-, or 17-year-old who's trying to buy beer?

Listen, that's why we have a consumer protection part of how we sell alcohol. We have an LCBO because we want social responsibility. We want to make sure that those who come in and buy alcohol in our government-run stores are doing that such a way that we're making the sale responsible. If a child comes in—I shouldn't say a child. If a person who is under age comes in, we're able to stop that sale. Partly the reason why there is a monopoly on the beer side, and that we have the Brewers Retail, is in order to allow that part of social responsibility to happen when it comes to the sale of alcohol.

So if you're proud of this legislation, send it to committee. Let the people come before it and talk about this legislation, the pros and the cons, because you will find both. But I'm telling you, there are some cons here.

I would think that the mothers of MADD driving—

Mr. Percy Hatfield: Against drunk driving.

Mr. Gilles Bisson: —the Mothers Against Drunk Driving, MADD—excuse me; I had the acronym wrong in my head—would be upset, because one of the things that they want to make sure is that we don't get access to alcohol, beer, wine and spirits in a way that makes it easier for us to be able to drink and drive. What's going to stop somebody from being able to walk into a corner store and buying—I don't know if they're going to allow this, but I know that when I was in Montreal, you could buy one bottle of beer. It's called a "road coke." What stops that from happening?

There are going to be some responsible retailers, I have no doubt, who are going to do the right thing, because with most people, that's what they want to do. Business people are hard-working people who are trying to make an honest living, and there are lots of those out there. But there are some that are a little bit less stringent when it comes to who they're going to sell to.

So is there going to be a problem, and is there a policy in place in order to make sure that we don't sell alcohol to younger people under the age of—is it 18 or 19 now, for alcohol?

Interjection: Nineteen.

Mr. Gilles Bisson: It's 19 for alcohol.

I think those are legitimate questions that the Mothers Against Drunk Driving would want to have answered. Maybe you can do this in a way that we can protect ourselves—I don't know—but you're certainly not putting it in this legislation, and you're not allowing anybody to suggest anything, because we are bypassing the committee process. This bill is not going to committee.

Ms. Sandy Shaw: Tyranny of the majority.

1410

Mr. Gilles Bisson: It's the tyranny of the majority, right? It's a really bad way of doing legislation.

So I say to the government across the way: If you want to spend time doing something that's useful, there are all kinds of other things that we could be dealing with in this House today and that this government could be working on. One of those is dealing with things like safe drinking water on reserves, hospital backlogs, municipal downloading, children with autism—there are all kinds of things we'd be able to do.

One of the things that bothers me as well is that by not going into committee—the government's argument is, "We're trying to break up a monopoly." Fair enough; that's a view. But who's actually going to get the beer? Somebody pointed it out the other day, and do you know what? I never even thought about this. That's why committee work is so, so good.

There used to be a time when you and I, Madam Speaker, were growing up in our communities, when most corner stores were owned by individual families. You remember those, right? There was Valcourt and Piché and Després; there were different stores that were owned by families that sold milk, bread, cigarettes and whatever it was that you needed. Some of them sold meat—whatever. But over the years, those independent corner stores have

been taken over by Circle K, Mac's milk, Petro-Can and Shell. Those are the people who have the majority of the businesses when it comes to convenience stores.

Is this government helping mom and pop? I'll bet you when this is all over, people who have corner stores that are independent are not going to be any better off when it comes to the sale of beer in their corner stores because most of it is going to go to those other types of organizations. You're going to see Mac's milk, you're going to see 7-Eleven, you're going to see Circle K and you're going to see all the large multinational companies—some of them national—who own gas stations and chains, store after store of convenience stores, get this business.

Who are we helping? Are we helping mom and pop? Again, it's the same thing. Tories only know one type of business, and that's big business. If they can help big business, they're there. When it comes to helping the average people on the street—and a lot of those are independent business people. I know: My mom and dad were independent business people. That's what they did all their lives. My friend here was an independent business person in the farming business. We understand. But you're not doing anything, in this case, to say, "What are we really doing to help those independent corner stores, the few that still exist?" Is there anything in this legislation that's going to make it fair for them, with a level playing field, when it comes to attracting beer sales, as compared to Circle K or Mac's milk?

Ms. Sandy Shaw: It might.

Mr. Gilles Bisson: I think there is a danger it might do that.

They're already struggling. My nephew owns a corner store in Timmins: Commercial Variety. Go there; they make great food. If you want a pizza or you want a burger, there's great food, between Mountjoy and Fogg, just by what used to be the old Sunrise Rentals. But stores like that are few and far between because they're having to compete with the Circle Ks, with the Mac's milks and with those larger chains that have all kinds of cash and provide lots of variety in those stores and lots of parking to be able to buy whatever it is you're going in to get. I will venture to say that the independent, like Corey, my nephew, is probably not going to be one of the ones that is going to benefit from the sale of beer in their corner store.

Ms. Sandy Shaw: He might.

Mr. Gilles Bisson: He might; he might. But my guess is, probably not. This is going to give a yet larger advantage to those convenience stores.

Are there people out in Ontario who want beer in corner stores? Absolutely. I've heard it in my riding. I think we've heard it everywhere. That's not the question. Are they a majority? I don't even know if it's a majority. The kickback that I've been getting, which was really surprising—Madam Speaker, you go to your riding on the weekend, and we all do the same. There were lots of people who have been raising this issue and saying, "Are these guys for real?" Holy geez, most of our grocery stores in Timmins sell beer. I don't know if it's a majority, but it's pretty close. A good number of them sell beer and wine

in the grocery store, and you can go to the Brewer's Retail, which has three outlets in Timmins—one in South Porcupine and two in Timmins—for a population of 43,000, with lots of parking. And you can go to the LCBO, and we've got two of those—one in South Porcupine and one in Timmins.

Are people in Timmins going to be hard-pressed to find a bottle of beer? That's not even talking about craft brewers. You can go to Compass Brewing on Algonquin, great beer just right by the lube shop, the Jiffy Lube, and to Full Beard on Wilson Avenue. It's great.

My point is, are we hard pressed when it comes to being able to access beer in any of our communities? It's not hard to buy beer anywhere in Ontario. You're not far away from either a Brewers Retail, a grocery store that now sells beer or alcohol, a craft brewer or an LCBO. There's something nearby. So what is the government really doing here?

You're saying you are doing this because you are going to create 9,100 jobs. Oh, what a stretch that is. There's no 9,100 jobs that are going to be created as a result of selling beer in a store—because I'll tell you what I would do. If I was the corner store and I was selling beer, it would be another stock item on my shelf or in my fridge. And guess what? It's going to be somebody who's behind the counter now who is going to be selling it, because all of the people who work behind the counter, by and large, have to be old enough to sell cigarettes. Right? You have to be of age to be able to sell cigarettes, so you've got to be of age to be able to sell beer. You're not creating 9,100 jobs. You guys just pull that number out of the air and say it over and over again and hope that if you say it long enough, people will believe you.

I think it was—I was going to say Joseph Stalin, but that's their friend the Bolshevik that they're very friendly with. But what's his name, the German in the Second World War—oh, my God.

Interjection.

Mr. Gilles Bisson: Joseph Goebbels. It was Joseph Goebbels—who was the director of communications, the head of communications, amongst some other very nasty things that he did in the Second World War—who as a propagandist used to say, “If you say something often enough, loud enough, eventually people will believe it.” That's all this is: “9,100, 9,100, 9,100.” There's no 9,100 jobs. My God. You guys are businesspeople, and you really think that if I add an item of stock to my shelf, I have to add a person because I've added stock?

With most of these stores, if you put beer in the fridge, you've got to take pop out. There's not that much room. You can only put in so much. Then you say, “Well, not a problem. They're going to come in with another fridge.” Then you've got to take the potato chips out. You're going to have to move something to make room, unless they're all going to expand their stores, which I don't think they're going to do. You're going to utilize the staff that you have, and any Conservative who is trying to shovel you the idea that all of a sudden there are going to be 9,100 people hired in Ontario because we're selling beer in a corner store—

it's a stretch. It's such a stretch that—we cannot say the word “lying” in this House, Madam Speaker, and I withdraw it as I say it. But we can't say that, right? It's not in order, and I regret that that's the way.

But the other thing is that there are clearly going to be layoffs in the Brewers Retail system. How are you going to create 9,100 jobs? You're going to lose jobs in Brewers Retail. Maybe some of those will survive; I don't know.

Hon. Monte McNaughton: Don't defend that old model.

Mr. Gilles Bisson: Old model? I'll tell you what's an old model. Put a mirror in front of yourselves, Conservatives. That's an old model—old-style thinking that never worked before. “Trickle-down economics and slogans are going to fix all the problems.” We have a Premier, Madam Speaker, who was a guy who made bumper stickers, and does legislation and policy in the same way. It's all about bumper sticker ideas: beer in corner stores, buck-a-beer, putting stickers on gas pumps as a result of the carbon tax.

This government is trying to make us believe that the price of gas is up only because of a carbon tax. Yes, it went up 4.6 cents; nobody argues that. All right? That's a truth. But the price of gas with the carbon tax was 95 cents a litre in Timmins. It's now about \$1.40 a litre. That's not the carbon tax. That's the companies gouging us, your private sector friends who have that monopoly and say, “Hey, no regulation. I can do what I want.”

At least the darned beer industry is regulated. We can regulate a bottle of beer. We can regulate a bottle of wine. We can regulate the price of milk. We can regulate natural gas to my door. And you guys can't deal with the price of gas in Ontario because you're too busy having this fake fight with the federal government about a carbon tax. The only people who imposed a carbon tax in Ontario were Conservatives, because we had a cap-and-trade system that said the polluter pays. That's what it was, and now we have a system that says, “You, Mr. Taxpayer, are going to now pay,” because Mr. Harris wants to play politics with the issue of climate change and he transfers the responsibility onto you to pay the federal carbon tax, which we would have never had to do if they hadn't taken off the cap-and-trade. I'm going to say: How is the election going to work for you in three years, my friend? I want you to run on this whole beer thing and see how far you're going to go.

1420

These guys, Madam Speaker, are all about simple little slogans and little stickers that they put up, and they are able to sell all of this stuff. But the real danger is when governments are not—

Hon. Monte McNaughton: Seventy-six seats.

Mr. Gilles Bisson: You see? They're proud of it. They're succeeding, they say. Have you looked at the polling numbers lately? Wow, wow.

Interjections.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Lisa Gretzky): Order.

Mr. Gilles Bisson: Do you know what amazes me, Madam Speaker? Some of the members—the one who was heckling across the way; I will not name who that is—

when they were here in opposition and they listened, the Tories along with me, they'd say, "My, oh my, are they ever arrogant." You guys in less than a year are doing exactly what the Liberals used to do. It's the same type of arrogance that we saw from them: "We got 76 seats and we won the last election and we get to do what we want." Come on; it's a democracy. Not everybody in Ontario voted Conservative; the majority didn't. I think you have a certain responsibility to listen to the others and to say, "All right, let's hear what you have to say." The best way to do that when it comes to bills is to allow a bill to go to committee and allow it to travel in Ontario so people can have their say.

I don't have a problem if you come to Timmins with a beer bill. Come to Timmins with the beer bill. You'll find people who like it; I have no doubt. But you're also going to find some people who are going to say, "This is problematic, for various reasons."

Business climate: Why do you want to live and invest in a province that doesn't respect contract law? I think that's a real issue. Coming from Conservatives, that's pretty terrible. I think it's probably the biggest issue.

Ms. Sandy Shaw: It's chilling.

Mr. Gilles Bisson: It is very chilling when you stop and think about it.

What are we going to do when it comes to making sure that beer is sold in a responsible manner? Making beer and wine more available doesn't necessarily mean to say that we have better control on who buys it. Unfortunately, people have been killed on our highways as a result of drunk driving. Thank God, I've never had to live through that. I've never had to get that knock at the door at 3 o'clock in the morning when the OPP or the local police come to tell you a loved one has been killed as a result of a drunk driver. But stop and think about it.

Making beer more available for sale—and I had the same problem with the Kathleen Wynne Liberals. When the Liberals took beer and wine and put it in grocery stores—same story. So Liberals can stand there all they want and say, "Oh, we would never do that." You did it in spades.

The question becomes: What control and what responsibility do we want business to take or government to take when it comes to the safe sale of alcohol? I think those are legitimate questions that committees would be able to deal with when it comes to sending this bill out to committee.

I'm just looking at if there was anything else. Let me just see—oh, yes, this is something else that I thought was really, really interesting. The bill that we have before us that is now being time-allocated and moved to third reading is only about breaking the Master Framework Agreement between Brewers Retail and the crown. But it doesn't deal with a whole bunch of other issues which I think are interesting ones to deal with.

I was very surprised the other day. I'm a legislator; you think I would have known the answer. I live on Edward and Bay, a big apartment building, when I'm here. Like you, when you're down here, you stay in an apartment.

You all know Five Guys hamburgers. The best hamburgers you can get are at Five Guys; that's just my opinion. Well, guess who moved next door to Five Guys on Yonge Street?

Mr. Percy Hatfield: Who?

Mr. Gilles Bisson: Tokyo Smoke. The other day, I go walking down Edward Street, and I see this big lineup in front of this thing called Tokyo Smoke. I went, "Well, Tokyo Smoke; it must be a pot dispensary," I thought. So I go into Five Guys, I order my hamburger, I come walking out of Five Guys, and this younger couple comes walking by and they've got a Tokyo Smoke bag. I ask them, "Tell me; what was your experience like?" He said, "Was it ever expensive." What I didn't realize the government had done is that they put a floor price on the sale of pot, but there's no cap. So they're actually selling at higher prices than the LCBO is through the mail-in service that they have—the cannabis store. I'm not a user, so I don't know what the prices are; I have no idea. I don't begrudge anybody who smokes pot. That's entirely up to them. That's just not my thing. I like beer and wine, white wine especially.

The thing is that the price, because it's allowed to, is actually going up for pot, which is going to do little to deal with the black market. So those who are out there selling pot on the black market are now in a situation where they're supposedly competing—the whole reason we legalized pot—not the whole reason, but one of the reasons—was to get rid of the black market. Well, you're just helping the black market. You put no cap on the price, so now Tokyo Smoke can sell for whatever price they want, and there's no cap on how much they can sell it for. Madam Speaker, essentially what it does is drive up the price.

My point is this, to this legislation: Is there going to be some sort of a limit on the price when it comes to beer being sold in corner stores, under whatever this government does? Because I don't see anything in here that says there's going to be one uniform price. I just raise it; I don't see it in the legislation. Are we necessarily going to pay the same price when it goes to the Circle K or it goes to the 7-Eleven? They're going to want to be able to make a profit, and if there's no cap, guess what?

Mr. Percy Hatfield: No lid on that price.

Mr. Gilles Bisson: No lid on that price, as you say—no lid on that beer. The suds are going to come out. You're going to see the price actually go up.

So when Mr. Ford and the Conservatives say, "We're making beer more available to you," you're going to have more access to beer, no question—if you get away with this, because you may end up having a gaggle by the courts, once they get you in before the judges. But that's a whole other point. The thing is that I don't think the price is going to remain the same. I predict that the price of beer will go up in those particular establishments, and once it goes up there, it's going to go up elsewhere. You're not doing anything to protect the price of beer.

The last point I want to make—because I know I've got other members who want to speak to this—is an interesting thing that you're doing here. Judges, I know—

and you know, as legislators—look at what's in debates. When they're looking at how they're going to rule when it comes to challenges on legislation that we draft, they look at the debate and they look at what the intent is. The very fact that you're time-allocating this with no public hearings, no time in committee—you're going from second reading to third reading. We had a minimal debate at second reading. Once you got to your six and a half hours, you time-allocated. The official opposition has one hour to debate this at time allocation, and you're going to limit to a one-hour debate at third reading—no time for discussion, no time for sober second thought, as they say. Right? It's kind of funny that I said that. I never thought of it as being funny. But the point is, you are, I think, weakening your case before the courts, because if you were confident that breaking the Master Framework Agreement was something you could do easily, you wouldn't be rushing this bill through the House the way that you are now. You would actually take your time, and you would go out and consult with people in order to deal with the ancillary issues that are around selling beer and making it more available across Ontario.

I'm just saying this doesn't help your court case, and my guess is, there is going to be a court case. They've already said there's going to be. There are going to be challenges under NAFTA. There will be challenges under the WTO. There will be challenges with the Pacific Rim—whatever that agreement is; I forget the acronym now. The point is, they're going to look to this debate, and they're going to look at the length of the debate, and they're going to look at the process which the government utilized in order to pass this legislation, and they're going to come to a conclusion: What were they afraid of? What were they trying to not have?

Interjection: What were they doing?

Mr. Gilles Bisson: What were they doing? “What were they doing?” is probably the bigger question.

The judge is going to sit there, and the judge will say, “Well, okay. That's interesting.” So I think that the government is not helping itself and its court case by the way that they're doing it.

I know that there are other members who want to speak to this. But I've got to say, in my years here—I don't know. I might stand corrected, but I don't remember a bill, by time allocation, being treated in the way that this one is, where we're taking a bill from second reading, barely six and a half hours, and we're rushing it into third reading with no committee time whatsoever, no time for amendments. We're not even going into Committee of the Whole. My God, we're going right to third reading. We have a total of one hour of debate, with 20 minutes for the government, if they use it, 20 minutes for us, and 10 and 10 with the other independents. I just say, that is not the way to draft legislation, and we will be voting against this time allocation motion, because this is a really, really bad idea.

1430

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

Mr. David Piccini: I certainly enjoyed listening to the member opposite. Let me speak directly to time allocation and take this House down memory lane.

In 1992, it was the NDP government that that honourable member opposite was a part of, under then-Premier Bob Rae, who famously brought forward time allocation. Of course, when it was used to move forward their radical agenda, that member was all in favour of it. In fact, they implemented time limits on members. Do you know what that member opposite had to say on time limits? What did he say? He said the following: “I think that is pretty reasonable. If you can't come to your point in 20 minutes you have a real problem.” Madam Speaker, he could take his advice. He has just spent 30 minutes on the clock and prevented his members opposite from speaking to this. And it was the NDP member opposite that introduced this time allocation. Wow.

Do you know what else, Madam Speaker? Do you know what else the member opposite had to say? He had to say, “With these rule changes we in this Legislature will then have to get to the business of this province.” That's just what this government is getting to: the business of the province.

They're not interested in meaningful debate on this. They're not interested in a meaningful discussion on free market. As we know, they don't believe in the free market. They're not interested in meaningful discussion on small business. Perhaps it's because they have utter contempt for our small businesses in Ontario. They're not interested in talking about fair alcohol distribution or consumer choice. What we hear opposite when we're moving this legislation forward, when we're using those very tools that the member opposite brought forward in this House, when we're using those tools to get going with the business, as he said, of this province—we're doing this, and what are the members opposite doing? It's fearmongering. It's, “Everyone can't be trusted.”

That member opposite reminds me of that one person that was out there defending the horse and buggy when we moved to cars. That's who that member opposite is. And I love using horses—I'm from rural Ontario—but I also use my car. This is the same member who would defend one car company being used when there are multiple. Let me say it in terms that member would understand. Imagine if there was one union that had the monopoly over workers' rights. He would be the one standing up against it. So what I want to know and what people on this side of the House want to know is why that member opposite and why the waving-finger member behind him want to protect a sweetheart deal. It's because they haven't actually gotten out and spoken to the people.

This government was elected on a mandate to reduce our debt, to grow the economy and to protect what matters most. What is this going to do? Bring 9,000 jobs to the Ontario economy, as estimated by the Retail Council of Canada, and bring an additional \$3.5 billion into the provincial coffers. I know it's something difficult for them to understand—because if it's not created by government, it must not be a job. But imagine that, Madam Speaker:

Small businesses, like that of Mr. Cho next door, my honourable member whose family grew up in convenience stores, created an opportunity so that he could now sit in this Legislature. Imagine those small businesses having the opportunity to increase their revenue and to increase the jobs and the people that they employ.

Of course, let's look at this government's record. That member opposite talked about moving on with the business of government. I don't remember another provincial government that has moved as swiftly and as effectively as this government has moved in the less than year we have been in government. Let's look at that record. They're so fixated on fearmongering because we know they have no leg to stand on when they actually look at our record. What's our record on jobs? Some 175,000 new jobs created in Ontario's economy since we last formed government. Again, unlike the members opposite, we know that it's not government that creates jobs; it is creating the conditions for job creation, and that is just what we've done.

Let's talk about our record on health care. That's a record I'm proud of, a record that has brought an additional \$300 million into hospitals. In my riding alone, we've seen an increase in base funding to NHH and an increase in base funding to CMH. We've seen investments that are going to lead to more front-line workers, more PSWs, more nurses in the hospitals.

Let's talk about our record on long-term care: \$1.7 billion on long-term care. What's that doing? It has helped deliver on over half of the 15,000 long-term-care beds we committed to in our platform.

Madam Speaker, we made 52 platform promises. We have completed 39; we've got another 12 on the way. We're running out of promises to keep. I'm proud of those promises we have kept, promises like long-term care and the 15,000 beds we committed to.

On education: I look in front of me and I see our education minister, who has committed \$1 billion in increased infrastructure to our schools—crumbling infrastructure that we were left, as a government. What was the then Liberal government's approach? It was to close schools down. It was to leave these schools derelict, with crumbling infrastructure. Not this minister. She is addressing that. That's why we have committed, as a government, \$1 billion in school repairs.

We have increased investments—STEM education, the arts. We have talked about skilled trades, expanding skilled trades. What is that going to do? The investment in skilled trades here, the new modernized skilled trades announcement made by the member right here—what is that going to do? It's going to unlock the economic potential of \$24 billion to Ontario's economy. Again, it's not created by the opposition, so it must not be good money, must not be good jobs. What's it going to do? It's 100,000 jobs into Ontario's economy. These are jobs that are going to go unfilled in the skilled trades unless we take a radical new course.

I say "radical," I know. I'm not talking "radical" like the big union bosses and the members opposite. I'm

talking about radical change that actually values the skilled trades, that tackles the culture shift, that talks about a culture that isn't valuing the viable careers in the skilled trades. Perhaps that's because those skilled trades might actually lead to entrepreneurship and a small business and a job, and we know that the members opposite aren't in favour of that. These jobs will go unfilled without action.

Again, when I talk about the economy and the impact here—that's why this finance minister is acting on this. It's a campaign promise. It's a commitment we made to Ontarians. All they need to do is go back and look to the core commitments we made to the people of Ontario and that we were elected on. That's why we were elected to a majority on this side of the House, and that's why we also have members on the opposite side of House: because Ontarians wanted a government that grows the economy, that expands choice and that treats the little guy with fairness. That's exactly what we're doing.

The member talks about protecting multinationals. That's what he is protecting: the three multinationals here. He tried to get all folksy and talk about Five Guys. Imagine if Five Guys had a monopoly over hamburger sales in Ontario. We'd stand up against it. I quite enjoy the local hamburgers that I can get. That's why we're moving on time allocation to introduce this legislation.

Contracts: They talk about the Constitution.

Interjections.

Mr. David Piccini: You're darned right, we're moving.

It's called the Constitution. It's called the duly elected officials that the people of Ontario elected to pass what is right for the people. It's about fairness. Companies know how our parliamentary system works.

Let me use an analogy that the opposition might actually understand. Imagine if we introduced a tax freeze in perpetuity. That means no new tax hikes. I know that's what we're going to do, because, of course, we've grown the economy without introducing a single new tax hike.

But, Madam Speaker, pause for a second. This is only an "if," because it's never going to happen. The members opposite have had a number of kicks at the can.

I would say to the member opposite from Hamilton—I'd look her in the eye and say, "Imagine this. Imagine if we implemented a tax freeze in perpetuity." Were they ever to form government, the first thing that they'd pass in government would be to get rid of that, and increase taxes on single moms, increase taxes on rural Ontarians, increase taxes on small businesses. We know that's what they would do. So what he's perpetuating is a real false narrative.

This is about fairness—fairness for Ontarians in this province. This is about growing our economy—9,000 jobs. This is about \$3.5 billion to the economy.

1440

I know it's difficult for the members opposite to understand that a small business, a convenience store—Grafton convenience or Clark's Variety in my community, at Precious Corners. I went to speak to Terri and to Neil, her husband, who run Clark's Variety, and they said, of

course—do you know what she said to me? She drank from her coffee cup and she said, “Why don’t you just treat us like adults?”

It’s about fairness. That’s what it’s about. It’s about the farmer. It’s about the small business owner. It’s about the husband or wife on their way home. They have family and friends coming over. They’re rushing home after a long day’s work. It’s a long weekend and they just want to pick up a little beer and serve it to their guests. Do you know what else they might pick up, Madam Speaker? They might also get some chips and some salsa. They might also get a couple of other things. Do you know where that leads? That leads to increased revenue for that small business owner. We know the members opposite aren’t interested in the small business owners. They want to protect the multinationals. They want to protect their elite friends. We’re here ready to protect small businesses, to stand up for the little guy. It’s about fairness.

I know that when they’re sipping champagne with their union friends in downtown Toronto, they might not think about the folks in rural Ontario, but the people in rural Ontario want fairness, they want choice, and they want that ability to go and pick up a six-pack and have a cold beer on a hot summer’s night. They want the ability to have expanded choice.

We make no apologies for growing our small business sector, for increasing the number of jobs that those small businesses will be able to create, for actually increasing an investment in this economy, our GDP—it’s an estimated \$3.5 billion to Ontario’s economy. This is important. This is what this government was elected on. We were elected on a mandate for fairness. We were elected on a mandate for job creation. We’ve created the conditions for 175,000 net new jobs, the bulk of which are full-time.

Again, they continue to drag us to the bottom of the barrel, to hurl insults. It’s cute that they’ve got their phrases. Perhaps they could take up poetry after they lose their seats in the next election.

Madam Speaker, we’re committed to being able to tackle a wide multitude and variety of issues in government, as I said. That’s why we’ve led to record health care investments, long-term-care beds, taking alternate-level-of-care patients out of the hospital setting and into long-term care, like in my riding.

That’s why we’re moving time allocation: to get to the business of growing our economy. We make no apologies for getting to the business of growing this economy. We make no apologies for record investments in health care; no apologies for record investments into fixing crumbling infrastructure in our schools; for actually working on a system that consults parents, to lead to mentorship and to education among our youth, that’s going to lead to expanded jobs in the skilled trades, that’s going to grow STEM, our IT capabilities, that’s going to lead to a knowledge-based economy—

Mr. Percy Hatfield: Point of order.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Lisa Gretzky): Stop the clock, please. I recognize the member from Windsor—Tecumseh on a point of order.

Mr. Percy Hatfield: Thank you, Speaker. As I understand it, as entertaining as the member from Northumberland—Peterborough South is, we’re supposed to be speaking to time allocation on the so-called beer bill, not infrastructure, not health care, not the economy.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Lisa Gretzky): Thank you for the point—

Ms. Goldie Ghamari: That’s what he’s doing—

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Lisa Gretzky): The member from Carleton will come to order.

Thank you for the point of order.

I’m just going to remind the member who has the floor to tie your remarks back into time allocation

Mr. David Piccini: Thank you, Madam Speaker, and let me do just that.

Their one-track minds—they look at this with a hole, the members opposite. Perhaps that’s because they had a Swiss cheese-size hole in their platform in the election. But we’re talking about time allocation on this because we’re getting to the business of government, as the member opposite said in 1992 in Hansard. We’re getting to the business of government.

I would submit to the member opposite: We’re using the tools of this place to get to the business of growing the economy, of tackling health care, of tackling education, and yes, restoring fairness in the sale of beer. What do you have against that? Come on.

Look, this is a government that’s moving—I know that after 15 years of the previous Liberal government, it is new for the members opposite to see a government actually staying true to our campaign commitments. But that’s exactly what we did.

When the Premier, as then-leader of the Ontario PC Party, visited me in Campbellford, when I took him into small businesses, when I had the Minister of Health, that the member opposite heckled, in my riding, we had those very same convenience store owners, those very same small business owners in there who wanted expanded choice, who wanted us to create the tools and tackle the monopolies that prevent them from growing their business.

As I said, I’m proud to stand on this side of the House. I’m proud of the leadership of this Premier and this finance minister that’s created the conditions to grow this economy by 175,000 net new jobs; that has increased funding that has moved through this House, using the legislative tools to increase funding for health care; that has led to a 15,000-new long-term-care-bed commitment and over 6,000 built or under construction today; that has led to \$300 million in health care; that has led to an increase in base funding to both my local hospitals—new long-term-care beds in Norwood, in Havelock, in Cobourg; that has led to increased investments in the crumbling school repairs so that rural schools in my riding can get the much-needed support they need; a reform in the education system so that a young boy or girl can look in rural Ontario and see a viable future in plumbing, in the skilled trades; at OPG and the 10,000 jobs with the Darlington refurbishment that that’s going to bring to my region.

This is a government that's moving swiftly, that's bringing Internet into rural Ontario so that agri-business can actually grow and that yes, Madam Speaker, is expanding choice and expanding fairness for Ontario consumers. We make no apology for doing that.

Interjections.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Lisa Gretzky): Be seated, please.

Further debate?

Mr. Michael Mantha: Speaker, only the member from Northumberland–Peterborough South could stand in his position and smile as he is—he's smiling back at me right now—and justify in his own explanation over the last 30 minutes that it's good to rip up contracts.

Let me give you a few more examples of what this government has done as far as ripping up contracts. They ripped up Alykhan Velshi's contract with OPG, costing taxpayers half a million dollars. They also ripped up the contract with Hydro One, which cost ratepayers \$103 million. They scrapped 758 renewable contracts that also hurt us.

This is a government that has actually introduced legislation. Why? Because they are ripping up all these contracts. They're protecting themselves from being sued. So it doesn't surprise me that this government is coming out with the idea of ripping up contracts, because they're Conservatives. They are good businessmen. They should know how business runs. But that's not flying with the rest of Ontarians.

We looked at some of the headlines—everybody gets these—and it kind of tells you the story as to what this government is doing in regard to why they're doing this. So you look at one. It says, "Ford Learns Art of U-turn in First Year of Power."

"PCs Pay Heed to Polls, Protests, Petitions as Party Alters Course on Files Generating Backlash."

Then we looked at another one: "The Realities of Conservative Cuts Are Sinking In and Ontarians Are Feeling the Pain and Asking, 'Is This What We Voted for?'"

"The Majority of Ontarians Say 'No, Stop the Cuts.'"

"Health Care: a Loud and Clear 'No' to Cuts, Privatization and Mega-Mergers."

So what is this government talking about here? I think the member from Timmins explained it quite well. They said, "Don't focus over here. Let's look at the beer over here. This is what we're doing," and that's what they are doing. They're changing the channel. But by changing the channel they're trying to convince Ontarians, "Wait a second. You need greater access to beer."

The great example—I was here last night when we were having this debate, along with the member from Essex. It's always nice when you come into the House and people do their homework. The member from Essex provided this explanation to the government: If you're trying to create greater access so that people can rush into the Beer Stores and have that beer, let's look at what we have presently here in Ontario. We have well over 2,400 access points to beer, wine, alcohol and spirits already through existing corner stores. I'm from northern Ontario, and we do have

some of those agencies in northern Ontario. We also have some in our grocery stores as we speak right now. So we have 2,400 stores readily accessible. Well, Speaker, did you know that there are only 1,600 McDonald's that are open in Ontario? Some 1,600. Imagine that: that it's easier in the province of Ontario to have access to a beer than it is to a Big Mac. How unacceptable is that? My goodness. Now there are your priorities.

1450

The report that came out from the special advisor that this government had brought on, who we paid a very nice, nice penny, identified—Mr. Ken Hughes said, "You know what? Expanding the markets, looking at more competition: Let's look at that." That's part of what was in his report. But nowhere in his report did he state anything about working and cancelling the present contract that we have, which is going to be done in approximately six years. It's a 10-year contract. Good or bad, it is what it is.

Again, instead of opening it up and breaking that agreement, which is going to have consequences, which is going to hurt Ontarians, which we're going to end up paying, which is going to end up taking away from the reputation that we have here—that's the cost, and we're going to have the legal challenges. He told this government, "Work within. Work with what you have. Be responsible." Of course, at no point in time did he ever say to break it. Now, if this government, instead of waiting the six years—because who knows? It might be a good thing; it might be a bad thing. But let's take that time for us to have that discussion, those decisions.

Here are a few other things. Because this government likes to blow a billion dollars, here are a few things that you could use that billion dollars for now, instead of just walking away from this contract and paying those fees. How about social services? I have a very good colleague of mine who provided me some of this information from a debate, and I thought I'd use it today. This government cut \$222 million from ODSP; you could put it back into there. There's \$300 million from Ontario Works; you could possibly put it back into there. Some \$84 million from child welfare: Now, there's something that you could probably invest in. How about \$3.3 million from the Family Responsibility Office? That's another option. How about \$7.5 million from the poverty reduction strategy, or \$17 million from domestic violence services? How about legal aid that you cut by \$164 million? The list goes on and on.

If you want to waste a billion dollars from Ontario taxpayers, as you claim to be the great managers of all dollars, here's another one, and this one is a matter of fairness. In northern Ontario there are many, many First Nations communities and communities across the north that still don't have access to clean water. Instead of being so focused, and one of your biggest priorities is providing beer, how about clean water? How about water that you feel safe putting your child in and having them have a good bath? How about instead of having our elders from our communities, some of them walking down several kilometres to get good, clean, reliable water to bring back

to their kitchens—how about we look at investing money into providing them with the water that they need? Get your priorities right.

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

M^{me} Goldie Ghamari: Je suis fière de parler aujourd'hui de la motion de limitation de la durée des débats pour « Bill 115 ». Le gouvernement envisage de déposer une mesure législative qui, si elle est adoptée et promulguée, résiliera l'accord inéquitable que le gouvernement précédent a conclu avec le Beer Store, ce qui permettra au gouvernement de l'Ontario d'élargir le marché de la vente d'alcool aux dépanneurs, aux hypermarchés et à un plus grand nombre d'épiceries, tout en protégeant les contribuables.

I just want to preface what I'm saying today with an email that we received from someone named Paul Wiseman, who just happens to be the vice-president and general manager of Quickie stores. If you're from eastern Ontario, you might be very familiar with Quickie stores. I actually have one Quickie convenience store located in my riding of Carleton, right at Bank and Leitrim.

Mr. Wiseman sent an email to us on May 31, and I'm just going to read his email because I think this is going to explain what's going on and explain how the general public feels about this. Here's what Mr. Wiseman says: "Good morning, ministers of the crown and elected officials. First of all, congratulations on the positive momentum your administration has implemented on behalf of all Ontarians, to this date, in your mandate. It is a breath of fresh air for those of us who were almost smothered in 'Liberal government knows best for you and our cronies' smog for too long—not to mention the debt, the red tape, the backroom deals and the protection of the chosen few.

"We have been actively involved with the beer file for a long time and are absolutely thrilled that your government has seen the light and is moving forward to modernize the distribution and availability of beer to Ontario's consumers and taxpayers."

Let me repeat that, Madam Speaker. Mr. Paul Wiseman, who is the vice-president and general manager of Quickie stores, says that they are "absolutely thrilled" that our "government has seen the light and is moving forward to modernize the distribution and availability of beer to Ontario's consumers and taxpayers.

"We thank you very much for all your efforts that you have added to this initiative.

"In addition to my role with Quickie stores, I am also on the board of directors of the Ontario Convenience Stores Association, who has a close working relationship with your colleagues. The OSCA was started several years ago, through the efforts of the owner and CEO of Quickie Convenience Stores, Mr. Arnold Kimmel.

"Mr. Kimmel and myself invite you to visit any of our stores this weekend. We have 39 in eastern Ontario, with the majority of them being in the greater Ottawa area, and there are stores in all five ridings that you represent. We would be most pleased to accommodate any store visit that

you would like to make, if you so decide, and we would be happy to join you there.

"In addition, we would be pleased to bring you to see some of our stores in Gatineau, to show you how we retail beer and wine in those stores, and let you have a clearer picture of how the stores would look, once legislation is passed and a road map is completed here in the province of Ontario, which is now open for business.

"We look forward to hearing from you, should you have interest. Thanks for your consideration."

I'd like to thank Mr. Wiseman for his kind email and his kind invitation, and I want to let him know that I will be taking him up on that invitation. I look forward to meeting him at the Quickie convenience store located in my riding of Carleton at Bank and Leitrim.

I also look forward to crossing the border and seeing how Quickie convenience stores are run in Quebec. We already have the infrastructure, and we already have stakeholders who are knowledgeable about how to responsibly sell wine and beer in convenience stores, and so why are we not doing the same thing here in Ontario? Why is the NDP opposing this? My understanding is that the NDP was all about the little guy. It was all about supporting local. Yet they seem to be taking the side of these multinational corporations, who are not even headquartered in Canada. Who are they trying to appease? Because they're certainly not fighting for Ontarians, and they're certainly not representing their constituents.

Madam Speaker, they talk about priorities. However, at the end of the day, if they were not opposed to this and if they actually agreed with us on this, then we as a Legislature could be focusing on other issues, and we as a Legislature could be moving on to other priorities. They're the ones who want to fight us on this, and they're the ones who are just opposing this. I don't know if they're opposing it out of principle, if they're opposing it because there is some sort of backroom deal that they have with multinational corporations—I don't know. But what I do know is that our—

Interjections.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Lisa Gretzky): I'm going to ask the member to withdraw. You're not allowed to impugn motive.

Ms. Goldie Ghamari: I withdraw, Madam Speaker.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Lisa Gretzky): Thank you. Back to the member for Carleton.

Ms. Goldie Ghamari: Thank you, Madam Speaker.

I also want to read a letter. It's actually an op ed that was written by the National Post, and I'm just going to read a few paragraphs of it. They say, "No Reason Ontario Corner Stores Can't Sell Beer. They've Proven Responsibility with Tobacco."

The subheading says, "Opinion: [The Premier] has made right call on independent retailers. It will bring the province's alcohol retail out of Prohibition era.

"I remember the first time I stepped into a Beer Store. I had just moved to Ontario from Alberta and we were having friends over for dinner. I'm not a beer drinker

myself (in fact, I've never had one) but I was looking to be a good host.

"Walking through those doors was like stepping back in time, where we had to line up to be served by a single person behind a counter with an inventory list on the wall beside them. You'd tell them what you want and they'd disappear behind a door, returning with your selection some minutes later. My only reference point to this retail"—my apologies, Madam Speaker. I seem to have misplaced that sentence.

1500

However, he continues on to say that, "In fact, in a May 1 open letter, the union representing Beer Store workers warned that expanding beer sales to convenience stores 'could impact public safety when some of those stores turn a blind eye to refusing underage or intoxicated customers.'"

Public safety is crucial, Madam Speaker—no question about that. But implying that only government and big corporations, or only a unionized workforce, can sell alcohol responsibly is not only deeply insulting to independent businesses across Canada, but also is proven false daily across the country.

Madam Speaker, let's not forget that very recently our government actually implemented new legislation to make Ontario roads safer. I want to turn back to an announcement that our government made on May 2, where we announced that our government is putting people first with the Getting Ontario Moving Act. Some of the proposed legislative changes in this act would increase public safety by making learning to drive safer and reaffirming to new drivers that it is never safe to drive under the influence, by introducing a new offence for any driving instructor that violates a zero blood alcohol or drug presence requirement.

It also improves traffic flow and enhances road safety by introducing tougher penalties for driving slowly in the left-hand lane. It also protects children by giving municipalities the tools they need to target drivers who blow by school buses and threaten the safety of children crossing roads to their school or home. It also strengthens laws that protect front-line roadside workers from careless drivers.

So when the members opposite talk about our priorities, the reality is, we've already kept all of our promises. What we did first was focus on enhancing safety, on making sure that our front-line workers are respected and are taken care of. Now that we have those strengthened laws in place, now that we have ensured that our communities are going to be safe and that there are mechanisms there that will enforce our zero-tolerance policy for drunk driving, we can look at everything else.

Now it's time to end the monopoly by the Beer Store. It's time to open up and give Ontarians choice. That's exactly what we're doing, because at the end of the day, we're not here to represent multinational corporations. At the end of the day, we're here to represent the people. That's what we campaigned on. We campaigned on being a voice for the people, and that's what we're going to do. That means supporting our local convenience stores.

There have been so many in my riding that have been forced to shut down over the years. We had a convenience store in Ashton that was shut down. We had one in Kars that was shut down. We have others across the riding that were shutting down because they just couldn't afford to operate.

Madam Speaker, making sure that Ontarians have free choice, and making sure that our markets are open, not just to convenience stores but also to craft brewers, especially craft brewers in my riding, like the Ashton Brew Pub—making sure that the market is open to them is part of our mandate of ensuring that Ontario is open for business.

For that reason, I'm happy to speak to this motion for time allocation to move this bill forward. I'm proud to support it.

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

Mr. Percy Hatfield: It's a pleasure to stand in the House this afternoon and join this debate. I've been listening intently all afternoon.

I just heard my friend from Carleton talk about being elected as the voice of the people. Well, you're not the voice of the people when you cut off their voices, when you time-allocate debate on a motion and you speed it through the House.

My good friend from Burlington earlier talked about time being valuable. I agree time is valuable, so why do you cut it off? Why do you allocate time? Why do you time-allocate a democratic process to discuss a bill that you have on the table? You are ending debate without listening to the other side.

I feel my time is just as valuable as any member opposite. I want my voice to be heard. Had I been given an opportunity to speak to this bill, other than time allocation, I would have raised the voices of the people at the Walkerville Brewery. Speaker, you know Walkerville well. I love their Honest Lager. They're also now doing a craft cider.

Ian Gourlay wrote me a letter this week; he's one of the owners at Walkerville Brewery in Windsor. He said, "Anything you can do to help me out? We're producing a craft cider now, but there's red tape in Ontario as part of the legislation that the people who come in and enjoy our craft cider can't take a couple of cans home." Walkerville Brewery makes their craft cider, but there's a regulation in Ontario that says that unless you own five acres of an apple orchard, you're not allowed to let anyone who comes into your establishment take home a can of craft cider brewed at Walkerville Brewery. You've got to own five acres of an apple orchard.

What's wrong with that? We could have had that debate on the beer bill. I took the letter over to the Minister of Economic Development, Job Creation and Trade. He's going to look at it. He's the minister in charge of red tape. The Minister of Finance saw me doing that and asked me what it was. I explained to him that these guys don't own an apple orchard of at least five acres, and he said, "Give me the letter. I'll take a look at it as well."

But this is something we should be having a debate about. When you time-allocate a bill, you cut off input

from the public. When you don't even take it to committee, you cut off a hearing process where members of the public, the voices of the people in this province, could have stood up and said, "I would like to have input on this bill because I have an issue. I want to bring something to your attention." That isn't going to happen.

The member from Northumberland–Peterborough South was talking about Hansard, different people and what they've said in Hansard over the years. Speaker, if he wants to play that game, if he wants to talk about Hansard, I've got some Hansard notes here that members of his cabinet have said about time allocation in the past—

Ms. Catherine Fife: Awkward.

Mr. Percy Hatfield: Oh, awkward; thank you. Awkward is right.

The labour minister from Haliburton–Kawartha Lakes–Brock, on April 10, 2018, speaking to this bill on time allocation, said:

"We're debating yet another time allocation motion on a government bill. Again and again, the government has shown disrespect for the democratic process by cutting short debate in the House...."

"We've seen this act play out so many times. It's actually quite irresponsible when the government introduces the bill and then time-allocates it a few short weeks later."

That was Laurie Scott, now the labour minister.

The list goes on and on. It doesn't matter where you point in the front row, in opposition they would stand here and rail, absolutely give them thunderous hell when they spoke about bills that were time-allocated. Every bill that this government has brought in in this session, in the past year has been time-allocated. My, how that worm in the apple turns, Speaker, when you get on the other side of the bench and you can't even talk about apple cider, you can't talk about craft cider. The worm has turned because now they're time-allocating every bill they put in the House.

It is not a democratic principle to be honoured or cherished. I think, as the member from Northumberland–Peterborough South said, it's a race to the bottom of the beer barrel, and he's absolutely correct because that's what they're involved in right now.

I just wanted to say that the voices at Walkerville Brewery have not been heard in this debate. They would have loved to have come to a hearing and made their points known. I'm sure there are people out there in the industry, in the mom-and-pop stores, in the convenience stores, who would have enjoyed an opportunity to come in and talk about it as well, but it's not going to happen.

It's not unusual for the government not to listen to the people in industries that they have an impact on. In the last budget, for example, out of the blue, they told all the casino operators in Ontario, "You're now going to be offering free drinks like they do in Vegas." That's not something that the casino industry ever asked for. It was never on the table in any of the discussions they had. But that's something that's going to be imposed on the casino operators in this province.

There's a good spin cycle, Speaker. They can stand up and they can tell us that we're not doing our jobs because

we're not adhering to everything they want to put forward on their agenda. Our job is to make the public aware of what they are doing and how they're doing it, because it is not in the democratic fashion that we've been accustomed to, it is not in the great tradition of parliamentarians. They are just doing everything wrong by time-allocating every bill they bring to the House, and some of us will never tolerate it.

Thank you for your time.

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

Mr. John Vanthof: I would just like to take a couple of minutes in this debate regarding time allocation of the bill regarding trying to put beer in corner stores. To me, the debate isn't really about beer in corner stores. That's a debate worth having, but the debate regarding this time allocation and why this one is very important—I've heard a couple of times today members on the governing side saying that the NDP were defending multinationals, and how could we do such terrible things?

1510

Well, you know what? I seem to recall that Premier Ford was in New York a month ago trying to get investment in this province from, I'm assuming, multinational investment funds. The debate here today and what we're trying to warn the government about—why you shouldn't time-allocate debate on this bill is because perhaps if you let this bill go to committee, multinational organizations, banking organizations, legal institutions could possibly warn you of the implications of this bill and of the repercussions you could be causing the province, because you can't or you shouldn't change the rules of a contract in the middle of the contract.

That is not good for business, and that is understood by, I thought, everyone in this province, but now it seems not the Conservative government of the day—which quite frankly shocks me, Speaker, because on that side, I know there are members with financial backgrounds, some members with some really serious financial chops, who have an international reputation. I cannot understand why members on that side of the House aren't letting the process take its due course and actually letting those issues come forward, because a stable government that respects contracts—it might not like the contracts of the previous government, and that's what elections are for.

A member on the other side said, "Well, that's the prerogative of government, to change regulations," and it is, but it's not the prerogative of government to change contracts. They're kidding themselves if they think that's the prerogative, and the reason that this bill is being time-allocated has got nothing to do with trying to get beer in corner stores before it gets warm and people want beer. That's what they're trying to say it's about, but why they're time-allocating this is because they want to get this bill through without the scrutiny. They're willing to take the risks of the legal ramifications and the lawsuits and the international trade tribunals. They're willing to take that risk, because they're hoping that people will forget about it by then.

My closing point: I do a lot of interviews, and in each interview, people ask me, “Well, Mr. Vanthof, what would the NDP do about reducing the deficit?” I say each time, “Do you know what the NDP wouldn’t do? We wouldn’t risk a billion dollars in penalties just so we could fulfill our campaign promise of having beer in corner stores.” We would never take that risk, and these people know that they’re taking that risk, and yet they don’t seem to care. I’m shocked, and people—true-blue Conservatives who have voted for this government—are equally incredibly shocked.

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

Ms. Bhutla Karpoche: Speaker, it is really disappointing that I rise again to speak on yet another time allocation motion, as opposed to actual legislation that this government has tabled. We know that a time allocation motion is undemocratic, because it doesn’t give the people of Ontario who want to have a say a say in what is being discussed and debated here in the House.

Speaker, it is the responsibility of the government to listen to the voices of the people, but we know—and we have seen this time and time again, in fact, with almost every legislation that this government has brought forward—that this government does not want to listen to the people of this province, when it is their job to do so.

What a time allocation motion says is that not only does the government not want to listen to the voices of the people, they certainly don’t want to listen to the opposition, but they also don’t want to listen to their own members who may have an interest in participating in the debate, because they’re shutting down debate. They obviously don’t want to listen to the constituents of the ridings that the government side MPPs represent.

This is not what the Legislature is about. The Legislature belongs to the people. It’s a place where we’re supposed to bring forward the concerns, the suggestions and the ideas of our constituents and discuss whether we are going to support or oppose the legislation. Debate actually results in better legislation; we know that.

This bill, as I understand it, is not going before committee. If this bill were to go before committee, then the government would not only have to listen to the public, but also have to listen to the experts. We’ve seen the record of this government when it comes to listening to experts. It’s simpler to ignore them on almost all issues—I would say especially on issues like the climate crisis, completely ignoring the experts on the topic.

Public consultation and the use of committee is the democratic process that has long been cherished in this Legislature and this province historically, but not under this government. We’ve seen major pieces of legislation, whether they’re on health care, the privatization of health care, education, housing, planning, on the budget itself—all of them rushed through without proper consultation.

If the government had engaged in genuine, meaningful consultation, you would hear from the people of Ontario.

I’d like to read a couple of emails that I’ve received on this particular bill from my constituents. The first one

writes: “I am writing this email to ask you to vote against the PC’s bill to end the 10-year deal with the Beer Store.

“As you know, in ending that contract the Beer Store will be entitled to damages that could cost the province approximately \$1 billion.” The public is aware of that. “That is a lot of money that is far better spent on education, public health, early childhood education, library services, tree planting, and the list goes on.

“This is not only a waste of taxpayers’ money, it is completely irresponsible. To make so many cuts to such important services in the name of ‘eliminating the deficit’ and then blatantly wasting this money is enraging.”

In another email from a constituent, this person writes: “I am deeply disappointed that our current provincial government would waste time and effort in trying to get beer and wine in corner stores and grocery stores. With all of the challenges that face Ontario, why would the Ford government attempt to fix something that is not broken?”

I have to completely agree with this constituent. Of all of the challenges that we’re currently facing in Ontario, what is the government’s obsession with alcohol? Why beer? We have so many more pressing issues that we need to be discussing and debating. We have the climate crisis; we have an affordable housing crisis; a mental health crisis; the opioid crisis; cuts to education; cuts to legal aid services; and Indigenous communities that have not had access to clean drinking water for decades. Yet the priorities of this government are on alcohol. Speaker, the priorities of this government do not reflect the priorities of the people of this province.

Speaking of education cuts, I did want to get into the record a couple of emails that my constituents have sent regarding the cuts. The first one writes:

“I am writing to register my outrage and request your support against the cuts to the TDSB. In particular, their plans to cut the four ... theatre technician positions. [They] are a very small part of the overall budget but [the] four jobs are key positions at each of the arts schools in the city. Without the theatre technicians, all performances at the schools would have to be cancelled. Students learn a great deal through performance and the future of these schools would be in jeopardy if these critical positions were done away with.”

I have to say I’m sure that the government side is also receiving emails from constituents on a whole bunch of important issues, but yet again, none of these are being discussed in the Legislature.

1520

Finally, I want to use the last few minutes that I have to talk about the public health angle to this bill. As you know, I’m always interested in putting a public health lens to all of these issues. We’re talking about liberalizing alcohol sales. The government-side MPPs have said that it’s about adults letting adults be adults. But what about us as legislators acting like adults? Have we thought about the public health consequences of this action? What is the government’s public health strategy? What is your public education strategy around increasing and allowing easier access to alcohol?

We know the impact of alcohol on population health, Speaker. There's plenty of research. The evidence is overwhelming. It contributes to greater addiction. We're going to have increased hallway health care. On one side, the government is trying to talk about creating a mental health and addictions strategy and has put forward a bill to create a centre for a mental health and addictions strategy, but on the other hand it's contributing to the mental health and addictions crisis. We know that alcohol is a leading risk factor for disease, for disability, for premature death in Canada. There are both short- and long-term health risks.

Speaker, the other thing is that the interventions that are shown to be most effective against alcohol abuse are actually carried out by local public health agencies, and we know what this government is trying to do to those, too. We've cut them down from 35 to 10, and we've cut their funding as well. So the only people on the ground who are actually trying to work to mitigate the damages of alcohol abuse and addictions are being cut. Here again we have a government that is not interested in putting the priorities of the people forward.

Finally, Speaker, I want to say that this government, in the name of standing up for the convenience stores—it has actually been mentioned before that a lot of these convenience stores are already owned by multinational corporations. These are chain stores.

So what we have here is the government side just replacing one multinational with another, and in the meantime making Ontarians pay for their mistake by ripping off this contract and in the process putting the people's health at risk.

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

Mr. Yakabuski has moved government notice of motion number 65 relating to allocation of time on Bill 115, An Act to amend the Liquor Control Act with respect to the termination of a specified agreement.

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 ayes have it.

Call in the members. This will be a 10-minute bell.

"Pursuant to standing order 28(h), I respectfully request that the vote on government notice of motion 65 be deferred until deferred votes on June 4, 2019."

Vote deferred.

TIME ALLOCATION

Hon. Bill Walker: I move that, pursuant to the standing order 47 and notwithstanding any other standing order or special order of the House relating to Bill 117, An Act to amend the Ontario Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals Act, that the order referring the bill to the Standing Committee on Justice Policy be discharged, and the bill be ordered for third reading; and

That, when the order for third reading of the bill is called, one hour shall be allotted to the third reading stage of the bill, with 20 minutes apportioned to the government, 20 minutes to Her Majesty's loyal opposition, 10 minutes to the Liberal Party independent members and 10 minutes apportioned to the Green Party independent member. At the end of this time, the Speaker shall interrupt the proceedings and shall put every question necessary to dispose of this stage of the bill without further debate or amendment; and

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

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

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Lisa Gretzky): I'm just going to ask the Minister of Government and Consumer Services to clarify the very first sentence, because I think I heard a word used that I don't think you intended to use.

Hon. Bill Walker: I'll repeat it, Madam Speaker.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Lisa Gretzky): Thank you.

Hon. Bill Walker: I move that, pursuant to standing order 47 and notwithstanding any other standing order or special order of the House relating to Bill 117, An Act to amend the Ontario Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals Act, that the order referring the bill to the Standing Committee on Justice Policy be discharged, and the bill be ordered for third reading.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Lisa Gretzky): Mr. Walker has moved government notice of motion number 66. Further debate?

Mr. Will Bouma: It's a pleasure to rise in the House today. Guess what? We're back on time allocation. Hurray.

Interjection.

Mr. Will Bouma: Don't sound so excited. Come on.

We do have a bit of an emergency in the province of Ontario right now in regard to the OSPCA and what's going on there. We have instances of you could call them "eco terrorists" going onto farms, everything being videoed, and the charges being dropped by the prosecutors because of lack of chance of conviction. We have farmers concerned for biosecurity and people trespassing.

Right now, the OSPCA isn't doing anything with large animals at all. In fact, we know that, around the end of this month, they will be ceasing services unless something is done. I would respectfully submit that if there's ever been a time to do time allocation to get something through, it would be on this interim measure for the OSPCA. The measures introduced in this bill will serve as a stopgap, so just an interim measure, while we work to implement a better and more effective animal protection system—and that is sorely necessary. I think everyone has realized that for quite some time.

My friend the member from Haldimand–Norfolk has identified some real problems with how the OSPCA has been working, especially in the large animal world. I had a very good meeting with CFFO a few Fridays ago, where

they were just saying that there really is no protection at all right now for farm animals. Indeed, all the farming groups are quite excited about seeing us move forward with a better way of protecting farm animals. Not only that, we have issues with livestock that's now being permitted in city uses and everything related to that, as well as other issues—one of our fellow members has put in legislation regarding puppy mills. The need to keep animals safe and healthy is very, very important, so we need a new system that will be comprehensive, robust and accountable, and that will work for the people of Ontario, and, most importantly, that will serve and protect the animals that we all appreciate and adore.

I'm sure that the opposition will all agree that this is something that we can't wait on, that we need an interim system. Indeed, we need that time to do a good job on developing new legislation, because this is something that we have to—and that the opposition should be quite happy about—hear what people have to say, what all the different groups have to put into this. Because you have not just people who love animals for their intrinsic value, who love them as pets; you have farm families that have been counting on their animals for their livelihood for generations.

Where we're coming from is a system where, over the last 100 years, the OSPCA has been providing important oversight and leadership in the area of animal welfare. It's been very disappointing to see them not only withdraw from their role—in fact, in June, this will happen—but also that we've seen some of their efforts to block attempts, to minimize gaps in enforcement and welfare rules. As this process has been going on, we've had certain local SPCAs step up to the plate and be willing to provide agreements with the government so that we can move forward, but the OSPCA has blocked those attempts.

1530

I remember—it seems just a few months ago; I think it was last summer—when the member from Haldimand-Norfolk and I were quite concerned about the story coming out, I think in his riding, of three horses that were out standing in a field, looking emaciated and sick and very much appearing to be deteriorating. I remember the outcry. I'm not going to say who was to blame or anything like that, Madam—Mr. Speaker; sorry, I didn't see the switch there. But we can see the lack of an efficient and effective model for dealing with animal welfare and the need for that.

The other piece, of course, is that in speaking to my police chief from Brantford, right now we have an opioid crisis, we've had more shootings in Brantford than we've had in years already and our police services are stretched thin. To ask our police services to take over animal welfare cases would just be too much.

We need to ensure that these sad-to-see situations as with the horses that we saw close to my riding don't happen, and that livestock and other animals are looked after so that they can't be abused. Moving on with that, our legislation will include a provision that would allow the province, via our Solicitor General, to appoint a chief

inspector. This fills a gap that's been left because the OSPCA has refused to appoint a chief inspector. Once we have a chief inspector, a chief inspector can in turn appoint qualified local inspectors, which might include humane societies, who would ensure that animals are taken care of and that their welfare is looked after.

Again, as I said, there's a time crunch on this, Mr. Speaker, because this deadline of the OSPCA getting out of this is coming quite quickly. The members beside me in the opposition, I think, in this case have to support time allocation, so that we can get this moving as quickly as possible and so that we can start the work on setting up a good legislative framework moving forward.

So we're taking real action right now to ensure that animal welfare is appropriately looked after so that no animal is put in harm's way. This will remain true in the interim, while we put in place a more permanent and better animal welfare system. So what are we doing? We're really doing those consultations. We're listening to all the different groups that have a stakeholder position in there.

I saw a document from my friends in multiple farm organizations doing something where they want to partner with the government to come up with legislation that will serve them well. They realize that that will put a greater onus of responsibility on them also, but they really see a need for a strong regulatory framework for animal welfare.

Again, these amendments to the OSPCA Act would serve only as a temporary measure, so even though we're time-allocating this—and it could be argued that we're doing this quite quickly without enough time to hear from people—these are just interim measures. This is an emergency, stopgap measure to fill the void that's left with the situation that we've found ourselves in right now. We are going to put in a more robust and comprehensive system to look after animals.

Our government is committed to this. We are committed to making sure that the system works in the interim for the people of Ontario and for all of the animals across our province. We all know, Mr. Speaker, that to allow our animals to be unprotected is simply unacceptable. That's why we're doing this—to make sure that our animals are protected.

Furthermore, our government is committed to getting things right as we design our new system. We will launch an online survey to get feedback from the public on this issue. I don't know if it's launched yet, but it will be up soon.

Just in closing, then, I would urge all of the members to support this legislation. I know that for the parliamentarians who have been sitting here for almost 30 years, whoever is in government seems to use time allocation when the time is right. We use it to move things through because we're in a hurry to get things done, and some would say maybe too hurried, but this is a different situation. This is, quite simply, something where we need an interim measure put in quickly so that we can work on a real solution. I would urge all the members on both sides of the House to support this time allocation so that we can get this interim measure in place, so that we can seek to

build a better long-term solution. I'll close with that, Mr. Speaker. Thank you.

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

Ms. Sara Singh: Point of order, Speaker.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Percy Hatfield): Point of order, the member for Brampton Centre.

Ms. Sara Singh: I apologize. I'd like for some indulgence just to introduce my guests here in the gallery. I actually have a former professor of mine, Miriam Anderson, who is visiting with our women, politics and power course from Ryerson University. It's a great treat to have them here. I actually used to be a teaching assistant for Professor Anderson as well. It's such a joy to have them here. Welcome to the people's House. I hope you enjoy the debate. Thank you for being here.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Percy Hatfield): Thank you. It's not exactly a legitimate point of order, but welcome to the Ontario Legislature.

Further debate?

Mr. Kevin Yarde: I'm glad to be rising here in the House. By the way, I just want to continue off what my friend here from Brampton Centre—she had mentioned she was speaking with the students from Ryerson. She's not known to be a comedian. I know her; she's fairly straight and narrow, and when she speaks, she speaks truth and she speaks honestly. We were having this conversation in the back here, and she was talking to the Ryerson students and talking about what she's going to be speaking about today. She mentioned to the students that she'll be talking about the beer bill. Of course, their reaction is that they all laughed. At that moment, Sara decided, "Well, let me just find out how they feel about this." This all has to do with time allocation still. She asked them, "What do you think we should be speaking about?" The students said, "We should be talking about health care, we should be talking about social assistance, we should be talking about education, but not about beer." So there you go. I applaud you for wanting to speak about the things that we should be speaking about.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker, for the opportunity to speak to this motion. Another day, another time allocation motion. If this was just one instance, maybe we would not be so upset. However, it seems the government is time-allocating every single bill. What is this government so afraid of that they want to limit debate of, seemingly, every bill they introduce in this House? If they really believe that they are acting in the best interests of the people of this province and people are satisfied with the consultations, then there is no reason to time-allocate bill after bill after bill after bill. But at the end of the day, it comes down to priorities—

Mr. Rick Nicholls: Urgency.

Mr. Kevin Yarde: The member across said "emergencies." Obviously, to him, getting beer in convenience stores is an emergency, other than getting education—

Mr. Rick Nicholls: Urgency, urgency—

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Percy Hatfield): The member for Chatham-Kent-Leamington will come to order, please.

Mr. Kevin Yarde: So maybe the members opposite aren't aware of this, but one of the reasons why we debate bills in the House in the open is to ensure transparency and accountability. Now, the House is home for everyone, and it's serious; it's serious business that we do here. Thoughtful scrutiny and a place for free-flowing ideas are necessary to ensure that every bill is thoroughly debated, considered and incorporated properly. But when you time-allocate a bill, you take away the time for these debates. You stonewall people. It sends a very, very bad message to the people of this province that their voices are not heard or will not be heard. I'm sure people from across this province would like their viewpoints to be heard and they would like their MPPs to be their voices in this House. But with these time allocation motions that the government continues to put forward time and time again, they're shutting out the very people they were elected to be here for.

For the last three elections, we've seen voter turnout, on average, barely cross 50%. Now, that's problematic. What we need is more and more Ontarians engaging in the civic process and engaged with the political sphere. That strengthens our democracy; it doesn't weaken it. It strengthens our democracy. The more people make their voices heard, the stronger our democracy will be and the stronger we can be, and we can move forward in this province. But when the government uses tactics to limit debate and silence voices of Ontarians, people lose faith in the government and our system. This cynicism does not serve the province or our democracy well; it is the exact opposite of what we should be doing here. We should allow the process to play out in its entirety. You should not limit and stifle debate to push a bill through. We need to engage Ontarians on issues, consult them and consider that in the decision-making that takes place in this House; not just for this bill, but also for other bills that the government has time-allocated in the last few weeks.

1540

People expect more of their government. We are talking about some issues that people struggle with every day. It is your job to listen to those people and let the debate play out in this House so you are aware of how people are reacting to your bill and what changes they want to see. They expect better from their government, Mr. Speaker. They need help from their government and they look upon all of us here in this House to fight for them and to provide them with the help they need.

My approach to being an elected person and to politics is to amplify the voices of my riding. I promised them that I would fight for them on issues that matter, and do you know what, Mr. Speaker? Instead of giving us that chance, and the platform to raise these concerns and our voices heard in the ridings, these motions that the government is bringing forward are silencing them.

On the campaign trail last year, the members opposite promised transparency. They promised partnership as well as public consultations on important issues facing our province. That seems like such a far-fetched time because this government has repeatedly gone out of their way to do

the exact opposite. Not only does this ploy silence our voices on the opposition bench, but it also takes away debate time from your side as well.

We have MPPs here from rural regions of Ontario, suburban cities and metropolitan cities. I am certain that different people from different regions of this province have had varying experiences with the OSPCA, animal welfare and the OSPCA Act in this province. To not have those voices and those varying inputs and feedback debated and spoken to in this House is a disservice to those people.

The court ruling which came down in January: Mr. Speaker, we've known about this problem for a while. We've known about it for about six months now. Six months—I want to emphasize that. This House has been in session since February. The government had all that time to assess the situation, consult with the people of Ontario, find solutions, draft legislation, allow for proper debate, and implement solutions. But here we are in June, as the House inches closer to rising for the summer, and despite six months of knowledge of the judge's decision, the government waits until the eleventh hour to push forward legislation which is, right now, as a matter of fact, a band-aid solution.

We all knew that this is not going to be a simple issue that can be ignored or fixed in a day or two. What you will hear from us is that something has needed to be changed for a while. This government's eleventh-hour legislation does not provide any long-term fix to this problem, and that is a big concern: no long-term solution here. In fact, this government's motion now needlessly bypasses the role of Parliament and the public's right to speak as part of the parliamentary process.

This is all very problematic for me, Mr. Speaker. All this legislation does is maintain the status quo, move the power of chief inspector to the ministry, and push the affiliates to continue their role by doing more with less. On top of that, this time allocation motion just unnecessarily shuts out debate in order to push this bill through without much public consultation and debate in this House.

People expect more out of this government, and they expect government to prioritize such things. Animal welfare enforcement is not a luxury; it is a necessity. People expect their government to be transparent and accountable and to allow their voices to be heard in this House. So I sincerely hope that this government will reflect on the choices they've made, get past the blame game and acknowledge that they have been playing catch-up.

What we need is a robust animal welfare enforcement system in the province, not another band-aid solution and certainly not more neglect. What we need is proper debate and consultation, not more time allocation motions.

My point, Mr. Speaker, is if this government was so sincere, so confident in their OSPCA bill, why are they rushing this bill through to have it into legislation? What they should be doing is taking the time to speak to the public, to speak to constituents to find out what they really need and what they really want.

People are going to look back on this legislation, and they're going to look at the debates—how long the debate was; the process; how we achieved the legislation—and I think they're going to ask the question: "What was the government afraid of? What were they afraid of?"

Mr. Speaker, we're not even going to go to committee, which is a shame. I know there are people out there who would have loved to come to committee. So I'll just say that this is not the way to draft legislation, and I will be voting against this time allocation motion because it is a very, very bad way to do democracy.

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

Mr. Stephen Crawford: As always, it's a pleasure to speak here today, and to speak on the time allocation on Bill 117.

As the Solicitor General pointed out last week, it is estimated that about 60% of households in Ontario have pets, including my own. We have two cats, one named Winston, after Winston Churchill, and another one called Lulu—I'm not sure where that name came from; my daughters picked it—and they reside with our family.

In our home, and in many homes, animals offer friendship, companionship and an excellent learning opportunity for kids. By having to care for these pets, our children can learn valuable skills like responsibility and compassion.

From an education perspective, places like zoos and aquariums offer a fantastic chance to learn about animals, ecosystems and the habitats of animals of all shapes and sizes.

We know this is a topic of particular importance to Ontarians, and we certainly agree with them on this. We have always maintained that animal protection enforcement in Ontario can be made more robust, transparent and accountable, and that's the objective that our government is trying to achieve.

We need to be able to offer these provisional protections in the interim to animals across the province and ensure that the rights afforded to them continue to be enforced.

In January, the Ontario Superior Court ruled that the OSPCA required enhanced and appropriate oversight before continuing in their role to protect animals, and, after a one-year stay, they could no longer enforce animal protection in this province.

We know that Ontarians are very happy that they granted a one-year extension, so that animals will continue to receive the support they need while this government finds a solution. But something needs to be done as soon as we can. The OPSCA is currently not enforcing the OSPCA Act. With the passing of this bill, we will put in place a temporary bridge from the existing legislation until a permanent solution is put into place. That is why we need time allocation on this bill.

It's very good to hear the positive feedback the government has received as a result of announcing Bill 117. 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.”

We’ve got another quote, 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.”

Many humane societies from across the province want to be able to continue their work, and this bill will provide them with the ability to do that. That is why the time allocation on this bill is so critical.

Our government is developing a new animal protection model that will better protect 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 put animal welfare first.

The OSPCA chose not to continue its role for the enforcement of livestock and horse cases, ending over a century of shared partnership with the province. While it has left our province in a very difficult position, we will work hard to create a system that better protects all animals and understands the unique standards of care that are applicable to livestock and horses, not just domestic pets. Again, this is a temporary solution, but it will fill the gaps while the government builds a new, permanent enforcement model and develops a legislative framework for the future.

Animal welfare is complex. Its stakeholders range from veterinarians, to pet owners, to animal advocacy groups, to farmers and ranchers. We are talking to all of these groups, as well as municipalities and police forces across the province. For the sake and safety of our animals, it is important that we take the amount of time on this topic that it demands, and we don’t rush into anything. The stakes are very high.

1550

The Solicitor General is taking the time needed to get the new model right. That includes making sure 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 the opportunity to share their thoughts on this very important topic.

I was amazed to hear that the government has already received 6,000 responses in the first three days. There are now over 10,000 submissions with another few days before closing on June 6. The high response rate clearly demonstrates that the public is interested in this topic, interested in animal welfare, and that the government is listening. That is the importance of time allocation on this bill and why this is so important a topic.

It’s also about larger animal livestock as well. Farmers and farm organizations are committed to the humane treatment of animals, be it livestock, poultry, horses, donkeys, domestic pets or wildlife. Ontario’s agricultural organizations continue to uphold high standards of care in line with the codes of practice and normal farming activities.

I know some of my colleagues have heard from farm organizations that having memorandums of understanding with a livestock group is a critical part of maintaining and improving animal care. Our farm organizations want to be a part of this 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. We want to make sure that the protection and the well-being of farm animals is not compromised, and farmers have the support they need to succeed and provide adequate care.

A big part of this support is through consultations with our farmers and those who understand these details intimately. This is the first step in creating a new animal welfare system for the province of Ontario. 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 that this can’t 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 education, protection and understanding are in place for each and every group.

Causing animal distress takes on many forms and is not always obvious. According to the Canadian Veterinary Medical Association, all veterinarians will encounter animal abuse in their careers, including physical abuse, such as inflicting injuries, causing unnecessary pain, and including cruel and inappropriate methods of training, such as taping a dog’s mouth shut to prevent it from barking.

Sometimes the problem is simply neglect, such as the owner forgetting to feed a pet or bring them water or leaving a pet inside a vehicle in extreme heat or cold. I know this in particular is a rising concern for many people of Ontario, especially after the increased awareness this issue has garnered over the last few years. Every year in North America, hundreds of pets die from heat exhaustion when they are left in a car while the owner popped in just for a few moments to get something to eat or drink.

There were also cases of emotional abuse for animals, such as denying an animal social interaction, animal hoarding, dog-fighting, puppy and kitten mills where dogs and cats are mass produced, often in the cruelest of conditions. This is just a short list of some of the examples of animal abuse that 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.

It’s important to note that 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 animal-related investigation or incident or have the space for sheltering these animals in need. This is why it is of particular importance that we have time allocation to pass this bill in a very timely fashion.

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 inspectors 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 reality we all face here today. The OSPCA has been asked by the Solicitor General to extend their enforcement capabilities to the end of the year. They have refused.

After considering the alternatives, the government's proposed legislation amendments are the most effective transitional response to the urgent need to support animal welfare laws in this province, hence the need to time-allocate this bill. It uses the experience of animal welfare organizations across the province and leverages the willing capacity in the province without having to rely on the OSPCA's co-operation, which they have made clear they are no longer prepared to extend. It sets the stage for a new permanent animal protection enforcement model that will be more robust, transparent and accountable. Without these proposed legislative amendments there are few, if any, options available to ensure animal welfare enforcement in this 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 amendments. The public can clearly see the 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 the legislative bridge, there will be a new model that is stronger, more transparent and more accountable. We need to protect and keep our animals safe. Rebuilding this system after a hundred years will take some time, but it will be built on the experience of animal welfare stakeholders, agriculture and the life experiences of pet owners.

I encourage all members of this House to support this legislation and the time allocation for this critical bill at this critical time.

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

M^{me} France G elinas: Yet again we are here talking about a time allocation motion. For some of you on television, the way it works is that for a government bill, the government can introduce a new bill whenever they want. They introduce the bill for first reading and most of the time it passes, because we haven't seen the bill. Then debate will go on for second reading. The debate for second reading has to be a minimum of 6.5 hours, but oftentimes it will be longer than this.

Think about it: There are 124 of us. We are elected to bring forward the voices of our constituents. It's pretty

hard to hear the voices of all of our constituents when you only have a few hours to talk about a bill.

After second reading is done and everybody who wanted to has had an opportunity to put their constituents' view on the record, so that we could have as strong and robust a piece of legislation as possible, it goes to a committee. At the committee level, anybody who lives in Ontario is allowed to come and tell the government what they like about the bill, what they don't like, the changes that they would like to see, and we take their views into account, to make it as good as possible. Maybe a part of the bill makes sense in my part of Ontario but doesn't make much sense in her part of Ontario. Once you know all of the different aspects of it and you know how it's going to be interpreted in different parts of our province, then you have a better understanding as to what the legislation will do from giving people opportunities to come to committee—we call this "deputations"—to do deputations.

Sometimes deputations may go for several days. In some cases, the deputations will move around the province. If it's a bill that mainly has to do with northern Ontario, the committee will come to different towns and villages in northern Ontario and give the people who live there, who will be the most affected by this piece of legislation, an opportunity to be heard, an opportunity to shape it in a way where it will be easier for people to understand the legislation, easier for them to follow the legislation, because after all, we want people to be in line with the legislation we put forward.

1600

After we take the time to listen to all of these people, then we come back to a process that we call clause-by-clause. When you read a bill, you will see that the bill is written in paragraphs. Every paragraph is called a clause. Basically you look at all of the paragraphs that make up the text of the bill and all of us can make choices. If we've heard that this particular part of the bill may not work so well in a certain part of the province, we can make changes to make the bill stronger, to make it better for all 14 million of us who will have to live with and follow whatever this bill says that we have to do.

After we go by clause-by-clause and make changes, then it comes back to this House, it comes back to the Legislative Assembly, and again, all 124 of us have an opportunity to talk to often quite a new bill: the ideas that had been put forward in the first reading, the ideas that you heard about when we did the deputations, the ideas that were put forward when we did the clause-by-clause to make the bill stronger, to make the bill more inclusive.

Then we have an opportunity to talk to the third reading of the bill, and then there is a vote on third reading. After the vote on third reading, it would go for royal assent. Once royal assent has been given, most of the time it becomes law; sometimes they'll say, "We'll have six months before it becomes law," that kind of stuff.

We're talking here about animal welfare, the humane treatment of animals. It would be pretty hard to find somebody who's opposed to that. I would say that everybody in this House thinks that animals in Ontario should be treated

in a humane way, and we all agree with that. But once you read the legislation and read what that will mean for farmers, what that will mean for municipalities who have to be responsible for part of this bill, once you do all of this, although the end goal is clear—we want to protect animals and we want to have a society that respects animals and treat them humanely—the path to get there is not always as clear as it could be, which is why we go through this process.

But not in this case, Speaker—again, the government has decided that they would time-allocate the bill. They've decided that they don't want to hear from the people of Ontario. This normal part of our legislative process, where people have an opportunity to come and do a deputation, this opportunity has been taken away. It's the same thing with clause-by-clause, which is the opportunity for us to look at the wording of the bill to make it as strong and enforceable as possible. All of this has been taken away.

You have the first idea of a bill; we had six hours of deputations on it. I'll let you do the math: 124 people, six hours. Most of us did not have an opportunity to talk to this bill, and then none of the people in Ontario will have the opportunity to do a deputation. None of us will have an opportunity to make changes to the bill. Then we will have 20—yes, count them, 20—minutes for all of the Ontario caucuses. There are 40 of us in here. If we were to divide this equally, we would all get 30 seconds. By the time you stand up, acknowledge the chair and ask to speak, it would be time to sit down. That's what we'll get. We will get 20 minutes, and then you get to vote yea or nay for the bill.

Really? Not only do we deserve better than this, I think animals also deserve better than this. We are being told, "Hold your breath. There is a more substantive bill that will come in a future yet to be identified." But there is nothing that tells us that in this future yet to be identified, in this new bill, that it will be any different, because this government has been here for about a year and of all of the bills that they have put forward, the great majority of them have been time-allocated. "Time-allocated" means that they don't want to hear from us who are there to represent the views of our constituents; they don't want to hear from the people of Ontario who may care very much about what's in that bill. It gets time-allocated; you don't get to be heard. You don't get to be taken into account.

Apparently, when this government puts something forward, they are so bang on that they never make a mistake. They never need to listen to anybody else. They know it all. It's the truth with a capital T, and, believe us—

Interjection.

M^{me} France Gélinas: No, that's not how it works. There are good ideas on all sides of the House. There are different lived realities whether you come from—me and Sol, who come from northern Ontario, or Niagara Falls or Oshawa or in and around Toronto. We all have very different constituencies who look at things through different eyes. This is what makes us stronger, this is what makes us more powerful and this is what makes good legislation. Take the time to listen to the different people. Take the

time to reach out and listen to the different points of view, and you will see that, at the end of the day, your legislation will be that much stronger.

To bulldoze ahead with the idea that only the PC minister knows how to move things forward—I'm not taking anything away from their minister; they have good ideas, but so does everybody else in this House, so do the 14 million Ontarians who share this province with us. We live in a democracy where people have an opportunity to be heard, and to take that opportunity away, nothing good comes of that. But they keep doing it. Not a week goes by that we don't have one of those speeches on time allocation. We have to do better.

Don't get me wrong, when the Liberal government was in power, they used quite a bit of time allocation to move their bills forward. When the Conservatives were sitting on this side of the House in opposition, they too spoke against the many, many times that the Liberal government would bring time allocation on a bill. They wanted to give people an opportunity to be heard. But now that they are in a position where they can decide if a bill gets to be talked about or not, most of the time they choose to time-allocate it. They choose to take away the rights of Ontarians and the rights of MPPs to share their views on the different pieces of legislation that come forward. That's not how you build a strong bill, much to the opposite.

To give us the, "Oh, wait. There is another bill that comes"—legislation is not an incremental process. Once you have a piece of legislation in place, most of the time that piece of legislation will be there for years to come. Here we have a piece of legislation that will have had 6.5 hours of debate on it for second reading, no deputations, no clause-by-clause and 20 minutes per party for third reading. Really? This is not the path to glorious legislation, let me tell you.

Encore une fois, madame la Présidente, on est ici cet après-midi pour parler du bâillon. Le gouvernement a décidé d'imposer le bâillon. Ça, c'est une expression que l'on utilise ici à l'Assemblée législative qui dit : « on ne veut plus vous entendre ». Un bâillon, c'est littéralement ce que tu mets sur la bouche de quelqu'un quand tu ne veux plus l'entendre. Ça, c'est ce qu'ils sont en train de faire. Ils ont imposé le bâillon. Ça veut dire qu'ils ne veulent plus nous entendre.

Pour ce projet de loi-là, on a eu la première lecture, ce qui est vraiment où on lit le titre du projet de loi. Bon, on parlait des animaux; tout le monde a voté en faveur.

1610

Après ça, on a eu 6,5 heures de débat; c'est tout—6,5 heures de débat pour 124 députés, ce n'est pas beaucoup de débat. Après ça, ils n'ont pas voulu aller en comité. Le comité, c'est là où les gens, les Ontariens et Ontariennes, ont une opportunité de venir nous dire ce qu'ils pensent du projet de loi et comment on peut l'améliorer pour qu'il reflète bien ce qui se passe dans toutes les parties de l'Ontario, dans tous les différents comtés. On n'a pas eu de discussions. Ils vont le ramener en troisième lecture après avoir infligé le bâillon. En troisième lecture, nous aurons 20 minutes pour tout mon caucus. Nous sommes

40 dans le caucus néo-démocrate. On aura 20 minutes pour 40 députés pour parler de ce projet de loi-là en troisième lecture, et après ça, ce sera le vote.

Quand on parle de la protection des animaux, c'est quelque chose que tient à cœur des millions d'Ontariens. On sait que 60 % des Ontariens et Ontariennes ont des animaux de compagnie. On ajoute à ça tous les animaux de ferme, les gros animaux, et il y a beaucoup de monde qui est intéressé à s'assurer que le projet de loi que l'on va mettre de l'avant pour protéger les animaux va être robuste, mais en même temps va avoir du bon sens. Bien, il n'y a aucune façon de faire changer ce projet de loi-là; il nous a été imposé, et on aura le choix après une troisième lecture de 20 minutes, en tout et partout, de voter pour ou de voter contre.

Moi, je ne suis pas en faveur d'imposer le bâillon sur pas mal tous les projets de loi qu'ils mettent de l'avant. On avait eu un gouvernement libéral avant ça qui faisait souvent la même chose, qui imposait le bâillon. Dans le temps, les conservateurs s'y opposaient et disaient : « On doit donner aux gens la chance d'être entendus. » Bien, maintenant qu'ils sont au gouvernement, ils font la même chose, et je te dirais qu'ils font la même chose, et encore pire. On est allé d'un gouvernement libéral qui le faisait trop à un gouvernement conservateur qui est encore pis.

Mais, en tout cas, les décisions—c'est le gouvernement qui décide de quoi on parle en Chambre, et c'est eux qui ont décidé d'infliger le bâillon. C'est sûr et certain que l'on va voter contre ça. On veut donner aux gens l'opportunité d'être entendus. Il y a trop de gens pour qui la protection des animaux est importante. Ils auraient dû avoir l'opportunité d'être entendus.

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

Mr. Rick Nicholls: I appreciate the opportunity to rise and speak to this very important legislation on Bill 117.

Again, we hear a lot of talk about time allocation. There's urgency in us getting this particular bill passed. I'm not going to go through all the reasons why, because our member from Oakville did just an incredible job in stating the reasons why this bill had to get passed. Kudos to our member from Oakville.

“The bill amends the Ontario Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals Act by adding section 21.1, which provides for the application of certain rules during an interim period ending on January 1, 2020”—just a few months away—“or on such other date as may be prescribed by regulations made by the Lieutenant Governor in Council.

“The rules permit the Solicitor General to appoint any person as the chief inspector during the interim period. They further provide that, during the interim period, the chief inspector may appoint any person as an inspector for the purposes of the act.”

Then it goes on to say: “The Solicitor General is provided with regulation-making authority to prescribe classes of persons who may exercise the powers of inspectors during the interim period and more generally for the purpose of carrying out section 21.1.”

Madam Speaker, animal welfare is important.

I want to take you back in time. About eight years ago, I was preparing to run as the candidate of record for the PCs down in my riding of Chatham-Kent-Essex at that time. All of a sudden, my daughter comes home from Toronto. My daughter is a singer-songwriter, and she was living in an apartment building. She came in one day, and there was this big fuss around the concierge. She walked over and said, “What’s going on?” Here was this beautiful, cute little Yorkie, shivering, soaking wet. This was in the middle of January. According to the concierge, this little Yorkie, who was about a year old, had been left tied to a tree outside of that apartment complex in the freezing rain, and had been out there for over one hour.

My daughter—it just broke her heart. She said, “If nobody claims this dog—we’ll put up posters and so on, but I’ll take care of him for the time being.” That’s the way I raised my kids.

Lo and behold, about a month later, when my daughter comes to the house, she opens the door and she goes, “Hi, Dad. I’m home.” All of a sudden, this little Yorkie comes running across the floor, and there he was. She said, “Dad, do you think you and Mom could find an appropriate home, a good home, for this little guy?”

I said, “Sure.” I decided to see how he was in our home. Well, it has been eight years. His name is Sebastian, and I’ll tell you, we can’t imagine our life without the little guy. It doesn’t matter what kind of a day I have in the Legislature or back in the constituency office. When he sees me coming—first of all, my wife tips him off. She’ll say, “Daddy’s home. Daddy’s home.” He runs to the door and he does his little happy dance, and then I bend down and pick him up. I’ll tell you, it’s just kisses galore. I can’t imagine my life without him. It doesn’t matter; all of a sudden, the worries of the day are gone. They’re just gone. He’s just so glad to see me, and I’m so glad to see him as well. He’s my little buddy as well.

I mentioned earlier that animal welfare is important, and we need to remember that. We also need to, and we should, do all in our power to protect our pets.

The problem has been around for a while, and it had been ignored by the previous government for quite some time. We heard last fall that the OSPCA would no longer be enforcing the act to protect our animals. We heard that from the member from the opposition, and he’s right. They said they would no longer be enforcing the act to protect our animals. So then we, the government, got an extension with the OSPCA, and they still did nothing. They still did nothing.

The rights of animals, and the people who care for them, can’t be left to chance. The jobs, and the safety of animals and their welfare, as well as for enforcement officers—this needs to be taken care of. We’re very serious about that.

I’m pleased to introduce the interim measures designed to ensure that animals remain protected as we work towards a better animal protection enforcement system right here in Ontario, one that is more robust, transparent and accountable.

After 100 years of enforcing animal welfare law in the province, the OSPCA has chosen to block our efforts to

minimize gaps in enforcement after they withdraw from their role, as of June 28, 2019.

Recently, we empowered local OSPCA affiliates, who indicated a willingness to assist in the transition, to continue protecting animals during the interim period. Unfortunately, the OSPCA has attempted to block these committed humane societies by contravening existing legislation.

Back when we were in opposition, I was the critic for community safety and correctional services. I challenged the government, because the OSCPA fell under the jurisdiction of community safety and correctional services, now known as the Solicitor General. They were receiving around \$5 million a year from the government, and there was no oversight at all—no oversight. We are going to be changing that, for sure.

The OSCPA, in their letter to the Solicitor General, said that the OSPCA's chief executive officer indicated that the OSPCA would not have a chief inspector in place, even though section 6.1(1) of the OSPCA Act expressly provides that: "The society shall appoint an employee of the society as the chief inspector."

This step is an attempt to block our efforts to allow willing humane societies to help minimize gaps in enforcement. This is extremely disappointing. Quite frankly, Madam Speaker, it puts animals in harm's way.

That's why our government for the people is taking decisive action to ensure that animals remain protected while we design a better system.

The legislation, if passed, would allow the province to appoint a chief inspector, who would in turn appoint qualified local inspectors, including local humane societies, to ensure that animal protection enforcement continues. The Solicitor General would also be able to appoint a chief inspector who would have the authority to appoint qualified inspectors to enforce the act, as OSPCA inspectors have done for over 100 years.

I'm going to take a moment and just share with you, Madam Speaker—and you might be aware of this because it happened adjacent to your riding, or close to your riding. It happened in my riding several years ago where, in fact, we all heard about the 21 pit bulls that were involved in a dog-fighting ring. It happened in a little town called Tilbury. It was the humane society that stepped in, along with the assistance of our Chatham-Kent Police Service. They went in, made the arrest, broke up that fighting ring. It was criminal. What they were forcing those dogs to do was totally, absolutely inhumane. But, of course, our legal system at that time would drag it out and drag it out and drag it out.

They had those dogs hidden, because we knew that if criminals knew where those dogs were being housed, then

the concern was that it might be putting OSPCA or humane personnel in harm's way. They kept that a secret, but in a little over two years, it finally was dismissed and nothing really happened. But I'm happy to say that the babies, the offspring of those pit bulls, are now service dogs. Some of them are service dogs helping and working with even children, and small children as well, so we're very excited about that.

Again, when we talk about what we're wanting to do, right now it's only temporary and the amendments that we're putting forth are a bridge between the existing OSPCA Act and a new animal welfare enforcement model that our government plans to introduce later this year. Of course, Madam Speaker, a number of local humane societies have already stepped forward to ask the province to help support their continued enforcement role during the transition period. These amendments would allow them to do so.

In conclusion, Madam Speaker, allowing animals to go unprotected is simply unacceptable. I know that the people of Ontario support our government's commitment to developing a better animal protection enforcement system. We're going to deliver on our promise to improve the system, and we'll take the time to ensure we reflect the ideas that come forward from the people across Ontario.

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

Mr. Walker has moved government notice of motion number 66 relating to allocation of time on Bill 117, An Act to amend the Ontario Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals Act. 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 ayes have it.

Call in the members. This will be a 10-minute bell.

The division bells rang from 1623 to 1624.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Lisa Gretzky): Pursuant to standing order 28(h), the chief government whip has requested that the vote on the government notice of motion 66 be deferred until deferred votes on June 4, 2019.

Vote deferred.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Lisa Gretzky): Orders of the day?

Hon. Bill Walker: I move that we adjourn.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Lisa Gretzky): Mr. Walker has moved adjournment of the House. Agreed? Agreed.

There being no further business, this House stands adjourned until tomorrow morning at 9 a.m.

The House adjourned at 1624.

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