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LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY
OF ONTARIO

Thursday 11 April 2019

ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE
DE L'ONTARIO

Jeudi 11 avril 2019

The House met at 0900.

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

ORDERS OF THE DAY

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

Resuming the debate adjourned on April 8, 2019, on the motion for second reading of the following bill:

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

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Pursuant to the order of the House passed April 10, 2019, I am now required to put the question.

Mr. Phillips has moved second reading of Bill 87, An Act to amend various statutes related to energy. 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.

This vote will be deferred until after question period today.

Second reading vote deferred.

THE PEOPLE'S HEALTH CARE
ACT, 2019

LOI DE 2019 SUR LES SOINS DE SANTÉ
POUR LA POPULATION

Resuming the debate adjourned on April 10, 2019, on the motion for third reading of the following bill:

Bill 74, An Act concerning the provision of health care, continuing Ontario Health and making consequential and related amendments and repeals / Projet de loi 74, Loi concernant la prestation de soins de santé, la prorogation de Santé Ontario, l'ajout de modifications corrélatives et connexes et des abrogations.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Further debate? The member for Nickel Belt.

M^{me} France Gélinas: Thank you, Speaker.

Interjections.

M^{me} France Gélinas: Apparently I have a very enthusiastic caucus this morning, so that's good.

We are starting third reading of Bill 74. The government had their hour lead yesterday. I started my lead, and I will kind of summarize what I did in the first 20 minutes and then go on to finish.

At the 30,000-foot level, Bill 74 says two things. The first one is that they are going to create a super-bureaucracy. The new super-bureaucracy will mean that good health agencies such as Cancer Care Ontario will be dissolved.

eHealth Ontario, which was working on bringing us an electronic health record, will be dissolved.

HealthForceOntario, which helps communities like mine recruit health professionals to northern, rural and hard-to-serve communities, will be dissolved.

Health Shared Services Ontario, which acts as a purchasing agent when hospitals want to get together to have a better bang for their buck, will be dissolved.

Ontario Health Quality is an agency that looks at different parts of our health care system and sees how we do, looks at best practices and starts to implement best practices in different parts of our health care system. They will be gone.

Trillium Gift of Life is the agency in charge of making sure that—and today, being April—as many people as possible sign up to become donors. Then, when somebody passes, they help the family make the final decision as to whether or not they would like to donate their organs. They are also part of this fantastic program we have right down here, on University Avenue, at Toronto General, where we do some very complex transplantation surgery that is done nowhere else in Canada. People come from all of the other provinces to be on the list and to be here, because Ontario is the only place where some of those surgeries can be done.

Then, the 14 local health integration networks are agencies that—most people don't know what they do. They were not well loved. But they did one thing, though: They gave us a voice. I, like my colleague from Sudbury—and many of my colleagues, actually; I see my colleague from Mushkegowuk–James Bay, and many others—we represent areas farther away from Toronto. What the 14 LHINs did is give us a voice. They had a mandate in legislation that they had to hold consultations. They had to give us an opportunity to speak, and they had to listen to what we had to do and report that back to the ministry. This is also gone. This is the super-agency. It dissolved the agencies that I've just named to create the new super-bureaucracy.

What's also in the bill is the creation of—the bill doesn't say how many, but the minister is on record many times—about 50 integrated care delivery systems. I'm

strong in math, Speaker. If you look at 14 million people and 50 of them, that means every integrated care delivery system will be about 280,000 people. For us who come from northern Ontario, that means one for all of us in northern Ontario. How can you integrate care from Noelville to Attawapiskat? This is nonsense. This doesn't make any sense for us. But we fully support integration, and I had shared in my first 20 minutes very successful integrations that were done by willing partners in different communities of the north, but we do it on a scale that makes sense in northern Ontario. We do it for 5,000 people in Espanola. We do it for 11,000 people in Elliot Lake. We do it—not for 280,000 people. Downtown Toronto? Yes, absolutely, it makes sense. Where I come from, where the people around me come from? Not so much, Speaker—not so much.

This is basically what I had covered. It took me 20 minutes the first time, but I can be fast. I did it in under five minutes this morning.

The rest of what we found in the bill: One big part of the bill that makes us nervous is that the bill takes a whole bunch of existing laws, like LHSIA, and then they put them into Bill 74, with some modifications. The modifications that sort of irritate me at every page is that whenever the previous legislation said, “delivered by not-for-profit,” systematically, it was always taken out. It made me nervous. Why would you copy 90%—sometimes 99%—of a piece of legislation that already exists? You copy it in Bill 74, except that every time that you refer to publicly delivered service and not-for-profit service, it is taken out.

0910

One of the first things that we did as the NDP caucus is that we pressed the government to say, “Do you intend to privatize? Is this why you have taken out of the bills that are now part of Bill 74 the references to not-for-profit?” When we asked them in the House, they stood up and said, “You will not pay with your credit card; you will pay with your OHIP card.” You don't pay with your OHIP card; your OHIP card gives you access to services. That's all it does. This idea that we pay with an OHIP card: That's not true. The funding mechanism has nothing to do with your OHIP card. You can go to a community health centre, to a hospital, to a hospice for palliative care, you can go to—the OHIP card gives you access; it has nothing to do with payments.

But when we asked them, “Is this going to be delivered by the public sector?” then they say, “Oh, well, physicians are private entrepreneurs.” They're absolutely right. Physicians are small business people who run their business and are paid by OHIP. We all get that. It has been there forever and it is part of our health care system. But the rest of our health care system, if you look at our hospices, if you look at our community health centres or nurse practitioner-led clinics or family health teams or Aboriginal health access centres or hospitals, everything else is not-for-profit. So when we ask them, “Is it okay to protect that, to protect the biggest players in our health care system that are not for profit?”, they never say yes.

So the NDP put six different motions forward, six different motions that were focused on one thing: Add the

“not-for-profit” back where it used to be in the legislation that you copied and pasted into Bill 74. Do you know how they voted on those six amendments, Speaker, to bring back not-for-profit delivery into Bill 74? They voted those down. So it is really hard to stand here and say, “Well, if you've taken out ‘not-for-profit,’ if we have given you six opportunities to put it back in—so it wasn't a mistake; it's by design, because we've offered you the opportunity to put it back in, and you voted it down—then it's really hard to not go down the next path and say that if you take away not-for-profit, it's because you want for-profit to be in there.” It's not a big step to make.

You start to look at this and you say, “Okay, we will have those big, integrated care, about 50 of them, that will look at about 280,000 people.” Who has the ability to administer such a thing? The LHINs will be gone. We used to have 14 LHINs; they were not-for-profit; they were there; they existed—they will be no more. Now we will have 50. How does going from 14 to 50 decrease bureaucracy? I don't know. I don't go to the same math teacher as they do, because, for me, that means we will have more bureaucracy than what we had before.

This put aside, who can handle this? Who can handle the care of 280,000 people? That will mean a number of hospitals, a number of primary care deliveries, a number of long-term-care homes, a number of community mental health, a number of palliative care services—who can handle this? It's not that many. You cannot ask a little community health centre with one executive director, a part-time HR person and maybe a contracted-out accountant to look after billions of dollars of health care services.

You look at who the players are who have the administrative capabilities of doing that. Well, the first thing that comes to mind is hospitals. I'm fine with that, except that I like my little hospitals. They are meaningful to me. They make a big difference to the communities that I serve. None of those will be able to do that, but the 50 biggest hospitals could become the 50 new integrated hospitals.

But you know who else is quite capable of doing this? All the big corporations, mainly US-based, but some international, that run our long-term-care system. Whether you look at Chartwell or you look at Extencicare or you look at Leisureworld, all of the big players in our long-term-care system have the administrative capability of taking this over.

They also have the administrative capability of maximizing the profit that they will take out of those billion dollars they will now be in charge of administering for us. I'm not comfortable with that, and 19,000 other people wrote in to say that they are not comfortable with that.

I would like to put into the record Susan Fraser from Ravina Crescent in Toronto. I have no idea who Susan Fraser is. I have boxes and boxes and boxes of written comments that were sent to the committee. Those are people that could not be heard but wanted to write something. There are 19,413 pieces of paper in my office, if you want, and I picked one.

She says, “I am retired and I rely on our publicly-funded health care system. Like the majority of Canadians,

I value and cherish our world-class health care system, which is supported by our tax dollars. Our health care system is not perfect and does have its shortcomings—long waiting lists for some procedures, hallway medicine in many emergency departments, inadequate home health support services which care for people at home and help keep people out of hospital, etc. Many, if not all of these problems, can be solved,” she says, “by adequate government funding.

“I have been particularly concerned about changes proposed to our health care system in Ontario by Bill 74, The People’s Health Act, 2019, which opens the door to a greater involvement of for-profit private companies. Savings and efficiencies that may be generated in the public system should be plowed back into the public system to fund service improvements and should not be taken off by private, for-profit companies to provide them larger profits.

“Please amend Bill 74 to prohibit the expansion of private, for-profit care and to prohibit the transfer of existing public or non-profit care delivery to private, for-profit companies.

“Ontario’s health care system must be kept in public hands and be truly health care ‘for the people.’”

I have, and we all received, 19,000 comments that pretty much all go the same way. They’ve all put in their own flavour. As I said, I picked one, but there are 19,413 other pieces of paper in my office. You’re welcome to come and have a look at them, and sit down and read some of them, and you will see that, overwhelmingly, people agree that they want to keep our public health care system public.

We tried to make amendments. They were shot down.

The next part of the bill, as I said, was the creation of the super-bureaucracy. The super-bureaucracy will be based in Toronto. Nothing wrong with Toronto—a beautiful city—but Toronto is not all of Ontario.

It will be governed by a board of directors of 15 people; 12 of them have been appointed already. The 12 that have been appointed are all from southern Ontario except for one Tory politician from North Bay.

This is not what the super-bureaucracy should look like. The board of directors of a super-bureaucracy that will be in charge of overseeing the biggest change in Ontario history, and in our health care system since medicare, should at least look like Ontario. It should be 50% men, 50% women. That’s not a big stretch. Maybe there should be geographical representation, so that people like Guy are there. There should be First Nations represented. There should be francophones represented. There’s none of that.

To make matters worse, those are all amendments that we brought forward. How about we make sure that the board is representative of our province? They shot that down. We pushed back: make sure that there’s at least a francophone and an Aboriginal person, a First Nation person, an Indigenous person on—they shot that down.

0920

When we asked things as simple as, “Let’s make sure that the appointments you make can be reviewed by the

Standing Committee on Government Agencies”—for most other appointments to all of the agencies, boards and commissions in Ontario, we as legislators are allowed to call them in and ask them questions. This is a process that brings transparency, that brings accountability. Sometimes you see the name of a person and you look at their profile on LinkedIn or whatever and you say, “Ugh,” but once you talk to them, you realize, “Oh, wow, their mother, their father, their siblings have a history. They’ve learned.” Maybe on paper they didn’t look like they were qualified to do the work, but once you have an opportunity to talk to them, you realize that they are well grounded, that they are going to do a good job on whatever agency, board or commission. They voted that down. They will pick those people in secret, they will appoint them in secret, and we will never get to bring them in front of the Legislature, never get to bring them to committee.

When we argued with them that transparency and accountability in our health care system is directly linked to quality care—people have to trust our health care system. They have to trust the people. Health care is a relationship between two people. If you don’t trust the person in front of you, you’re not going to be able to get the best care. That transcends throughout the health care system. They would not hear of it. They voted down every single one of our amendments that we put forward. To make sure that the board would travel, that the board would have a minimum of four meetings, that the board would hold open meetings so that people can see that—every single one of those amendments were voted down.

This will be a board that will be selected behind closed doors, appointed behind closed doors, that will meet behind closed doors, and they will be in charge of restructuring our health care system. I’m not comfortable with that.

I have to come back to the dissolution of Cancer Care Ontario. I’m old enough to remember what our cancer treatment centres looked like before we had Cancer Care Ontario. I’m really proud that Ruth Grier, who was the Minister of Health when the NDP was in power, is the one who brought Cancer Care Ontario. Why? Because before we had Cancer Care Ontario, we had a best practice happening at Princess Margaret, but it was not available to the people of Sudbury; it was not available to the people of St. Catharines; it was not available to the people of anywhere else. You had a new advancement in treatment and technology that suddenly became available in London, but nobody else had it.

Cancer Care Ontario looked at the entire journey, from diagnostics, to treatment, to support, to caregivers, to palliative care. They identified the best practices. They rolled them out throughout. They made sure that all 100 hospitals that provide oncology services and cancer services used the best practices to care for people who had cancer. And it paid off by—just phenomenal.

When you look at people being diagnosed with cancer in Ontario right now, it is not a fatal disease anymore. For many, it becomes a chronic condition or it becomes something that you go through, you recover and you go on to live your merry lives.

We have some of the best outcomes in the world when it comes to treatment of people with cancer. Why? Because of Care Cancer Ontario. Whenever I bring this up, the minister raves about how good Cancer Care Ontario is, that we should take the learnings from Cancer Care Ontario and bring them to other parts of our health care system. We agree with all of this.

So we asked Cancer Care Ontario, “How much consultation were you part of? How are you going to help shape the learnings you’ve got to make sure that they are applied to other parts of the health care system so that we see the same result?” And the answer was, none.

Cancer Care Ontario, as written in the bill, will be dissolved. That’s the word that the bill uses: “dissolved.” It’s like when you put sugar in your coffee and you dissolve it; there’s no more sugar. When you put Cancer Care Ontario in the super-bureaucracy, there’s no more Cancer Care Ontario. I don’t like this visual at all, but that’s the word that the bill uses, so that’s the word I’m supposed to use. I don’t like that at all. I’m worried.

The executive director of Care Cancer Ontario came and did a deputation for us, which I’m not able to find right now. But he shared with us what some of the learnings were that he had done. One of the first learnings he had done that he wanted to share was that, because Cancer Care Ontario was given solely one mandate—to care for cancer patients—they were able to bring in the expertise. They were able to set a plan. They were actually just about to set their fifth plan for cancer treatment in Ontario. This is a plan that is made public. They were also going to put forward their third renal plan, because Cancer Care Ontario looks after cancer and renal. They were about to put out their third plan.

They also said that they were held to account on that plan and that all of this was made in a public way, so that, he said, it always made them very nervous, because when they set out the plan—they are assessed on that plan and have to report publicly—sometimes they did not achieve everything that they had set out to achieve. It certainly was a huge motivator for everybody to work really, really hard so that you achieve that plan.

He talked about what brought us from what we had in the early 1990s to what we have now. Basically, because you had one agency given one mandate, they were able to gain the trust of the provider of care. Because, remember, the government can dream up any plan they want. If the front-line health care workers were not engaged, did not have trust in that plan, they are the ones facing the patient. If they are not sure that what you’re telling them is going to help the patient sitting in front of them, they’re not going to do it. Cancer Care Ontario was able to change all of that, and now, like sugar in your coffee, Speaker, they’re going to be dissolved. They’re not going to be there anymore, and I’m not happy about that.

The next part of the bill: The bill actually says that it’s going to create an advisory council for francophones and another one for Indigenous people. I’ll deal with the francophones first and the Indigenous second.

Let’s look at what we already have. We already have French-language services entities that cover the entire

province. Those entities used to report to the LHINs. The LHINs don’t exist anymore. Their boards were kicked to the curb: “Thank you very much for your volunteer work. We don’t want you anymore.” The entities are supposed to report to the boards of the LHINs that are no longer there. The minister had a francophone advisory council. All of this, as I said, existed in previous legislation.

Now we look at what exists now in the legislation, and what exists now is one sentence that says that they will have a francophone advisory council. When we pushed back and said, “Will the francophone community have an opportunity to select members to represent them on those advisory councils, like we had in the previous bill?” The answer was, “No.” When we asked to put things in as simple as, “Will there be open meetings? Can we guarantee that there will be at least four meetings a year? Can we guarantee that they will have opportunity for engagement?” Nothing.

0930

We used to have a bill that had at least three pages of obligations that had to do with the francophone advisory council, that basically set out opportunities for the francophone community to nominate people, set out the responsibility of those councils to make sure that they were relevant, met the needs and had a direct relationship with the French-language entity.

All of this is gone. All we have now is one sentence—actually, it’s one line and half of the other line—that says that they will create a French-language advisory council. But if you don’t put anything else with it, that means that this council could be made up of three people that will be selected by the minister and that will meet once every three years. What kind of advice do you figure three people who meet once every three years could give? That is not in the bill.

There have been ministers before who were not very—how can I say this?—kind towards francophones in Ontario and that would be more than happy not to have this council. I’m not saying that the present minister is there, but a bill is not for the present minister. A bill is not an incremental affair; a bill is there, and most of the time we don’t change them for 10 years—most of the time we don’t change them for 25 years. Between now and 25 years, there will be many Ministers of Health in between, and all there will be in the bill to make sure that we have a French advisory council is one line and a half saying we have to have a council. It doesn’t say that it has to meet a minimum amount of time; it doesn’t say that it has to have a minimum amount of people that have to be connected to the francophone community—none of that. For all we know, the thing could not meet for months and years on end, and you would still be in accordance with the law. That’s a huge setback.

When it comes to the Indigenous advisory council, they did make a little change, so I’ll say thank you for this. We had two First Nations groups that had an opportunity to come and do a deputation. Those two groups that got an opportunity to talk were Nishnawbe Aski Nation and the Chiefs of Ontario. But four more Aboriginal and First

Nations associations wrote to us: the Anishinabek Nation, the Grand Council Treaty 3, the Ontario Federation of Indigenous Friendship Centres and the Six Nations council. Basically what they told us is that to only have one Indigenous council could be problematic because the Indigenous community is quite varied. You have First Nations; you have Métis; you have Inuit. All of them are a part, and many more. So the government agreed to say that there could be two councils, but that was it. The rest of what they asked for—and the member, Sol Mamakwa, the member for—

Interjection: Kiiwetinoong.

M^{me} France Gélinas: Kiiwetinoong—sorry—was part of the committee that handled that bill and will go into more detail as to what all of the First Nations who came forward wanted. But they stated the reality that health care delivery on First Nations is either non-existent or sorely lacking. They have solutions of their own that they would like to put forward. They would like to have an opportunity for meaningful engagement with the minister. I know that NAN was here yesterday and put out a lot of effort to start those engagements with the people of Queen's Park. I hope all of you had an opportunity to go and meet them.

But, coming back to the bill, they were quite specific as to what they wanted. They want to have an opportunity to say who will represent them. Who is the Minister of Health to decide? None of that was listened to. We put amendments to bring back what the First Nations have said in their oral deputations as well as their written deputations, to say, "We all agree that we are failing our First Nations and our Aboriginal people every single day. We all agree that we need to do better." They come forward to say, "Here's what the structure should look like if you want to change things," and they were completely ignored.

We tried to put forward amendments on the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples. This is something that binds us. This is something that needs to be respected. This is something that we need to put in our laws in Ontario so that we show that we are serious about reconciliation with our First Nations. I'll let you take a guess as to how they voted on that. They voted that down.

So, for the First Nations, they get the opportunity to have two—sorry, for the Indigenous advisory council, they have the opportunity to have two, but the rest of it is exactly the same. They will be selected by the minister. He or she will decide if there's one, two, three, or 15 people on this council; he or she will decide if they meet once a year, once every three years or once a week—which I doubt very much. They will also decide what will be the mandate of those councils—"they" as in the ministry, not the Indigenous people. What an opportunity lost.

To say that we will have a French-language advisory council—we already had this. We lost three pages of legislative protection that we used to have, and the Indigenous advisory council fared no better.

Again, I want to remind the people on the other side that this bill will be for a long time. You may have lots of trust in your present Minister of Health, but I guarantee you she

won't be there in 25 years, but the bill will still be there. The protections that we could have put for Indigenous people still won't be there.

There's only eight minutes left. All right.

The next point I wanted to talk to you about was the goals, so that when the minister talks about why her government is doing this, it is quite clear. You can ask anybody on the Conservative side, and they will spit it out like this: "Why are we doing this? Because we have hallway health care. Because we want to wrap services around the patient. Because we want a warm send-off from the hospitals to long-term care, to mental health and addictions, to home and community support."

All of their goals are things that we also support. We see the value in integration. We see our hospitals that are overcrowded. We see that, yes, it is very difficult to go from a hospital to a long-term-care home when there's a four-month wait average. And if you come from our part of the world—

Mr. Guy Bourgoïn: Three to four years.

M^{me} France Gélinas: In his part, it's three to four years. Mine and his are no better. We don't measure in days or weeks or months anymore; we measure in years.

So we agree with them, but could we get them to put those goals into the bill? Nope. The bill doesn't talk about overcrowding. It doesn't talk about any of this. What it does say is that we will go from 14 LHINs to 50 integrated care delivery systems in a super-bureaucracy.

The bill is really not clear enough to know what will happen if you happen to be in one of those integrated care deliveries—let's say, one that is based around Welland and this area—and you need services that are available in a different integrated care. Nobody knows how you will be looked after and transferred.

0940

Then the bill goes into opening the door to virtual care. I come from northern Ontario. We use virtual care extensively for the good of the patient. A lot of patients who are in Hearst and Kaps and areas that we represent don't have to drive to Sudbury. They go through the Ontario Telehealth Network, and you have this very secure system of video conference and you do your consultation with somebody beside you—usually it's a nurse; sometimes it's a physician—and there's a specialist physician at the other end. It works beautifully. But this is not what we are talking about when they're talking about virtual care. When they are talking about virtual care, it opens the doors to virtual care that is handy for the physician, not necessarily for the patients at the other end—virtual care that opens the door to the for-profit system and not the not-for-profit, because you know full well that when Tommy Douglas invented medicare, virtual care was not on his radar. It had not been invented. It had not been thought about. It is not part of medicare.

If it is not part of medicare, and we have a bill that has taken out every reference to not-for-profit, what are you left with? A whole bunch of for-profit companies. I will give you an example. We all know that there is a pent-up demand within Ontarians. We want to have access to our

hospital health records. People want to have access. They want to be able to see it. They want to be able to get the results of their latest test, get the summary that the physician did the last time they saw them. They want to be able to book their appointments online. They want to be able to check where they are on the wait-list. We do everything else with our phones; why couldn't we do that?

I can tell you that some hospitals have started to do this. Just go down the street to Women's College Hospital. They have this wonderful portal where people can, with their phones, have access to their appointment. They can change their appointment. They can make it online. All of this is done by the hospital, in a not-for-profit. But given that virtual care is not covered in the not-for-profit, and given that there is this pent-up demand from all of us to connect, what do you think will happen? The for-profit will come in and say, "We have the solution. We will give you access. All you have to do is pay us—I don't know—two bucks a month, five bucks a month, 10 bucks a month"—whatever they want, basically, because there is no regulation that says that you cannot charge for that.

I have a problem with that. First of all, not all of us can pay 10 bucks a month to gain access and make appointments and all of that. Second, why are we letting them profit on the back of a database that we own, that the taxpayers pay for? But more fundamentally, once you have a for-profit company that has access to that data, they will make money out of it. They will use that data, see the patterns and start to make money. This is fundamentally wrong. People wanting to gain access—it's to improve their care, not to make a for-profit company more profit all the time.

The last part is that we all know that we gain access to our health care system through our family physician or a primary-care nurse practitioner. Did you know, Speaker, that physicians are not included in that bill? When they say "wraparound," when they say that everybody will be connected, physicians are not included. A few hundred physicians who work in community health centres or Aboriginal health access centres will be included. The rest of the physicians—we're talking about 40,000 of them—are not included in this bill. The family physicians—about 22,000 family physicians—that most of us rely on, and the primary care nurse practitioners that we rely on—physicians are not included. They have not been consulted. They are not included. They are not part of this bill. The physicians are the gatekeepers of the system. They are our point of access, and they are not part of the bill. The bill is focused on six parts; physicians are not one of them.

The last part is that, although when the PA talks about the provisions for Catholic health organizations—yes, Catholic health organizations are supposed to be protected, but there's also a clause in the bill that allows the ministry to stop funding. So, yes, the Sisters of St. Joseph will be protected, but the hospital that they run won't receive money anymore. The long-term-care home that they run won't receive money anymore, because we have given the minister powers like I have never been before: unchecked power, unaccountable power, with no mandate.

She or he will have to put their orders on a website for 30 days. That's it; that's all.

This bill is not supportable.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Jennifer K. French): Questions and comments? I recognize the member from Mississauga–Lakeshore.

Mr. Rudy Cuzzetto: Thank you, and good morning, Madam Speaker. I'm pleased to rise here today to support Bill 74, The People's Health Care Act, our plan to modernize the health care system. I'd like to thank the Minister of Health and Long-Term Care and her parliamentary assistants, the members from Oakville North–Burlington and Eglinton–Lawrence, for their leadership on this issue.

Madam Speaker, after 15 years of Liberal mismanagement, we inherited a health care system that is in crisis. I would like the member from Nickel Belt to take note of this point here: Over the last five years, Ontario spent 30% more than the Canadian average on health care administration. Yet, according to the Premier's council on improving health care, over 1,000 patients are receiving care in hospital hallways every day, including in my own riding of Mississauga–Lakeshore. The average wait time for a long-term-care bed is 146 days. Speaker, that's up 300% over the last 15 years, from 36 days in 2003 to 146 days now. That's just not good enough for the people of Ontario.

Bill 74 provides a long-term plan for a better-connected public health care system. It will reduce spending on bureaucrats and red tape, and reinvest in front-line care for patients. It will make it easier to get the services we need and help to make life easier for patients and families.

Madam Speaker, I'd ask all members to join with me in supporting this important bill for the people of Ontario.

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

Mr. Jamie West: I want to begin by thanking the member from Nickel Belt for her information. It's a good opportunity to learn so much. I look forward to the future, when she becomes the Minister of Health and we can fix this crisis once and for all.

A few points she brought up actually were about the north. Being from the north, in Sudbury—we often joke that Sudbury is the Timbit in the middle of the Nickel Belt doughnut. There were comments earlier this week about where the north starts. There's discussions about it. I spoke with people in Toronto—not members, but people in Toronto—saying that northern Ontario starts at Bloor Street. When I went for an interview when I was in my twenties, they said, "You might have to move to the north. You might have to move as far north as Barrie." I've heard people talk about North Bay being the north. Our Minister of Finance is from North Bay. That's the north; it's got north in the title. The riding of Sudbury is maybe the north, or maybe Nickel Belt is the north because it extends beyond. But what about Thunder Bay, which is 11 hours past Sudbury? What about all the other areas of the north—James Bay and farther north?

When you're integrating, you take that voice away from all these communities. It doesn't matter if you think the

north is Barrie or if you think that north is north of Thunder Bay. When you take those voices away and you centralize them in Toronto, you lose the flavour and the understanding of what's really going on there. And that's the problem with this super-bureaucracy: that what works here in the 416 doesn't work in the 705. And, Speaker, it is important that we have those voices.

She also talked about the voices from the francophone community and the Indigenous communities. We're dissolving those voices. We're saying, "Don't worry, Ontario, the 416 knows what's best. We'll explain it to you and we'll get it right. Trust us"—

Interjection.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Jennifer K. French): The member for Kitchener–Conestoga will come to order.

Mr. Jamie West:—and that's an issue, Speaker, and that's why we're speaking about it. It's okay if the government doesn't listen; we're just trying to get them to.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Jennifer K. French): Further questions and comments? I recognize the member from Cambridge.

Mrs. Belinda Karahalios: Thank you, Madam Speaker, and good morning to you.

While we're getting things on the record, let's do just that. Member from Nickel Belt, thank you for your comments. That was carry-over from yesterday, so thank you for that. You said you received 19,530 pieces of paper; 18,000 were form letters—let's put that on the record.

What else should we put on the record? I was on the social policy committee with you. You referenced the board as "old, rich white guys." Let's put that on the record.

Let's talk about some of the amendments that were made, too, that were approved by our government. Part VI of schedule 1: "Duties."

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Clause 2(a): "engage the Indigenous health planning entities...;

"(b) engage the French language health planning entities that the minister, by regulation, specifies...;

"(3) The minister shall engage with Indigenous communities before specifying Indigenous health planning entities for the purposes of this section."

Let's put more things on the record: "8.1(1) The minister shall establish the following councils:

"1. One or more Indigenous health councils to advise the minister about health and service delivery issues related to Indigenous peoples.

"2. A French language health services advisory council to advise the minister about health and service delivery issues related to francophone communities.

"Members

"(2) The minister shall engage with Indigenous communities before appointing members of a council established under paragraph 1 of subsection (1)."

Clearly, we are listening. Clearly, we are engaging with our communities—French-language and Indigenous communities—just for the record, Madam Speaker.

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

Mrs. Jennifer (Jennie) Stevens: I'd like to thank the member from Nickel Belt, as well, for her wisdom here today. I'm going to put a few facts on the record as well.

I've heard from people, day in and day out, voicing their concerns with having no access to life-saving medication for their treatments. This isn't a joke. This is actually no laughing matter, as well. This is serious, and it's a serious crisis within Niagara. Why are the Premier and the Minister of Health not thinking of how cutting OHIP services will affect the average person and family?

Take nerve-blocking injections, for example. As you may know, these weekly injections are administered for pain management therapy for people with ailments such as disc disease, fibromyalgia and anything that affects the nervous system, however—

Interjections.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Jennifer K. French): Kitchener–Conestoga, come to order. Niagara Centre, come to order.

Mrs. Jennifer (Jennie) Stevens: Thank you, Madam Speaker.

The pain associated with nerve disease is life-altering, something that St. Catharines resident Paul Sauntry, who spoke to me this week, knows too well. Suffering from excruciating pain and debilitating headaches, Paul described his pain as "torturous." For the last three years, Paul has been receiving 25 nerve-block injections every week just so that he can sit, stand and have quality of life. Madam Speaker, he described to me that at one point he thought of suicide, something he considered simply to relieve himself from the physical and psychological pain he feels every day.

Madam Speaker, I ask: If the OHIP cuts this nerve-injection pain relief, will he have to go to opioids? Probably so. This will cost our health care system more money.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Jennifer K. French): I return to the member from Nickel Belt for her two-minute reply.

M^{me} France Gélinas: Thank you, Speaker.

We agree with the reasons for change. Our hospitals are overcrowded. The wait time to get into a long-term-care home is too long. Our home care system fails so many people who end up in hospital and then can't go back. We agree with all of this. What we disagree with are the solutions that they have put forward.

There are two parts to their solution: The first one is to create the super-bureaucracy. How is dissolving Cancer Care Ontario—Cancer Care Ontario is not broken. Our cancer treatment centre is one of the best. It is not broken. Why try to fix part of the system that is not broken?

Trillium Gift of Life: We are one of the best provinces when it comes to organ transplants and success for organ donation. Why is it that they dissolve things that are very successful to create the super-bureaucracy that will not free up a single bed at Health Sciences North? It has nothing to do with it. It has to do with concentration of power.

When people say, “Oh, they will put the money that they save in administration and invest it into care”—we tried to put that into the bill, and they refused, so that’s not going to happen. That’s the first part of the bill.

The second part is to create about 50 integrated care delivery systems for about 280,000 people. Again, there’s nothing wrong with integration, but the way that they have it set up, the way that they give the minister—if there are no willing partners at the local level, the minister can do whatever she or he wants. They have been given power to take resources away, to take assets away, to merge against their will. All they have to do is put it on the website for 30 days, and it’s done.

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

Mr. Dave Smith: As always, I’m happy to rise in this House and have debate. I have to say that I’ve written this speech about four times now. Today is budget day, and we need to focus on a lot of positives because today is a great day for Ontario.

I am confused, though, by some of the things that the member from Nickel Belt said. She talked about getting rid of the 14 LHINs and how that was getting rid of that local flavour, but having 50 agencies that were going to work was going to be unmanageable because 14 LHINs for 14 million people was better than 50 for 14 million people. I don’t understand her math.

But we’re here to talk about Bill 74, The People’s Health Care Act. This is a piece of legislation introduced by my friend, the Minister of Health and Long-Term Care. Before we can start to unpack how our government plans to get health care back on track in Ontario, we first need to understand the state of the current health care system, understand how vital it is that change be made, and be made without any more delay.

We’ve heard it a number of times, but it’s true: For 15 years under the former government, our health care system was recklessly mismanaged. Precious funds were spent on bureaucracy while front-line services were left to do the best they could with what little they had. Actually, it reminds me of a TV show from my early teens; some of you might remember it. But I’m not sure that even MacGyver could have done as much as our nurses, our PSWs and other front-line workers have been able to do with so little support.

Despite the best efforts of our health care professionals, where did this leave our patients? It left them in hallways. It left them in storage closets. Over 1,000 patients every single day receive care in a hallway across this province. They’re cared for by staff who, like MacGyver, metaphorically turned orange peels and duct tape into nuclear reactors. They did what they could with what they had to work with.

My colleague the member from Ottawa South, the recognized leader of an entity that is no longer a recognized party, has often said to me that the work we do here becomes our legacy. Well, sir, the legacy that your former government has left health care is one of bloated bureaucracy, long waits and burned-out staff—a system that does

not meet the needs of families today and can never meet the needs, moving forward. You broke that covenant that you made with the people of Ontario when you did that.

If passed, Bill 74 will change this. No longer will taxpayer dollars be lost in a quagmire before they reach the patient’s bedside. We’ll ensure that health care dollars are spent where they’re needed most: on front-line services centred around the patient and not centred around a system that focuses only on the system.

Back in January of this year, the Premier’s Council on Improving Healthcare and Ending Hallway Medicine released its first report. The report outlined three key findings with the current state of health care in Ontario. Speaker, I’m happy to say that Bill 74 sets in place the tools to correct these core issues our health care system is bogged down with. Bill 74 is one more example of our government’s commitment of making a promise and following that through. We promised to fix our health care system.

The first key finding was difficulty navigating the system. Patients and their families are struggling to navigate through the current health care system. Because of this, they’re either not receiving their care in a timely fashion or they’re simply not receiving care at all. A good example of this is the patient who instinctively heads to the emergency room as their first step because they don’t know, or, in many cases, like in my riding of Peterborough–Kawartha, they don’t have access to primary care.

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Not knowing how to access or not having access to primary health teams, individuals end up in the emergency rooms. This is even more evident when it comes to mental health services. Children’s Mental Health Ontario is on the record from November 2017 as stating, “Half of parents who sought help for mental health services for their child said they faced challenges in getting the services they needed, primarily due to wait times.”

Bill 74 will work to remedy this issue by creating a connected care system where patients and their families will have access to one coordinated team focused on specific local needs, creating an easier transition from one health provider to another. The minister herself said it perfectly when she said, “We must ... coordinate the public health care system, so it is organized around people’s needs and outcomes.” High-quality, connected and appropriate care will become the new standard across the province of Ontario.

Bill 74 will also provide the tool to fix the issue of difficulty navigating the system by providing not only patients but also their families and their caregivers with 24-hour access, seven days a week, helping navigating the health care system with their Ontario health teams, because when a patient or their family is dealing with difficulties, the last thing they need to be doing is struggling trying to navigate phone calls, trying to speak to someone who might be able to help them. They don’t need to be bounced between 1-800 numbers hoping, praying to speak to the right person. Continuous access to care and smooth transitions: That is what the people of Ontario asked for,

and that's exactly what they're going to receive. Speaker, everyone sitting in the government seats refers to that as a promise made, a promise kept.

The second key issue outlined by the council was that the system is facing capacity pressures. It doesn't have the appropriate mix of services, beds or digital tools to be ready for the projected increase in complex care needs and capacity pressures, either in the short or in the long term. There's growing demand and opportunity to innovate in care delivery, particularly in the use of virtual care, apps and ensuring patients have access to their own data.

According to the 2018 Health Care Experience Survey, only 16% of Ontarians could make an appointment with their health care provider through email or through a website. Perhaps even more surprisingly is that less than 1% of appointments that year were conducted virtually in Ontario.

Our government is well on its way to fulfilling its commitment of adding 15,000 long-term-care beds, which will begin to help the capacity issues. Bill 74 works to remedy this by redirecting money to front-line staff and services so we can modernize and improve patient experience.

Patients will no longer have to struggle to gain access to their own medical records or rely on their memory when it comes to their health care journey. Bill 74 will work to improve access to secure digital tools, including online health records and virtual care options for patients. It brings our health care system into the 21st century, where it belongs.

The third key finding is that there needs to be more effective coordination at both system level and point of care. Bill 74 will achieve improved health outcomes for taxpayer money spent through the system. As currently designed, the health care system does not work efficiently. The current system is described as decentralized, large and siloed, making it difficult, at times, to know who's responsible and who's accountable for ensuring Ontarians have access to high-value health care.

One patient survey response said, "There is such a gap in the transitions of care ... the interest is not on the patient but on each individual health service provider's own unique budget and strategic objectives. Why does each agency have their own administration as opposed to a truly regional or provincially coordinated system?"

Another response: "The staff have all been kind and professional ... the negative issue would be the constant need to provide basic information like address, date of birth, medications, family doctors, allergies, and more. It is very frustrating for a senior to be asked the same questions."

This is where Bill 74 really gets to work to fix and strengthen our public health care system. Long gone are the silos and disconnected care. Bill 74 works to integrate multiple provincial agencies and specialized provincial programs into a single agency to provide a central point of accountability and oversight for the health care system. Right now, Ontario has not only a large network of provincial and regional agencies but also 1,800 health service provider organizations. This simply creates confusion for

the patients trying to navigate the system. With the integration of these agencies into a single health care agency in conjunction with the support of the local health teams, patients no longer have to spend valuable diagnosis time telling their entire medical story before the doctor can properly diagnose a patient or direct a patient to care. Instead, providers will be looking at the patient as a whole.

If passed, Bill 74 will provide seamless access to the various types of health care services: primary care, hospitals, home and community care, palliative care, residential long-term care, and mental health and addictions.

Patients and their families are rarely health care professionals, so why are we expecting them to navigate the health care system as though they are? The establishment of a single accountable agency, Ontario Health, will enable so many great innovations and changes to our current system, like:

- the expansion of current exceptional clinical guidance and quality improvement practices that exist into other areas of the health care sector;

- creating best-in-class models for parts of the health care sector that were previously left behind; and

- more oversight to the care that's being provided across the province, as well as providing clear accountability for monitoring and evaluating the quality of health care services being provided, all while respecting the taxpayers' dollars by more efficient use of public health care dollars.

How do we do that, you ask? By eliminating duplication of back-office infrastructure and administration—more health care dollars going straight to front-line services and patients.

Bill 74 has worked to address the key findings outlined in the Premier's Council on Improving Healthcare and Ending Hallway Medicine report.

The Minister of Health and Long-Term Care, along with the PAs, the members from Eglinton–Lawrence and Oakville North–Burlington, have done an excellent job since our government was elected, travelling around the province and hearing from stakeholders and from patients, understanding the changes that are needed in health care today. The minister worked hard for six years as the critic for health care and then as the first Patient Ombudsman. Combined, they truly have their finger on the pulse of health care. Together, they understand the importance of creating unified, allied care, not the piecemeal and patchwork of the current health care system.

While we see many stakeholders in agreement that our current health system needs an overhaul, and Bill 74 puts the province on track to do this, the NDP has many criticisms of why Bill 74 shouldn't go through. They've created a campaign of fearmongering to scare the general public.

Their first fabricated fear tactic: privatizing health care. I would ask the NDP to read the bill and then go back and read it a second time. Tell me how many times the words "privatize" or "privatization" are listed in the bill. I'll save you the time; it's zero. Nowhere in the piece of legislation does it say that government has plans to privatize our public health care system. Let's be clear: Bill 74 is about

strengthening our public health care system. Individuals in the province who currently qualify for OHIP will continue to present their OHIP card to receive health care in the province of Ontario.

1010

The second fabricated fear tactic: The government is trying to overhaul the health care system overnight and changes are coming in too soon. This simply is not the case. We recognize that modernizing the health system will take some time. Any time you take an existing legacy system and transition it, you have to take a measured and deliberate approach. We will continue to listen to the people who plan and work on the front lines—nurses, doctors and other health care providers—and we'll implement our public health care strategy. This is the same for the new Ontario health teams. They'll be established in phases across the province to make sure that the connected and integrated care is just that, connected to the patients, and that their needs are seamlessly incorporated into the various types of health services.

The third fabricated fearmongering tactic: With the creation of Ontario Health, people in rural Ontario, like my riding of Peterborough—Kawartha, will lose their voice to a super-agency. The entirety of Bill 74 is creating a health care system focused around the patient and their individual needs. Whether those are the needs of the patients in my riding or across the entire province, the creation of local health teams will make sure patients do not fall through the cracks and their needs are put first. Unlike the failed Liberal system of bloated bureaucracy and high-paid CEOs, if passed, Bill 74 creates a system where dollars go to the front line.

Speaker, I'd like everyone here to indulge me for a moment and close their eyes so they can take a walk down memory lane courtesy of the Ontario Hansard. Speaker, I see someone, perhaps the Leader of the Opposition when she was the head of the third party in the province, and she wished for something in health care: a system focused on front-line services. If you listen carefully, you can hear her: "When I visit with folks across the province, one thing they tell me is that they want their health care system to be there ... when they need it. They want to know that they will have a family doctor when they need one, care for their aging parents when their parents need that care and access to an ER when a loved one is facing an emergency." That was said on June 14, 2012.

On March 4, that same member said, "My next question is to the Premier. Susan from Oshawa wrote to us out of frustration because of the lack of balance in the way the Liberal government has funded health care in this province: 'These upper level costs'—meaning executive salaries—'need to be radically contained and service at the front line needs [to be] beefed [up].'"

"Will the Premier agree that we need a balanced approach that caps hospital ... salaries and finds efficiencies in LHINs and CCACs so that we can strengthen home care and health care in this province?"

But not only did the current Leader of the Opposition call for less money to administration; so did another member of her caucus. On April 19, 2010, the current critic for

health care said, "Minister, whether it is LHINs or hospitals, CEOs are signing lucrative contracts that allow for very generous compensation packages when these CEOs quit, retire or are fired or let go. Why does the Minister of Health allow for this culture of entitlement to flourish among health care top executives?" That was spoken by the member from Nickel Belt, currently the critic for health care.

What we put in Bill 74, they were once for, until we introduced it. Now, suddenly, those ideas that they once promoted are going to create the end of the world as we know it. The opposition was in favour of putting money in the front line instead of to executives and CEOs, and now they're against it. With the passing of Bill 74, that is exactly what we're going to do: put money in the front lines.

Our health care system today is broken. Our government knows that and the members opposite know that. They've already said it in this House multiple times. It's currently under an ever-increasing burden. Over the past few years, we've seen a number of important health care indicators trending downward. Patients are waiting too long. They're waiting too long to see specialists, waiting too long for hospital beds and waiting too long for long-term-care spaces.

On the subject of long-term-care beds, Speaker, the legacy that my friend from Ottawa Centre left us is one where it's a 300% longer wait because of his formerly recognized party. That's why Bill 74 is so desperately needed—a bill that envisions a public health care system where patients and families have access to faster, better, more connected services. I implore everyone in this House to stand up and vote in favour of the people of Ontario.

Third reading debate deemed adjourned.

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

The House recessed from 1015 to 1030.

INTRODUCTION OF VISITORS

Mr. Faisal Hassan: I would like to welcome Gwyn Chapman, founder of the Inspiring and Empowering Youth Network, community leaders, and students from Winona public school, Africentric Alternative School, Rockcliffe Middle School and Ryerson University, who are spending the day here at Queen's Park to talk about political and civic engagement. Welcome. Enjoy your day here at Queen's Park.

Mr. Sam Oosterhoff: Today I have the pleasure of welcoming to the House John Homan, who is here with the Ontario Pork Producers and will be joining us in a few moments.

Mr. Mike Schreiner: It's a real honour today to introduce Errin Jones, a student from the University of Akron, who is here visiting Ontario and Queen's Park, and working in my office as part of an internship through the Bliss Institute. Welcome, Errin.

Hon. Monte McNaughton: I'd like to welcome to Queen's Park my father and my mentor in life, Gary McNaughton. Welcome to Queen's Park.

Ms. Jill Andrew: Good morning, Mr. Speaker. I would like to welcome Zanana Akande, the former NDP member for the Toronto riding of St. Andrew–St. Patrick, who served during the 35th Parliament for the years of 1990 to 1994. I don't see her yet, but I know she's on her way. As we all know, she was the first Black woman elected to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario and the first Black woman to serve as a cabinet minister in Canada. I'd like to thank her for the incomparable trail that she has set for us, and for me specifically.

I would also like to welcome Rafi Aaron, who is co-chair of the Beth Shalom/Beth Tzedec Out of the Cold shelter and the manager of the annual Out of the Cold Art Show. Toronto–St. Paul's, as we may know, has four of the city's Out of the Cold programs. I am more than honoured to have Rafi here with us today. And I'll do it again in the afternoon.

Hon. Peter Bethlenfalvy: I want to welcome to the House Lynn Klages and Safa Khan, my great constituency office staff. Thanks very much for being here.

M. Guy Bourgouin: Je voudrais souhaiter la bienvenue à Carol Jolin et Bryan Michaud de l'AFO. Bienvenue à Queen's Park.

Mrs. Robin Martin: I have three people to introduce today. I'm delighted to welcome to Queen's Park a friend and volunteer on my campaign, Rahul Gangolli, and his friend Tammy Smith, as well as Charissa Levy, who is a resident of Eglinton–Lawrence and the mother of our page captain today, Erynn Levy.

Ms. Andrea Khanjin: This morning I wanted to welcome members of my campaign family, Gwen Deluce and Randall Pineault. I'm so proud to have you here today. Welcome.

Ms. Bhutla Karpoché: I'd like to welcome Michau van Speyk from Parkdale–High Park.

Mr. Billy Pang: I would like to introduce two of my constituents and the parents of page Gajan, Mr. and Mrs. Suthakar, who have joined us today in the gallery.

Hon. Monte McNaughton: Today I'd also like to welcome to Queen's Park Neal Roberts. He is the father of Andrew Roberts, who works in my office. Welcome.

ORDER OF BUSINESS

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): The member for Ottawa South has informed me that he has a point of order.

Mr. John Fraser: I'd like to ask for unanimous consent to ask a question on behalf of the member from Thunder Bay–Superior North.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): The member for Ottawa South is seeking the unanimous consent of the House to ask a question on behalf of the member for Thunder Bay–Superior North this morning. Agreed? Agreed.

CORRECTION OF RECORD

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): The member for Peterborough–Kawartha told me he had a point of order.

Mr. Dave Smith: I'd like to correct my record from this morning. I referenced the member from Ottawa Centre. I actually meant the member from Ottawa South.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): You can rise on a point of order to correct your own record. I appreciate that from the member from Peterborough–Kawartha.

ORAL QUESTIONS

GOVERNMENT ACCOUNTABILITY

Mr. John Vanthof: My question is to the Premier. This is a question about the ethical standards the Premier holds for himself and his staff—a matter of public importance.

Yesterday, CBC News reported concerning revelations regarding the Premier's friend, Jason Kenney, leader of the United Conservative Party of Alberta. According to the CBC, email addresses linked to certain Conservative domain names were fraudulently attached to Conservative party memberships and used to cast ballots in the party leadership race. Among the domain names was dean-french.ca.

Interjections.

Mr. John Vanthof: Has the Premier talked to Dean French, his chief of staff, about this incident?

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): I had difficulty hearing the member's question because of the interjections that were coming from the government side of the House.

Mr. Sam Oosterhoff: Because it was a stupid question.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): I would ask the member for Niagara West to come to order.

I'm going to call upon the Premier to reply.

Hon. Doug Ford: Through you, Mr. Speaker: I was in the same boat as you; I couldn't hear what he was saying over there.

But I can tell you one thing: This is going to be a great day for Ontario. It's a great day because we're presenting the budget today. We're turning the province around, we're putting more money back into taxpayers' pockets, we're respecting the taxpayers and we're going to continue doing this for the next three years.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Supplementary.

Mr. John Vanthof: Once again to the Premier: A former Conservative member of Alberta's Legislature has written the RCMP about this matter. He alleges that the Kenney leadership campaign used fraudulent emails to intercept personal identification numbers needed to cast a ballot in the leadership race.

Interjections.

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

Mr. John Vanthof: The CBC reports that some of those addresses were linked to a website bearing the name of Dean French, the Premier's chief of staff.

The Premier's office said yesterday that Dean French no longer owns that web domain. When did he cease to own the website that bears his name, and does he know who owns it now?

Interjections.

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

Premier?

Hon. Doug Ford: House leader.

Hon. Todd Smith: Speaker, this is a pathetic, pathetic line of questioning. It's a shame that the Ontario NDP feels that it has to do the bidding of the Alberta NDP and Rachel Notley, who's about to go down in flames in the Alberta election next week.

There is nothing to this whatsoever that deals in any way with government policy here in the province of Ontario. I can't believe that with a budget about to be tabled in Ontario—a budget that's going to work towards our promises of ending hallway health care, creating good jobs in Ontario and putting more money back in the pockets of Ontarians—that the member from northern Ontario wouldn't be standing up and advocating for jobs in northern Ontario and ending hallway health care in Ontario. Instead, he's on a partisan trip on behalf of Rachel Notley and the NDP in Alberta.

1040

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Stop the clock. Members will please take their seats. The House will come to order.

Restart the clock. Final supplementary.

Mr. John Vanthof: This concerns the ethical standards the Premier sets for himself and staff in his office. It's a matter of public record that the Premier is an avid supporter of Jason Kenney and his bid to become Premier of Alberta. Now we see a website bearing the name of the Premier's chief of staff suddenly appear in the allegations concerning Jason Kenney and election fraud.

Has the Premier instructed his chief of staff to turn all relevant information over to the RCMP officers who have been asked to investigate this matter?

Hon. Todd Smith: Even the CBC today—even the CBC, Mr. Speaker—is reporting that it's not Dean French's website. It has nothing to do with Dean French. It has nothing to do with our government here in Ontario.

I think it's absolutely shameful, and it's a desperate attempt for this NDP party here in Ontario to try and prop up the NDP in Alberta, a government that has seen hundreds of thousands of jobs leaving Alberta, a government in Alberta that has increased taxes, a government that has made it more difficult to live affordably in the province of Ontario.

It's exactly what we don't want to see here in Ontario. The policies of the NDP in Alberta would be the policies of the NDP here in Ontario. We don't want to have any part of that, Mr. Speaker, and the people of Ontario didn't either. That's why they voted for us—

Interjections.

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

Restart the clock. Next question.

GOVERNMENT ACCOUNTABILITY

Mr. Taras Natyshak: My question is to the Premier. This question is also about the ethical standard that the Premier holds for himself, his staff and as a matter of public importance.

Speaker, the Premier has made no secret of his close friendship with Jason Kenney. The Premier flew out to Alberta to campaign with him. I think the Premier even referred to his relationship with Jason Kenney as a “bromance.”

We've since learned the RCMP has launched an investigation into possible voter fraud, and now there are new revelations concerning a website bearing the name of the Premier's chief of staff.

What assurances can the Premier offer that no one in his office or in his party is in any way implicated in these matters?

Hon. Doug Ford: Through you, Mr. Speaker: Thank you for the compliment about the bromance. You know something? I think the world of Jason Kenney.

I think the world of the people out in Alberta. The people of Alberta have been punished way too long. People are losing their jobs. They want to build a pipeline. They've had roadblocks from Premier Notley. It's just over and over again.

But guess what, Mr. Speaker? There's a blue sweep going right across this country, and it's going to continue with Alberta. I can't wait to have the new Premier of Alberta, Jason Kenney, right here to visit us in Ontario.

Interjections.

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

Interjections.

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

Start the clock. Supplementary.

Mr. Taras Natyshak: Speaker, the Premier may not take these allegations seriously but, thankfully, the RCMP are taking it very seriously in Alberta right now.

Last night on CBC's The National, even Jason Kenney, the Premier's bromance friend, had to admit that these new revelations were concerning.

The RCMP are currently conducting an investigation, and a website bearing the name of Dean French, the Premier's chief of staff, is tied up in the middle of all this.

Speaker, if Dean French no longer controls the website, who does and why is it linked to voter fraud in the province of Alberta?

Hon. Doug Ford: Minister of Natural Resources.

Hon. John Yakabuski: I want to thank the member—no, I don't want to thank him for this question, because this line of questioning has reached a new low in this House. As a matter of fact, we might be able to use some of those questions to help us dig some of those subway

tunnels—we're going to bring transit to the city of Toronto—because they're below anything I've seen in this House before.

The reality is here: We're on a historic day in the province of Ontario. We're going to deliver the best budget and the first really great budget in 15 years in this province—and the NDP want to engage in a line of questioning that has absolutely nothing to do with what is going on here in the province of Ontario—a budget that is going to lift people here in the province of Ontario, change the channel from 15 years of destruction under the Liberals.

We are turning things around under the leadership of Premier Ford. You should get on board with us.

Interjections.

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

Mr. Taras Natyshak: Speaker, this is a chance for the Premier to set an ethical standard for himself and his caucus. They should actually be thanking us for that opportunity.

Speaker, if the following investigation—

Interjections.

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

Mr. Taras Natyshak: When police find there was evidence of election fraud and that Dean French, the Premier's chief of staff, was directly involved, what action will the Premier take?

Hon. John Yakabuski: Well, we'd like to give the NDP an opportunity to change that line of questioning into something that brings positive results for the people of Ontario.

Here we are today, April 11, 2019, a historic day in the Ontario Legislature—

Interjection.

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

Hon. John Yakabuski: —a historic day for the people of Ontario, a budget brought forth by my colleague Minister of Finance Vic Fedeli that is going to change—

Interjection.

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

I apologize to the minister. Conclude your answer.

Hon. John Yakabuski: Just trying to help them out, Speaker.

Here we have an opportunity for the NDP to actually join with us. We've had 15 years of negatives from the people on the other side, who now cannot form an actual party. Now we have a chance to turn Ontario around. Our first budget—

Interjections.

Hon. John Yakabuski: Listen to what we're saying. Get on board with us. This is going to be a great day for the people of Ontario.

Interjections.

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

Next question.

EDUCATION FUNDING

Ms. Marit Stiles: My question is to the Minister of Education. Yesterday, the Toronto District School Board released their accounting of what the government's cuts to education will mean to them, and it's not good. The Toronto school board alone will lose over \$28 million next year, requiring them to make cuts and offer students less programs and less opportunities; and let's point out also, with the existing shortfall that already exists, they're going to be down about \$55 million. When will the minister learn that every dollar taken out of our education system leaves our young people worse off?

Hon. Lisa M. Thompson: First of all, I'd like to respond by saying that the PC government of Ontario is going to be investing in education like never before, and I'm very, very proud of that.

Now, to carry on specifically with regard to TDSB: I appreciate the fact that there are some school boards experiencing financial pressures of teacher salaries and benefits due to proposed changes in class size. However, school boards are left in this position as a result of poorly negotiated local collective agreements. That's the reality. The fact of the matter is, the Ministry of Education does not have any authority over locally bargained collective agreements. So we're going to be working with school boards as we go forward.

As I mentioned on the onset, we're going to be investing in education and we're going to help school boards get it right.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Supplementary.

Ms. Marit Stiles: I think the minister—and I'm going to go back to the minister here—needs to go back to minister school and learn something about how we fund education and how collective agreements are bargained in this province.

The Toronto District School Board had already raised the alarm bell about the government's cuts to education, saying they will be forced to eliminate 800 high school teaching positions. That means fewer course offerings like art, shop classes, music, and technology for students, that help foster well-rounded kids. It means larger class sizes and less one-on-one attention. It means less opportunity for our young people.

1050

Instead of gutting our education system, will the minister go back to the drawing board and come back with a plan that actually works for students?

Hon. Lisa M. Thompson: Thank you very much. I look forward to sending some correspondence over to the member opposite to explain how it really works.

That said, I am so excited about our plan for education here in Ontario. It's a plan that's going to work for you and teachers and parents and everybody in this province, because we're getting education in Ontario back on track.

We've listened to 72,000 individuals who took time, thoughtful time, to contribute their ideas and their suggestions to get it right. That is exactly what we're going to do by focusing on math, by focusing on STEM and by making

sure that we have an education system in Ontario that's sustainable—because our students deserve the very best in education so that they have confidence in their career paths.

That said, we're also going to be recognizing the importance of skilled trades and actually sculpting our education programs to make sure that they are relevant for the jobs and careers not only for today, but into tomorrow and the future as well.

PUBLIC TRANSIT

Mr. Vijay Thanigasalam: Yesterday was a historic day for Ontario. For the first time ever, the Ontario government is taking the lead in building new subways in this province.

Our Premier announced a \$28.5-billion expansion to our province's transit network to get Ontarians moving. This transit plan for the 21st century is by far the most money ever invested to get shovels in the ground and to get new subways built.

Commuters across the GTHA want seamless networks that will get them to work on time and back to their friends and families faster. This is especially true for the residents of Scarborough, who have been waiting for over 30 years for access to the subway system. Mr. Speaker, this is a promise made, promise kept.

Can the Premier please detail to us how our government for the people's transit system will benefit the residents of Scarborough and connect them to a truly regional transit system?

Hon. Doug Ford: Through you, Mr. Speaker: I want to thank the great MPP from Scarborough—Rouge Park. The people out in Scarborough are incredible people.

I can tell you, for nine years, we fought for the people of Scarborough to get subways. Yesterday, we finally blazed a new trail for every single person, the 630,000 people, who live out in Scarborough, who have been starving for subways for 30 years. Now they're going to be able to expand the opportunity where they work because they're going to have rapid transit in Scarborough, a three-stop subway.

It was very personal, Mr. Speaker. My brother Rob started it. If it wasn't for him, we wouldn't even have a Scarborough subway right now.

People of Scarborough: We said we were going to deliver a subway. We're delivering a subway to the people of Scarborough.

Interjections.

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

Restart the clock. Supplementary question.

Mr. Vijay Thanigasalam: Thank you, Premier, for that answer. It's great to hear that our government for the people is sticking to our promise to finally deliver transit to the residents of Scarborough.

For decades, there has been little new transit built. Our subway system has not kept up with the growth of the GTHA. Technology in the subway is outdated and much-needed maintenance has been put off for far too long.

My constituents want to be able to get to work and home on time, leaving more time for what matters. Can the Premier tell us more about our government's \$28.5-billion transit plan that is breaking down barriers to make the subway work more for the people in more communities like Scarborough?

Hon. Doug Ford: Through you, Mr. Speaker: Again, I want to thank our MPP for the question. But do you know who gets more thanks than anyone? The best Minister of Transportation you could ever ask for. He's an absolute champion. He's incredible.

Do you know something? It takes a true leader to put this plan together, the largest transit plan not only here in Canada but in North America—\$28.5 billion—and our minister was the one who created this plan and who's going to execute this plan and get Ontario moving once again. He's taking care of the people of Scarborough. He's taking care of the Eglinton line going west all the way to the airport.

I talk to a lot of people who work up at the airport; they're just over the top. The second-largest employer in Canada, our airport is.

Our crown jewel is the Ontario Line. Again, thanks to our great Minister of Transportation, his idea, he is transforming—

Interjections.

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

Restart the clock. Next question.

PUBLIC TRANSIT

Ms. Jessica Bell: My question is to the Premier. In the past, we've seen governments make big, grand promises on transit, only to find out that the realities on the ground are way off from what was first announced.

Yesterday, the Premier drew lines on a map and pulled numbers out of a hat to try to explain how much his new plan would cost and when it would actually be delivered. Could the Premier show us the evidence, the planning studies and cost estimates for how he got to these magic figures?

Hon. Doug Ford: Minister of Transportation.

Hon. Jeff Yurek: Thanks to the member opposite for this question. Yesterday was a historic day for the province of Ontario. We sat with the Premier of Ontario; the Minister of Infrastructure, Monte McNaughton; my PA, Kinga Surma; Stephen Lecce, PA to Mr. McNaughton; and Christine Hogarth, Etobicoke—Lakeshore. All together, we announced a historic build for the city of Toronto and helping the GTA.

We are going to build the long-awaited relief line, called the Ontario Line. We are going to build the Yonge extension. We are going to build into Scarborough, three stops of what the people would like. Finally, we're going to go to the west along Eglinton, underground, for the people of Etobicoke, and make sure that we can get out there to the airport.

Mr. Speaker, the NDP should be happy about this build. It is affecting their own constituents, it's giving them a

better transit opportunity, but most of all, it's creating the regional transit network that we need in the GTHA. The Ontario government of the PC party is going to build, build, build.

Interjections.

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

Interjection.

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

Interjection.

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

Restart the clock. Supplementary question.

Ms. Jessica Bell: Back to the Premier: The city of Toronto has already spent several years and millions of dollars on plans for the relief line. The Premier now wants to rip all these plans up and start all over again. How can the Premier defend starting again from scratch when we know that will mean delays? It will mean that Torontonians are stuck in overcrowded trains and stations, and it means that people in Scarborough will be stuck in buses for years.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): The question is to the Minister of Transportation.

Hon. Jeff Yurek: Thanks again, Mr. Speaker, for that question. The member opposite herself was in the technical briefing prior to the announcement, so she has seen the plans and how detailed the operations are, going forward.

I can tell you right now, Mr. Speaker, that we are going to utilize the plans that have already been developed thus far, but we're going to extend it further. We're not just going to build the relief line; we're going to build the Ontario Line, which goes from Ontario Place up to the Ontario Science Centre. We're not just going to build one stop in Scarborough; we're going to build three stops in Scarborough. We're going to utilize those plans.

You know, Mr. Speaker, maybe the NDP should stop and listen to what the regional mayors are saying to this announcement. Mayor Scarpitti: "The Yonge North subway extension is on the move. I am thrilled" with "the provincial government's \$28.5-billion transit...."

1100

The mayor of Vaughan: "Vaughan and York regions voice is heard! Commuters in Vaughan, York region and the GTA can look forward to ... access to transit."

Mayor John Tory: "I am happy that they have committed themselves to a very substantial investment in public transit."

Hop on board—

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

The next question.

PUBLIC TRANSIT

Mrs. Gila Martow: My question is to the fantastic Minister of Transportation. Yesterday, the Premier, the Minister of Transportation, the Minister of Infrastructure, the parliamentary assistant for transportation, the parliamentary assistant for infrastructure, and the member from

Etobicoke–Lakeshore made a huge transportation announcement.

Our government for the people made a commitment during the election to get the people of Ontario moving. Part of that commitment was to upload the responsibility for the subway infrastructure and build subways faster and more effectively. We are doing just that.

Yesterday, our government unveiled a new transit map, a vision for the 21st century, with connections to communities and to jobs in places that have never been joined by the subway system before.

Can the Minister of Transportation share with this Legislature how our transit plan will benefit my riding of Thornhill?

Hon. Jeff Yurek: I'd like to thank the member from Thornhill for that question. I've got to say, the member from Thornhill daily talks to me about improving transit in her region. I thank her very much for it.

Mr. Speaker, as I announced earlier, it was a historic day for the province of Ontario. We had quite a turnout from the media and people that were interested in this announcement: the Premier, the Minister of Infrastructure, the parliamentary assistants, Steve Lecce, Kinga Surma, and Christine Hogarth, from Etobicoke–Lakeshore. It was a great day, announcing a \$28.5-billion investment in expansions of the subway system.

The member for Thornhill should be grateful to know, and happy, that the Yonge North extension is going to benefit her riding and her constituents.

There are growing populations. There's growing demand to utilize transit. That's why we're going to build outside of the city limits. We're going to expand to where it's needed.

The Yonge extension will be a 7.4-kilometre extension north from Finch station, connecting Richmond Hill, Vaughan and Markham to the subway system.

Mr. Speaker, I have more to say in our supplemental.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Supplementary?

Mrs. Gila Martow: Thank you to the minister for that great response. Our government is delivering on our promise to build a regional transportation network. The residents of Thornhill are thrilled about this announcement and the transit connectivity that will be unlocked to countless job opportunities for people across the region.

It was great to see Mayors Scarpitti, Barrow and Bevilacqua, as well as regional chair Emerson, at the announcement yesterday, showing their support for this historic investment.

Mr. Speaker, transportation is not something to play politics about. The people of Ontario and the GTHA have waited long enough. It's time to invest and build new transportation so that the people of this great province can get to work on time, get home faster, get to family and friends sooner, and maybe get to see a game downtown every now and then.

Can the Minister of Transportation tell us more about the benefits of the Yonge subway extension?

Hon. Jeff Yurek: Thanks again to the member from Thornhill for that question. People from north to south of

the Toronto region will be connected to new jobs and new opportunities.

The Premier and I have challenged officials to ensure that this line is in service as soon as possible. We will build it in conjunction with the Ontario Line, and this line will open soon after that line is up and running.

We're doing this because we've talked to transit users and heard of their frustrations, and crowdings and delays and subway lines that just don't go far enough. People are counting on us to make their commutes better and to get started right away. For years, construction for extensions and new lines—everything has been stuck in red tape. We've taken out the scissors, we've cut away the red tape and we're going to build, build, build.

CURRICULUM

Mr. Terence Kernaghan: My question is for the Minister of Education. Yesterday, I asked the minister to name “homophobia” and “transphobia,” to recognize the Day of Pink. The minister deliberately refused to, thereby contributing to the exclusion of LGBTQ+ students, first excluded from Ontario's regressive 1998 curriculum and now even excluded from international days meant to recognize and support them. How can LGBTQ+ students and families count on this minister to combat homophobia and bullying in our schools when she won't even acknowledge its existence in this chamber?

Hon. Lisa M. Thompson: Thank you very much. I appreciate it very much. I think it really matters in terms of what is said in the public domain. Again, words backed up by action is so, so important.

It all starts with respect. On every single side of a situation, it starts with respect. That's why I am so proud of the health and physical education curriculum that we're developing and that we're going to be releasing in September of 2019.

Students today need to know how to respect one another and accept one another and how to use technology safely, and to know and accept what healthy relationships look like so we can put an end once and for all to homophobia and transphobia.

This is so not a place to play politics. It's unbelievable that these people are taking a serious subject and trying to play politics, when I, as Minister of Education, and this entire government—the PC government of Ontario—are trying—

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

Mr. Terence Kernaghan: I'm glad to hear the minister finally use those words, but she's a day late. Instead of addressing forms of discrimination head-on, we've heard the minister resort to name calling, using the letters N-D-P to change them into different words, using poisonous rhetoric like “failed Liberal ideology” when talking about the health and phys ed curriculum and using dismissive terms for Ontarians, such as “certain groups.”

Speaker, exclusion is dehumanizing. Instead of condemning discrimination, the minister has said that she

embraces healthy relationships. At the same time, this minister has made it harder for LGBTQ+ students to learn about what healthy relationships look like. She has delayed teaching about important issues, like gender expression, until grade 8.

LGBTQ+ students deserve the same access to information that their heterosexual peers have. Does the minister believe LGBTQ+ relationships are healthy relationships which deserve equal recognition in the classroom?

Hon. Lisa M. Thompson: I am really pleased to stand any day in this House to talk about where we've landed when it comes to the health and physical education curriculum. Again, 72,000 people chose to get engaged via telephone town halls or online surveys or actually taking time to submit written ideas, suggestions and concerns, which we all took into consideration. At the end of the day, we've landed in a really good place when it comes to health and physical education. Even organizations like the provincial phys ed organization—I can't think of—

Interjection: Opeha.

Hon. Lisa M. Thompson: —Opeha said every student is going to recognize themselves in our health and physical education curriculum.

It goes beyond. This is the first time ever we're going to be addressing mental health and wellness, starting in grade 1 right through to grade 12. The fact of the matter is, we're hitting the mark with this health and physical education curriculum. No matter how the members opposite try to paint it, I'm very proud of where—

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

ONTARIO BUDGET

Mr. John Fraser: My question is for the Premier. Good morning, Premier.

Hon. Doug Ford: Good afternoon.

Mr. John Fraser: It's still morning. I know you're excited. It's like Christmas.

It's your government's first budget. It's an important day in the life of a government, so I want to wish you, in a non-partisan way, good luck. Families will be looking for things in your budget that are important to them. Those measures, Speaker—through you to the Premier—that they'll be looking for in that budget will all be in the lock-up. Our staff are there looking right now. We're digging down.

We know that one of those measures in the budget is to spend millions and millions of dollars of taxpayers' money on partisan election advertising to prop up their friend Andrew Scheer. Does the Premier think that that's appropriate?

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Order.

1110

Hon. Doug Ford: That is the pot calling the kettle black—unbelievable. They wasted hundreds of millions of dollars with their propaganda ads, telling the people of Ontario all of the great things. Meanwhile, they were misleading the public—

Interjections.

Hon. Doug Ford: Oh, okay.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): The Premier has to withdraw.

Hon. Doug Ford: Withdraw. It slipped out. Sorry, Mr. Speaker. I tried to put it back in there.

As they were wasting billions of dollars of hard-earned taxpayers' money, we ended up with a \$15-billion deficit. That's \$15 billion that every single man, woman and child is going to have to pay back. We're going to have a responsible budget. We're going to have a thoughtful budget, and at the end of the day, we're going to do this responsibly. We will balance that budget eventually and make sure that we put more money into the taxpayer's pocket.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Supplementary?

Mr. John Fraser: I'll take that as that he believes that that spending is appropriate.

A simple question, just in the interest of transparency—
Interjections.

Mr. John Fraser: No, this is serious. It's serious.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Stop the clock. The government side will come to order and allow the member for Ottawa South to place his supplementary question.

Start the clock. Once again, the member for Ottawa South.

Mr. John Fraser: It's just simply: Will you be registering as a third party in the federal election?

Hon. Doug Ford: Do you know something? I can't even take the member seriously, Mr. Speaker.

We are going to be working for the next three years and three months, making sure that we fix the problem. Do you know why we're going to fix the problem? The people up there, those young students, see the future. Once they graduate, they're going to want a job. They want their parents to be able to afford to put them through university. They want to make sure that they have a responsible government, and that's exactly what we're going to deliver on this budget.

MENTAL HEALTH SERVICES

Miss Kinga Surma: My question is for the Deputy Premier and Minister of Health and Long-Term Care. Mr. Speaker, our government promised to make mental health and addictions a priority during the election. I have been hearing from my constituents that they cannot access the mental health services they need when and where they need them.

With one in five Ontarians affected by mental health, it is clear that this issue affects every person in the province, directly or indirectly. Can the minister please inform the members of this Legislature what our government is doing to address mental health in the province of Ontario?

Hon. Christine Elliott: Thank you to the member from Etobicoke Centre for her question. This is an important issue for the people of Ontario, and our government believes that no one should have to wait long periods of time to receive mental health and addictions services.

That's why we are investing \$3.8 billion to expand our mental health programs and services across the province. We have already announced the first wave of funding, which includes adding more than 50 new mental health beds, but of course there's a lot more to do. We've also held a series of engagement sessions across the province to understand what additional supports and services are necessary.

We look forward to hearing from all members of the Legislature on this issue. These discussions will help inform our decisions as we establish a connected and comprehensive mental health and addictions system in Ontario. We will continue to make mental health a priority in this government to address the needs of all Ontarians.

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

Miss Kinga Surma: Back to the minister: Every day, our dedicated police officers work tirelessly to keep our communities safe. These brave men and women frequently put themselves in harm's way or witness highly traumatic events in the course of their duties. Tragically, far too many officers and their families have suffered as a result. Police officers face a unique type of stress, and the current system isn't responsive to the realities front-line officers encounter on a daily basis.

Mr. Speaker, can the minister please tell this House how our government is addressing the mental health crisis in the Ontario Provincial Police?

Hon. Christine Elliott: To the Solicitor General.

Hon. Sylvia Jones: Thank you to the member from Etobicoke Centre. I know that she understands very well how important this is to our government, and I appreciate your advocacy and assistance.

You know, it's heartbreaking when we hear that 13 OPP officers have taken their lives. We need to do a better job to protect the people who, frankly, have done such an excellent job protecting us.

Interjections.

Hon. Sylvia Jones: Thank you.

Front-line OPP officers have always answered when the people of Ontario have called for their help, and it's now time for our government to step up and assist them. It's why our government was proud to announce, in conjunction with the Ontario Provincial Police Association, the launching of a new integrated mental health support program for OPP officers and their families.

This is something that is critically important to our government. We're going to get it right, and we're going to partner with the people who can provide the service and make it better for our front-line officers.

PREMIER'S COMMENTS

Mr. Jamie West: My question is to the Minister of Labour. The Minister of Labour has a vital role in the province and a responsibility to show leadership when it comes to collective bargaining and labour relations in Ontario.

On Monday, the member for Oshawa asked the minister a question about the Premier's characterization of elected

union leaders as thugs. The minister didn't provide an answer, so I'd like to give her a second chance. Does the minister responsible for labour relations in the province of Ontario agree with the Premier that labour leaders are thugs, or will she take this opportunity to distance herself from the Premier's comments?

Hon. Laurie Scott: Mr. Speaker, I just want to inform the member across the way of what the Ministry of Labour actually does. It's required by law to act as a neutral overseer for the labour relations process in the province of Ontario.

We, as the Ministry of Labour, provide neutral conciliation and mediation services, with the aim of helping bargaining parties to conclude collective agreements without work disruptions. So we want the two parties to come to the table, the employer and the bargaining units.

The Ministry of Labour has an excellent record; 98% of all agreements are reached without strikes or a lockout. The Ministry of Labour provides services, mediators and conciliators to help both parties deal with that.

I just want to clarify that for the member opposite, to the question he asked—the role of the Ministry of Labour in issues.

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

Mr. Jamie West: The minister told me what the ministry does. I'm asking her about the comments the Premier made about calling union leaders "thugs."

To quote the minister herself from last week, "We have, in the province of Ontario, with this party and this government, a good working relationship with unions"—which is a great sentiment that was echoed today, but it doesn't square with the words the Premier used, who called the elected union leaders "thugs."

Ontarians need to have faith in the principles of good faith from the ministry. Will the Minister of Labour clearly state that the Premier's comments were unacceptable?

Hon. Laurie Scott: The President of the Treasury Board.

Hon. Peter Bethlenfalvy: Yesterday, we wore pink for anti-bullying. It's beyond me to understand where this member opposite is coming from, through you, Mr. Speaker.

Our Premier is for every Ontarian. He's for every family. He's for every worker. He's not a thug; he's working for the people of Ontario.

Today is a special day because my good friend and colleague the Minister of Finance is going to deliver the best budget in the history of Ontario. We've got transit going. We'll get the people moving. We are getting jobs. We're getting people moving to jobs. Mr. Speaker, we're going to get moving on a path to balance. That's what we're going to do.

MINING INDUSTRY

Mr. Randy Pettapiece: My question is for the Minister of Labour. For 15 years, northern Ontario suffered as the Liberal government threw up roadblocks and barriers that

prevented entrepreneurs, companies and resource-users from investing in and contributing to the economic development of northern Ontario.

Speaker, I know our government is working hard to repair the damage done by the Liberals. We're taking concrete steps to remind the people of northern Ontario that yes, the provincial government does, in fact, care about the well-being of Ontario families who live north of Barrie.

1120

This week the minister made an announcement that will make northern Ontario's mining industry safer and more prosperous.

I ask the minister: Would you please inform the House on what our government is doing to protect northern Ontario miners and encourage safe economic growth in the north?

Hon. Laurie Scott: I thank the member for Perth-Wellington for all the hard work that he does in this Legislature and for his constituents.

On Tuesday I had the great pleasure of visiting the Ministry of Labour materials testing laboratory in Sudbury, where I announced our government's investment of almost \$2.6 million in a new tensile testing machine. Expected to be operational by next spring, this state-of-the-art machine will be able to test both wire ropes and synthetic ropes, which are likely to be used in the future.

Our PC government's new investment will put Ontario on the leading edge of mine safety for the next 25 years. Rope safety is essential for mine operators to ensure their mines are operating safely and reliably. This new machine will help to keep Ontario workers in the mining sector safe.

Our government is bringing good jobs and investment to the north. We're sending the signal that the rest of the province and northern Ontario is open for business and open for jobs.

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

Mr. Randy Pettapiece: I'd like to thank the minister for her commitment to the safety of all workers in this province, including miners.

This exciting announcement is great news for northern communities benefiting from our investments in mining test facilities. We are delivering on our promise to strengthen Ontario's mining sector.

Our government is committed to attracting new investments to the industry because it creates so many opportunities, especially in northern communities. We are attracting new investments in Ontario as we move forward with our open-for-business mandate.

Can the minister please tell the members of this House about how our government is making Ontario's mining sector open for business?

Hon. Laurie Scott: Minister of Energy, Northern Development and Mines.

Hon. Greg Rickford: Like the Ministry of Labour, the Ministry of Northern Development and Mines is committed to the safety and evolving safety technologies for our

mines. We're also interested in actually opening mines. The previous government has a poor record in these regards: seven years, eight years, 15 years for mines to open. It's ridiculous. That's why the Premier and I struck a mining working group. We have leaders from all aspects of this industry—finance, prospectors, people who build large-scale mines and operate them—and we're looking forward to a brighter future for the mining sector.

I'm excited about this afternoon as a northern MPP from our caucus delivers a budget that lays out a new horizon for prosperity for northern Ontario. From Timmins to Kirkland Lake to Kapuskasing and Red Lake, I'll be able to go and talk about that prosperity for northern Ontario and tell them that the members opposite—

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

SERVICES EN FRANÇAIS

M. Guy Bourgouin: Ma question est pour la ministre des Affaires francophones. Vendredi passé, l'ombudsman de l'Ontario a annoncé son plan visant à remplacer le bureau indépendant du commissaire aux services en français. Parmi ses annonces, l'ombudsman a déclaré qu'il y aurait des mises à pied dans le nouveau bureau du commissaire. Selon les informations des médias, trois postes seront supprimés dans un bureau qui compte actuellement 14 employés. D'autre part, la ministre des Affaires francophones avait promis qu'il n'y aurait pas de licenciements lors du transfert du commissaire au sein du Bureau de l'ombudsman.

Vous forcez la vérité, madame la Ministre.

Qu'est-ce que la ministre a à dire aux Franco-Ontariens et Franco-Ontariennes par rapport à ses promesses et à la nouvelle réalité du Commissariat aux services en français?

L'hon. Caroline Mulroney: Ce que j'aimerais dire au député de l'opposition, aux Ontariens et aux Franco-Ontariens c'est que le travail du commissaire va continuer à se faire au sein du Bureau de l'ombudsman. Toutes les dispositions de surveillance qui existent présentement au sein du bureau du commissariat vont continuer à exister au sein du Bureau de l'ombudsman. Le travail de formuler des recommandations va continuer à se faire et le processus de récolte de plaintes va continuer à se faire.

Monsieur le Président, je demanderais très simplement au député de l'opposition d'arrêter de dire aux Franco-Ontariens et aux francophones en Ontario qu'il n'y aura plus de commissaire, parce que ce n'est pas la vérité. Le travail important—les dispositions de surveillance—va continuer au sein du Bureau de l'ombudsman.

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

M. Guy Bourgouin: Le fait de changer le titre, de mettre un titre de commissaire en dessous de l'ombudsman, ne répond pas aux besoins des francophones.

D'ailleurs, nous avons appris que l'Assemblée de la francophonie de l'Ontario a été exclue du huis clos

budgétaire aujourd'hui. Tout cela se produit quelques jours après que l'AFO eut reproché au gouvernement d'avoir licencié des employés du commissaire.

Aussi, lors d'un entretien avec les médias, la ministre a ouvertement critiqué l'AFO en ajoutant qu'elle est là « pour tous les francophones de l'Ontario ».

C'est pas mal troublant de savoir que l'organisme porte-parole des Franco-Ontariens et Franco-Ontariennes a été exclu du huis clos quelques heures après que la ministre les ait critiqués dans les médias. Madame la Ministre, pourquoi votre gouvernement exclut-il l'organisme rassembleur des francophones du moment politique le plus important de l'année?

L'hon. Caroline Mulroney: En tant que ministre des Affaires francophones, j'ai le grand honneur de travailler pour tous les francophones en Ontario. Notre gouvernement va continuer à faire valoir les priorités des francophones, des Franco-Ontariens et des Franco-Ontariennes. On va continuer à améliorer les services de première ligne pour tous les francophones en Ontario, et on va continuer à encourager la croissance économique.

Tout cela va être mis aujourd'hui. On va commencer à parler de ceci dans le budget, qui va être présenté par le ministre des Finances cet après-midi. Nous travaillons pour tous les Ontariens, les francophones, les Franco-Ontariens et les Franco-Ontariennes. Je travaille avec les intervenants de plusieurs groupes, et je vais continuer à faire ceci, monsieur le Président, pour tous les Franco-Ontariens et les Franco-Ontariennes.

JOB CREATION

Mr. Prabmeet Singh Sarkaria: My question is for the Minister of Economic Development, Job Creation and Trade. Under the leadership of Premier Ford and Minister Smith, this government has already created over 100,000 jobs for the people of his province. I know that our government is committed to reducing red tape and burdensome regulation. By making life easier for our job creators, we are going to create more opportunities for the people of Ontario. That is exactly why we passed Bill 66 last week.

On the government benches, we're happy about creating jobs and opportunities. Unfortunately, the members opposite are not. The member for Parkdale–High Park said during debate that “the best social program is definitely not a job.” Could the minister outline for this House why the member is wrong and the steps our government is taking to give Ontarians the dignity of work they deserve?

Hon. Todd Smith: Thanks very much to my good friend from Brampton for that question. I'm very happy to correct the member opposite in her response during debate.

As my friend the Minister of Children, Community and Social Services always says, the best social program in Ontario is a job, and while the NDP might not believe that, the people of Ontario do want jobs and they want opportunities. On this side of the aisle, we're working hard to create jobs after 15 dark years under the Liberals where more than 300,000 manufacturing jobs left the province.

If the NDP had their way, that kind of trend would continue in Ontario. Let me quote the member from Kingston and the Islands during debate on Bill 66, talking about manufacturing jobs. He said, “They’re the jobs of the past.” I wonder how his counterparts from Oshawa and Windsor feel about that, Mr. Speaker. Sounds like a socialist agenda on that side of the House. That’s the real NDP for you.

We’re doing everything we can to reduce red tape and make sure that Ontario is open for business—

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

Mr. Prabmeet Singh Sarkaria: Back to the minister: Thank you, Minister, for the response. It is unbelievable that the member of the opposition would dismiss a sector that employs hundreds and thousands of people across Ontario. While the real NDP may think manufacturing jobs aren’t worth fighting for, we know that’s not true. They are well-paying, highly skilled jobs.

1130

Mr. Speaker, red tape is holding back our job creators, especially our small businesses. During debate on Bill 66, the member for Guelph said, “If this legislation were about making life easier for small businesses, then I’d be on board.” I know our bill does exactly that, but the member for Guelph voted against it.

Could the minister please outline for the House how our government is making life easier for small businesses?

Hon. Todd Smith: Thanks again for another great question from my good friend from Brampton. You know, the parliamentary assistants and I have spoken to hundreds of small businesses since we’ve taken office, and they’ve told us what they need to succeed. They need government to get out of the way.

Look, I know the opposition thinks that if a small business can’t deal with red tape, then they should just close down. They pretty much said so during debate and during committee. In the words, again, of the member from Kingston and the Islands, asking for relief from red tape is “reflective of lazy management,” Mr. Speaker.

On this side of the House, we want small businesses to focus on what matters most. That’s creating good jobs, focusing on their business and focusing on their customers. That’s why we’ve been hard at work in cutting red tape.

I hope the member from Guelph will support us as we continue on this quest to make Ontario open for business, to restore Ontario’s competitiveness and to bring Ontario back to its rightful place as—

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

Next question.

WOMEN’S SERVICES

Ms. Suze Morrison: My question is for the Minister of Children, Community and Social Services. The Investing in Women’s Futures fund provides grants to women’s organizations for services like job training, counselling and support for women experiencing violence. For the past

11 days, these organizations have been without funding. In that time, the Women’s Own Resource Centre in South River has lost all of their staff. Women’s Place Kenora is facing closure. In my riding, the Times Change Women’s Employment Service has reduced staff and will have to reduce their hours. The list goes on.

Will the minister confirm that these vital women’s organizations will receive their funding that they need in today’s budget?

Hon. Lisa MacLeod: I’d like to thank the member opposite for her question, an important question. But I’ll tell you something: At 4 o’clock today, for the first time in 15 years, there will be a path forward for all women in Ontario to a better path to balance, to protect what matters most to all of us.

I’m not going to comment on what’s in that budget. That’s for our finance minister, Vic Fedeli, to do at 4 o’clock today, when we set our path to balance for all Ontarians, women included.

Women’s centres from across Ontario were invited to submit applications for the Investing in Women’s Futures program earlier this year. Following confirmation of today’s 2019-20 budget, we’ll be able to determine, based on the review and approval of individual applications.

I’m very excited though, Speaker. For the first time in 15 years, social services, which are the backbone of Ontario, will be protected and sustainable as a result of our path forward, thanks to Minister Fedeli.

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

Ms. Suze Morrison: Where has the minister been for the last 11 days when women have been without services and programs in this province?

Yesterday, I heard the story of a Toronto woman named Rae who accessed services at Times Change. She wrote a passionate letter about the training that she received. She said, “Every one of these services was essential to my employment. I would not have succeeded without using these services. By coming into Times Change, step by step, I gained knowledge and gained confidence. I am very grateful.”

Can the minister promise stable funding for these life-saving organizations?

Hon. Lisa MacLeod: The member opposite asked where I’ve been for the last 11 days. I can tell you where I’ve been for the last 13 years: in this assembly, watching the former Liberal government ruin the finances of this province and compromise our valued and core social services, like supporting women who are fleeing domestic violence. It was aided and abetted and supported by the New Democratic Party 97% of the time.

So I’ll defer to the finance minister later today on what those budgets will be, and we’ll go forward accordingly. But let me be perfectly clear: When this government took office, we made a commitment to women fleeing violence in their communities and in their homes. That’s why we are investing an historic \$174.5 million to ensure that they’re supported, and \$11.5 million of that was as a result of my colleagues—my male colleagues—who have taken a strong stand in rural Ontario.

So, I'll stand here again. As I've always said, it takes strong women to support vulnerable women. It also takes strong men to support vulnerable—

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

FERRY SERVICE

Mr. Rick Nicholls: My question is to the Minister of Transportation. Last week, the Minister of Transportation visited my riding of Chatham-Kent–Leamington to celebrate a huge milestone in public transportation, one that will make life easier for people going between Leamington or Kingsville and Pelee Island.

A ferry is not just another form of transportation. Speaker, it's a link between communities, and the ferry plays a significant role in the daily lives of my constituents. Many attendees at the announcement last week were there because, for many of them, ferries are an integral part of their life. Whether it's local business owners or farmers transporting goods to and from the island, or relying on the ferry to get to work, ferries play a big role in the economy and everyday life.

My question to the minister is simply this: Could the minister share with the Legislature the wonderful news that he delivered to my riding last week?

Hon. Jeff Yurek: I thank the member from Chatham-Kent-Leamington for that question. It truly was a wonderful day just the other week with the member, and also the former mayor of Pelee Island, Rick Masse. It was a great celebration. It was a cloudy day but a warm crowd, Mr. Speaker.

Everybody was celebrating the fact the Pelee Islander II is now in service. In fact, on April 6 at 8 a.m. it went into service. That Pelee Islander II will be able to be part of the transportation of over 50,000 people who travel to Pelee island every year. These ferries are there for their safety and to make sure they get there on time. In fact, this Pelee Islander II will be faster than the former ferry that was there, and also carry more passengers and more cars.

Mr. Speaker, this new ferry is going to benefit the local economy, bring more tourists to Pelee Island, and make it easier for businesses to move their goods. This is just another one of the important services our government supports—

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

Mr. Rick Nicholls: You know, we did have a great day last week down in Leamington ensuring that the beautiful Pelee Islander II is getting ready for its first launch. So, again, thank you, Minister, for your response.

I know that the residents of Chatham-Kent–Leamington and myself were thrilled with this announcement. Replacing the original Pelee Islander, which is nearly 60 years old, will provide more modern and reliable service.

In everything our government does, every program, every policy and every service change, we put people first. We value the experience of Ontarians. Our government is providing relief to the people of Pelee Island and Essex county by reducing wait times with a new, larger ferry.

Can the minister please share more important details about the Pelee Islander II?

Hon. Jeff Yurek: Thanks again, Mr. Speaker, for that question. Since its arrival in Ontario, the ship's crew have worked diligently to complete extensive training and ensure that the new ferry met all the necessary safety requirements. The Pelee Islander II, as I mentioned earlier, is significantly larger. It will carry almost 400 people and up to 34 cars. This larger vessel is going to help improve the local economy, improve tourism and improve recreation for everyone, not only in this whole area.

I invite all Ontarians to take a trip to Pelee Island this summer and help support the local economy. This is just another way that we're supporting local economies and especially tourism.

Mr. Speaker, this is a government going forward, whether it's by boat, car, bike, air or by subway. We're going to invest in Ontario. We're going to get this province moving. We're going to make Ontario a place to stand and a place to grow.

YOUTH EMPLOYMENT

Mr. Ian Arthur: My question is to the Minister of Training, Colleges and Universities. Because of this government's elimination of the Youth Job Link program that helps young people find employment and the Employing Youth Talent Incentive program which helps employers, small business owners, with job training and wages for young people, the KEYS Job Centre in Kingston lost over \$1 million in funding on April 1.

Minister, it is already challenging enough for young people in Kingston to find meaningful employment opportunities, and Ontario's youth unemployment rate is higher than the national average and double what it is for the rest of the province. Will the minister admit this was wrong and commit today to reversing these callous cuts?

Hon. Merrilee Fullerton: Thank you to the member opposite for that question. We promised the people of Ontario to create good jobs in Ontario and make Ontario open for business. That is why our government passed the Making Ontario Open for Business Act. It is shameful that the NDP refused to support legislation that will create good jobs for people across Ontario. We want to make it easier for individuals to join the trades. The complex, convoluted and constraining system that was previously in place under the Liberals did the opposite.

The Premier was clear with the people of Ontario during the campaign that our government will fill the skills gap, provide the training and increase apprenticeships for our young people, for those who need to be reskilled and retrained. We are well on our way, and I will take no lessons from the NDP.

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

VISITORS

Ms. Jill Andrew: Point of order, Speaker.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Point of order: the member for Toronto–St. Paul’s.

Ms. Jill Andrew: I didn’t get a chance to this morning, but I just wanted to welcome the Winona public school, Africentric Alternative School, Rockcliffe Middle School and Ryerson University. They mean a whole lot to me. Welcome to all the students and children in our House. It’s your House.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): It appears the member for Guelph has a point of order.

Mr. Mike Schreiner: Yes, a point of order, as well, Mr. Speaker. I want to welcome my friend Glen Hodgson, who, along with Trent and Autumn Hodgson, is visiting Queen’s Park today. Welcome.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): The member from Richmond Hill, on a point of order, I gather.

Mrs. Daisy Wai: I would like to welcome my great supporter from Richmond Hill, Mr. Adrian Praysner. He is joining us in the public gallery. Welcome to Queen’s Park. I know that you’ll be very excited with today’s budget presentation.

NOTICE OF DISSATISFACTION

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Pursuant to standing order 38(a), the member for Sudbury has given notice of his dissatisfaction with the answer to his question given by the Minister of Labour concerning the Premier’s comments. This matter will be debated Tuesday at 6 p.m.

DEFERRED VOTES

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

Deferred vote on the motion for second reading of the following bill:

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

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Call in the members. This is a five-minute bell.

The division bells rang from 1143 to 1148.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): I’m going to ask the members to take their seats.

On March 28, 2019, Mr. Phillips moved second reading of Bill 87. All those in favour of the motion will please rise one at a time and be recognized by the Clerk.

Ayes

Anand, Deepak	Harris, Mike	Pettapiece, Randy
Baber, Roman	Hogarth, Christine	Phillips, Rod
Babikian, Aris	Jones, Sylvia	Rasheed, Kaleed
Bailey, Robert	Kanapathi, Logan	Rickford, Greg
Barrett, Toby	Karahalios, Belinda	Roberts, Jeremy
Bethlenfalvy, Peter	Ke, Vincent	Romano, Ross
Bouma, Will	Khanjin, Andrea	Sabawy, Sheref
Calandra, Paul	Kramp, Daryl	Sandhu, Amarjot
Cho, Raymond Sung Joon	Kusendova, Natalia	Sarkaria, Prabmeet Singh
Cho, Stan	Lecca, Stephen	Scott, Laurie

Clark, Steve	MacLeod, Lisa	Skelly, Donna
Coe, Lorne	Martin, Robin	Smith, Dave
Crawford, Stephen	Martow, Gila	Smith, Todd
Cuzzetto, Rudy	McDonell, Jim	Surma, Kinga
Downey, Doug	McKenna, Jane	Tangri, Nina
Dunlop, Jill	McNaughton, Monte	Thanigasalam, Vijay
Elliott, Christine	Miller, Norman	Thompson, Lisa M.
Fee, Amy	Mulroney, Caroline	Tibollo, Michael A.
Ford, Doug	Nicholls, Rick	Triantafilopoulos, Effie J.
Fullerton, Merrilee	Oosterhoff, Sam	Wai, Daisy
Ghamari, Goldie	Pang, Billy	Walker, Bill
Gill, Parm	Park, Lindsey	Yakabuski, John
Hardeman, Ernie	Parsa, Michael	Yurek, Jeff

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): All those opposed to the motion will please rise one at a time and be counted.

Nays

Andrew, Jill	Gretzky, Lisa	Sattler, Peggy
Armstrong, Teresa J.	Harden, Joel	Schreiner, Mike
Arthur, Ian	Hassan, Faisal	Singh, Gurratan
Bell, Jessica	Hatfield, Percy	Singh, Sara
Berns-McGown, Rima	Karpoche, Bhutilla	Stevens, Jennifer (Jennie)
Bisson, Gilles	Kernaghan, Terence	Stiles, Marit
Bourgouin, Guy	Lindo, Laura Mae	Tabuns, Peter
Burch, Jeff	Mamakwa, Sol	Taylor, Monique
Fife, Catherine	Mantha, Michael	Vanthof, John
French, Jennifer K.	Monteith-Farrell, Judith	West, Jamie
Gates, Wayne	Morrison, Suze	Yarde, Kevin
Gélinas, France	Natyshak, Taras	
Glover, Chris	Rakocevic, Tom	

The Clerk of the Assembly (Mr. Todd Decker): The ayes are 69; the nays are 37.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): I declare the motion carried.

Second reading agreed to.

Hon. Lisa MacLeod: Point of order, Speaker.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): There are no points of order during a vote.

Pursuant to the order of the House dated April 10, 2019, the bill stands referred to the Standing Committee on General Government.

WEARING OF HOCKEY JERSEY

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Now I can entertain points of order. The Minister of Children, Community and Social Services on a point of order.

Hon. Lisa MacLeod: Thank you, Speaker. This will be very quick. I just wanted to challenge the member from Sudbury to wear an Ottawa 67’s jersey on Monday after we eliminate his Sudbury Wolves tonight.

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): We were having a very civil question period until you brought up the hockey. Are there any other points of order? Okay.

This House is in recess until 1 p.m.

The House recessed from 1152 to 1300.

NOTICE OF DISSATISFACTION

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

INTRODUCTION OF VISITORS

Hon. Jeff Yurek: I'd like to introduce former page Maggie Yurek, who is here with us today.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Welcome back. I think it is now time for members' statements.

MEMBERS' STATEMENTS

OPIOID ABUSE

Mr. Jamie West: I want to tell you about some young people in my community who have lost their lives to the opioid crisis, and their loved ones.

Amanda Byrne told me about her brother Ryan Packham: "Ryan was an amazing man, a hard worker, the best uncle any child could ask for and a loving son." On August 25, Ryan died of an opioid overdose. He was one of three overdose deaths that weekend.

Devon Lachance was a 23-year-old Cambrian College music student who could master any instrument in just a few hours. On February 8, Devon overdosed on purple heroin.

In February alone, eight people died in 15 days from opioid-related incidents in Sudbury. The impact of the opioid emergency is magnified in northern communities like ours. When someone passes away, all of Sudbury mourns, Speaker. Devon and Ryan deserve to be more than just statistics. We're in the midst of a public health emergency. This crisis is the silent killer of our youth and our residents, and we need urgent action from this government to prevent more deaths. All of these deaths are preventable.

EASTER SEALS TELETHON

Mr. Dave Smith: Today is a great day. It's one of those days that's positive for Ontario. I'd like to talk about something positive that happened this past weekend in my riding.

On Sunday, we had the Easter Seals Telethon. For those of you who don't know, that telethon is to raise money to buy wheelchairs for those who need them. It was a fabulous success. I'd like to shout out to a couple of people in particular: Graham Hart, the emcee for the event. It was his 45th Easter Seals Telethon that he was hosting. I think that is a remarkable achievement in and of itself.

On top of that, we raised a great deal of money for Easter Seals, money that's going to go to people who need it.

I want to give a shout-out in particular to one individual: my constituency assistant, who has cerebral palsy and who is in a wheelchair. She made a donation so that others can have the wheelchairs they need as well. She recognized that that's part of her responsibility and it's something that she wanted to do. I think it's a very noble act on her part and I'd like to recognize her for that.

WIKWEMIKONG HIGH SCHOOL ROBOTICS TEAM

Mr. Sol Mamakwa: Meegwetch, Mr. Speaker. Yesterday we were visited by leadership from Anishinabek Nation. They represent 40 First Nations from across Ontario. I wanted to thank them for travelling to spend time with us.

Today I want to honour some other, very gifted members of Anishinabek Nation. This week, the Wikwemikong High School robotics team from Manitoulin Island are doing something very special. Team 5672 is competing for the FIRST Ontario Provincial Championship for robotics. I wish them good luck in their qualification matches today in Mississauga. This team qualified by winning the regional competition in Waterloo. The team also set a world record score during the semifinals for the regionals.

They are an all-First Nations robotics team, with 25 members, and they are from the Ojibway, Odawa and Potawatomi Nations. Their hope is to inspire more First Nations youth to be involved in the science, technology, engineering and mathematics fields, also known as STEM.

First Nations youth are significantly underrepresented in all fields of STEM study. High-quality STEM education for First Nations youth would give them greater career and educational opportunities, and investing in First Nations STEM education can help our youth reach their potential.

But today, I want to say good luck to the team from Wikwemikong High School. We are proud of you. Meegwetch.

FAIRVIEW MALL

Mr. Vincent Ke: Last week, the owner of the Fairview Mall, a community shopping mall in my riding of Don Valley North, announced an \$80-million transformation project. This project involves repurposing the existing department store and other retail spaces into a new row of restaurants and improving pedestrian access from the mall to Don Mills subway station.

Fairview Mall is a landmark for Don Valley North. For close to 50 years, Fairview Mall has provided Don Valley North residents a local destination to get together, shop and spend their time. Fairview Mall has created great memories and experiences for those who go there. Earlier this year, I joined Fairview Mall to celebrate the lunar new year with our local residents and community.

This revitalization and transformation project is creating jobs and enhancing the makeup of Don Valley North. Congratulations and thank you for investing in our economy and our community.

AUTOMOBILE INSURANCE

Mr. Tom Rakocevic: If you drive in Ontario, the law says you need auto insurance, but shopping around for the best auto insurance rate leaves us stuck between a rock and a hard place. A report in 2018 estimated that Ontario drivers have overpaid the auto insurance industry by as much as a billion a year in their premiums. Even worse,

some GTA communities, like my lifelong home of Humber River–Black Creek, pay some of the highest auto insurance rates in the country.

The past Liberal government's record on auto insurance was broken promises on reducing premiums, and while rates rose under their watch, accident benefits were significantly reduced.

Ontario's NDP and I have been fighting for fair auto insurance rates for many years. At the packed town halls I've hosted and attended on better auto insurance, drivers spoke with one voice: "Enough is enough." I have heard them, and on March 27 I introduced my private member's bill, entitled the Lower Auto Insurance Rates Act, which will cap excessive auto insurance company profiteering and bring improved transparency on the information these companies submit to the government regulator.

Next week, on April 18, my bill will be debated during second reading here in this House. I'm calling on all MPPs to do the right thing: Support my Lower Automobile Insurance Rates Act and side with Ontario's drivers over excessive auto insurance company gouging.

VOLUNTEERS IN BURLINGTON

Ms. Jane McKenna: National Volunteer Week is a perfect time for me to recognize and extend my heartfelt thanks to all the volunteers who contribute their time and energy to volunteering in countless Burlington endeavours. Their work is part of the reason Burlington is known as one of the greatest places to live in the entire province of Ontario. There is a genuine sense of community that comes from simply caring and showing it.

Joseph Brant Hospital recently recognized Barb Teather, a dedicated hospital volunteer who has been supporting and helping patients for 40 years. We are incredibly grateful to Barb and all the Joseph Brant Hospital volunteers who give generously of their time and make a positive impact on the lives of patients and their visitors every day. Joseph Brant Hospital has more than 500 dedicated volunteers who contribute about 80,000 hours a year in over 40 areas of service.

I also want to recognize the venerable Bill Reid on his 30th anniversary of working on the poppy campaign for the Royal Canadian Legion branch. Bill is absolutely iconic in Burlington and is a vital part of this important Remembrance Day awareness and fundraising drive.

Volunteers are at the heart of everything they do at the beautiful Royal Botanical Gardens. If you have never visited, you must go. It is a world-class destination and a huge draw for green thumbs and students in Burlington. I want to recognize Larissa Fenn, Royal Botanical Gardens' board of directors. Thank you so much.

We have so many volunteers, I won't be able to mention them all. We appreciate all of them.

1310

DALAI LAMA

Ms. Bhutla Karpoche: Many of us heard the recent reports that His Holiness the 14th Dalai Lama of Tibet had

been admitted to a hospital in India. His Holiness's personal physician has said that His Holiness was admitted for a minor chest infection. Given His Holiness's age—he's 83 years old—these reports, of course, worried us all.

The Tibetan community of Ontario organized a community prayer gathering yesterday at the Tibetan Canadian Cultural Centre for His Holiness's good health and long life. This morning, we learned the good news that His Holiness is doing well and is expected to be released tomorrow.

His Holiness the Dalai Lama is not only a spiritual leader to Tibetans but to people all around the world. He has spent his entire life travelling around the world giving teachings, holding dialogues, promoting peace and compassion, and engaging in science and spirituality. And of course, he has been a tireless advocate for the Tibetan people and on the Tibet issue.

On behalf of my constituents of Parkdale–High Park, and on behalf of all Ontarians and Canadians, I'd like to wish His Holiness good health. We join everyone in their prayers for His Holiness's long life.

I'd also like to thank the hospital staff for their care, and thank the people all around the world for their concerns and their prayers for His Holiness's recovery.

Speaker, we look forward to welcoming His Holiness back to Canada.

JARED KEESO

Mr. Randy Pettapiece: It's my pleasure to rise in the House today to congratulate Listowel's own Jared Keeso on his night to remember at the Canadian Screen Awards. Jared is a co-creator of the smash CraveTV hit series *Letterkenny*, a crowd favourite from coast to coast. The show's seventh season is set to resume later this year.

One of Listowel's favourite sons did the town proud, winning two major awards that night.

Inspired by Jared's upbringing in Listowel, *Letterkenny* contains all the hilarity, hijinks and heart that encompass life in small-town rural Ontario. While the characters on the show may come from different circles and have their fair share of differences, they always have each other's backs at the end of the day.

Jared started his night by winning the award for best writing in a comedy for the *Letterkenny* episode "Letterkenny Spelling Bee," an award he shared with his writing partner, Jacob Tierney. He then took home the award for the best lead actor in a comedy, an award he won for his work as *Letterkenny*'s main character, straight-shooting, everyday man Wayne.

I've had the privilege of watching Jared's career take off, and I'm happy to say that he remains as humble and grounded as ever—a great Perth county boy.

I would like to congratulate Jared on his success, and I wish him all the best in the future. As OMAFRA PA, I agree wholeheartedly when Wayne says, "It's a great day for hay!" As for the rest of today's proceedings, Mr. Speaker: "Pitter patter, let's get at 'er."

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): I think you've upstaged the Minister of Finance today.

MARCH MUDNESS

Ms. Jill Dunlop: Last week, my family, staff and friends partook in the annual March Mudness in beautiful Penetanguishene. Hosted by the North Simcoe Rotaract, this fundraiser consisted of 25 obstacles that participants had to crawl, climb and hurdle through.

The purpose of the annual Mudness is to promote youth mental health in the region and fundraise for local services. I am happy to say that North Simcoe Rotaract is expecting to raise between \$35,000 and \$40,000 this year.

These proceeds are going to three local groups who support youth in Simcoe North: Waypoint Centre's Youth Wellness Hub, Big Brothers Big Sisters of North Simcoe, and Georgian Bay District Secondary School's Equity Club.

I would like to read a number of the obstacles' names today: the Sloth Scramble, the Truffle Shuffle and, perhaps the most aptly named, Light at the End of the Tunnel.

My personal favourite of the day, the Great Wall, had groups hoist each team member over a wooden barrier one at a time, a task that relied on a healthy dose of arm strength and teamwork. The Great Wall really embodied the central purpose of the day.

Every group faced each obstacle as a team and as a community. In doing so, we were able to show our youth that they are not alone and that their community is here to face every challenge with them and to lift them up when they need that support the most.

I would like to thank the amazing North Simcoe Rotaract for all their hard work in organizing this event and for all that they do in our community. This club empowers and engages young people in the region, connecting them with community leaders to develop their leadership and professional skills.

I'd like to thank North Simcoe Rotaract, Team Dunlop and all participants of the event, and I look forward to getting muddy with all of you again next year.

PETITIONS

HEALTH CARE

M^{me} France Gélinas: I would like to thank Leadnow for collecting 22,000 signatures on this petition that reads as follows:

"Prohibit New Private, For-Profit Care.

"To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas Bill 74 hands over sweeping new powers to unelected, unaccountable insiders that could lead to giant corporations making a profit from the sick; and

"Whereas powerful corporate lobbyists are doing everything possible to drive forward a for-profit agenda; and

"Whereas for-profit care has been conclusively demonstrated to lead to even longer wait times, overbilling and hidden billing, and in the worst cases to two-tier systems that can deny care; and

"Whereas over 90% of Canadians view public, not-for-profit health care as one of the defining characteristics of our Canadian identity;"

They petition the Legislative Assembly to "call on the Ford government to ban any additional for-profit care in Ontario resulting from the changes being implemented by Bill 74."

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

CHILD CARE WORKERS

Mr. Jamie West: I have 237 signatures that were collected as part of Equal Pay Day.

"Petition to Maintain the Provincial Wage Enhancement Grant for Registered Early Childhood Educators and Child Care Workers in Licensed Child Care.

"To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas the provincial Wage Enhancement Grant provides \$2 per hour in wage support to many registered early childhood educators and child care workers in licensed child care;

"Whereas the provincial Wage Enhancement Grant supports staff recruitment and retention in licensed child care, increases income security among registered early childhood educators and child care workers, and begins to recognize their contributions to Ontario communities;

"Whereas the provincial Wage Enhancement Grant helps close the gender wage gap;

"Whereas the provincial Wage Enhancement Grant helps keep parents' child care fees from rising;

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

"Maintain the \$2-per-hour provincial Wage Enhancement Grant for registered early childhood educators and child care workers in licensed child care."

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

CAMPUS RADIO STATIONS

Ms. Bhutla Karpoche: This petition is entitled "Campus Radio Stations are an Essential Service.

"To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas Ontario campus radio stations consist of over 150 staff members and 3,500 volunteers, a majority of them youth and students;

"Whereas campus radio stations offer training and development for students, both as part of their on-campus course curriculum and within the community at large, including preparation for careers in broadcasting and journalism;

"Whereas campus radio stations in Ontario are key providers of emergency information under the National Public Alerting System;

“Whereas campus radio stations are an independent news and media outlet for students and communities that provides a platform for marginalized voices;

“Whereas campus radio stations have a high fixed cost compared to other student services;

“Therefore we, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to deem campus radio stations an essential fee under the Student Choice Initiative.”

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

EDUCATION FUNDING

Mr. Tom Rakocevic: This petition is entitled “Don’t Increase Class Sizes in Our Public Schools.

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

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

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

“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 petition and will be signing it and giving it to page Aaryan.

1320

EDUCATION FUNDING

Mr. Faisal Hassan: I have to thank the students of York South–Weston for this petition. It is entitled “Stop Ford’s Education Cuts.

“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;

“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 fully support this petition, and I’m affixing my name to it and providing it to the page to deliver to the table.

LONG-TERM CARE

Ms. Teresa J. Armstrong: I have thousands of signatures on this very important petition, and still more are coming in.

“Time to Care Act—Bill 13.

“To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

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

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

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

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

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

MEN’S MENTAL HEALTH AND ADDICTION SERVICES

Mr. John Vanthof: I have a petition signed by Alex Bain and many others in my riding.

“To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“Whereas the district of Timiskaming has a high rate of mental health issues in the male population; and

“Whereas there is no specific facility or program being offered in the Timiskaming district for men in crisis;

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

“To request the Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care work in partnership with the community stakeholders to develop a crisis bed facility in the Timiskaming district.”

I wholeheartedly agree. I’m going affix my signature and give it to Erynn to bring it to the table.

AUTISM TREATMENT

Ms. Rima Berns-McGown: My petition is “Support Ontario Families with Autism.

“To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

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

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

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

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

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

I agree with this petition and will be signing it and giving it to page Aaryan to take to the Clerk.

EMERGENCY SERVICES

M^{me} France Gélinas: I would like to thank Jeanne D’Arc Audette from Hanmer, in my riding, for this petition. It reads as follows:

“911 Emergency Response.

“To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

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

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

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

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

They petition the Legislative Assembly as follows:

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

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

MENTAL HEALTH AND ADDICTION SERVICES

Ms. Bhutla Karpoche: This petition is titled “No More Waiting for Children and Youth Mental Health Care.

“To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“Whereas one in five children and youth in Ontario experience a mental health issue that significantly impacts their lives, and the lives of people around them;

“Whereas there are over 12,000 children and youth on the wait-list seeking mental health and addictions care;

“Whereas the wait times for children and youth seeking mental health and addictions care in the province average three months to 18 months;

“Whereas too many children and youth have died waiting for treatment, and early treatment is more likely to be effective in helping people live full and happy lives;

“Whereas the failure to take action in helping children and youth access mental health and addictions services hurts people, families and Ontario’s communities;

“Therefore we, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to immediately cap the wait time for children and youth seeking mental health and addictions services to 30 days after these services have been deemed essential, taking all the necessary policy and funding steps to ensure that the minister is able to enforce this cap, and provide children and youth the services they need and deserve.”

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

INJURED WORKERS

Mr. Tom Rakocevic: This petition is entitled “Workers’ Comp is a Right.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

I will be supporting this, signing it and giving it to page Katherine.

SOCIAL ASSISTANCE

Mr. Faisal Hassan: I have a petition here entitled “Reverse Doug Ford’s Cuts to Low-Income Families.

“Whereas Doug Ford eliminated the Basic Income Pilot project and slashed the new social assistance rates by 1.5%, and did so without warning;

“Whereas cuts to already-meagre social assistance rates will disproportionately impact children, those with mental health challenges, persons with disabilities, and people struggling in poverty;

“Whereas the decision to cancel the Basic Income Pilot project was made without any evidence, and leaves thousands of Ontarians without details about whether they will be able to access other forms of income assistance;

“Whereas the independently authored Income Security: A Roadmap for Change report, presented to the government last fall, recommends both increases to rates and the continuation of the Basic Income Pilot project as key steps towards income adequacy and poverty reduction;

“Whereas the failure to address poverty—and the homelessness, hunger, health crises, and desperation that can result from poverty—hurts people, families and Ontario’s communities;

“Therefore we, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to immediately reverse Doug Ford’s callous decision to slash increases to social assistance rates by 50%, and reverse his decision to cancel the Basic Income Pilot project, decisions that will undoubtedly hurt thousands of vulnerable people and drag Ontario backwards when it comes to homelessness reduction and anti-poverty efforts.”

I fully support this petition. I will be affixing my signature to it and providing it to page Gajan to deliver to the table.

LONG-TERM CARE

Ms. Teresa J. Armstrong: I have a petition here for temperatures in long-term-care homes.

“To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

SERVICES EN FRANÇAIS

M^{me} France Gélinas: J’aimerais remercier Josée et Anique Viau de Hanmer pour la pétition.

« À l’Assemblée législative de l’Ontario :

« Respectez la communauté francophone.

« Considérant que l’énoncé économique d’automne du gouvernement a annoncé l’élimination du Commissariat aux services en français et l’annulation des plans pour l’Université de l’Ontario français; et

« Considérant que ces décisions constituent une trahison de la responsabilité de l’Ontario envers notre communauté francophone; »

Ils demandent à « l’Assemblée législative de demander au gouvernement de maintenir le bureau du commissaire aux services en français, ainsi que son financement et ses pouvoirs, et de maintenir l’engagement de l’Ontario de financer l’Université de l’Ontario français. »

J’appuie cette pétition, je vais la signer et je demande au page Aaryan de l’amener à la table des greffiers.

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

Pursuant to standing order 58(b), I am now going to recess the House until 4 p.m.

The House recessed from 1331 to 1600.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

2019 ONTARIO BUDGET

BUDGET DE L’ONTARIO DE 2019

Hon. Victor Fedeli: I move, seconded by Mr. Ford, that this House approves in general the budgetary policy of the government.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Mr. Fedeli has moved, seconded by Mr. Ford, that this House approves in general the budgetary policy of the government.

I’m going to ask the indulgence of the House as the pages distribute the budget speech and documents.

Applause.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): I’m pleased to announce that our pages have achieved a new record in the delivery of the budget documents to the members in this chamber.

Have all of the members received their budget documents?

I recognize the Minister of Finance.

Hon. Victor Fedeli: Monsieur le Président, there are far too many guests to recognize in the galleries today: friends, family, elected officials, mayors, Chiefs, councillors, former MPPs, a former Premier.

Sit up straight, Mike. Your dad’s here.

I will mention one person by name. My wife, Patty, is here from our hometown in Corbeil. Our friends who are here—all of our friends—just call her Miss P. So let me thank Miss P for being here today, and for the love and support she has shown me and shared with our family for 33 years.

Monsieur le Président, Mr. Speaker, today, we are presenting the first budget of our government’s mandate, a plan for the people, by the people and, most importantly, a plan that puts the people first.

Under the leadership of Premier Doug Ford, our government has started down a path to balance so that we can protect what matters most: our vital services such as health care and education.

We are working smarter, spending smarter and re-inventing the way government serves the people. And we are taking steps to attract businesses, create jobs, and provide opportunities for our emerging engineers, nurses and tradespeople.

Our government's approach is both thoughtful and measured—and is built on a foundation of four clear priorities.

First—We are restoring accountability and trust by introducing a credible, sustainable and fully costed plan that will return the province to fiscal balance. In fact, our plan is projected to generate average savings and cost avoidance of about eight cents for every dollar spent.

Second—We are protecting what matters most by adopting bold new ways to deliver world-class services, such as health care and education, while supporting our front-line workers.

Third—We are putting people first by making life more affordable and convenient with our new child care tax credit, a flexible auto insurance plan, an expanded rapid transit system, and a reduced estate administration tax.

And fourth—We are making Ontario open for business and open for jobs, lowering business costs, and making it easier for employers to hire workers and for workers to find a job.

Our government stands firmly on the side of hard-working taxpayers. That's why the 2019 budget contains no new tax increases. Not one.

This budget builds on the incredible work of our cabinet and our caucus, the work that they've been doing since taking office. In nine short months, our government has achieved hundreds of initiatives for the benefit of individuals, families and businesses, such as:

- cancelling the cap-and-trade carbon tax;
- introducing our Low-income Individuals and Families Tax Credit;
- cutting corporate income taxes through the Ontario Job Creation Investment Incentive;
- building new schools in high-growth areas; and
- adding new long-term-care beds, more hospital beds and repairs and upgrades to dozens of hospitals throughout Ontario.

We have made tremendous progress, but there is much more to do. And to be blunt, the challenge before us is daunting.

Mr. Speaker, nobody should underestimate the mess we inherited.

When the independent financial commission completed its review of Ontario's books, one thing became abundantly clear: The cupboards were not only bare; the fiscal house was collapsing under the weight of the massive debt and deficit.

Speaker, the previous government was spending \$40 million a day more than they took in. Under their watch, the deficit grew to \$15 billion and the debt ballooned to more than one third of a trillion dollars. In fact, interest on debt is the fourth-largest line item in the budget after health care, education and social services.

Ontario deserves better. And on June 7, the people of Ontario voted for something better—Premier Doug Ford and his Plan for the People.

Restoring trust, accountability, and transparency is foundational to our plans to build a fiscally sustainable government and protect and enhance the services we all cherish. The fact is, our government is increasing year-over-year investments in both health care and education.

But we cannot kid ourselves. The challenges of an aging population and older schools are real and will require even further investment.

Given the fiscal mess we inherited, do we really think health care will be there for our kids if we continue to run endless deficits? Do we really think our public education system will flourish when the government continues to pile on more and more debt? The answer to both questions is a resounding no.

That's why balancing the budget is a critical first step to protecting our core services.

Balancing the budget requires discipline, determination and an appetite to take a different approach to government; to modernize, digitize and make our services and programs more efficient, all while protecting front-line workers.

That is the path that our government has chosen. We have created a fully costed and sustainable plan that will take us to balance in five years. This is both reasonable and responsible. Nous allons balancer le budget en cinq ans.

1610

We are pleased to report that in the short time we've been in office, the deficit has been reduced by \$3.3 billion to \$11.7 billion for this past fiscal year.

And our government is projecting to further reduce the deficit by nearly \$1.5 billion over the next year, lowering the deficit to \$10.3 billion.

Le déficit a été réduit à 11,7 milliards de dollars dans la dernière année, et sera réduit à 10,3 milliards de dollars cette année.

There is a long and difficult road ahead, but our determination is absolute—we will return Ontario to a balanced budget on the schedule that we are setting out here today.

At the same time, we know that talk is cheap. This is why we are backing up this commitment with an iron-clad guarantee that will change the culture of government.

As part of the budget legislation, our government is proposing a new, robust accountability framework called the Fiscal Sustainability, Transparency and Accountability Act. This represents the first comprehensive change to Ontario's fiscal planning legislation in 15 years.

In addition, the proposed act would require governments to deliver the budget by March 31.

And perhaps more importantly, the act will include an "Accountability Guarantee" for both the Premier and the Minister of Finance. They will each be required to pay a fine equal to 10% of their Premier and ministerial salaries for each missed reporting deadline. Sorry I didn't tell you about that one earlier, Premier. We are, quite literally, putting our money where our mouth is.

While it's important to slay the deficit, it is equally important to face the mountain of debt.

Ontario has the largest subnational debt on the planet. Over the past decade, the previous government allowed the debt to double to \$347 billion, or about \$24,000 for every man, woman, and child in our province.

Interest payments on this debt are more than the entire budget of most Ontario ministries and are currently forecast to be \$13.3 billion this year. Every dollar that goes to interest is a dollar that can't go to a home care worker, fix another school or reduce taxes. Every single day, the people of Ontario pay for the excesses of the past in a very real and very painful way.

This grave situation needs to be addressed. So, Speaker, we will direct any unused money from the reserve and the contingency fund, as well as any unspent dollars at the end of the year, into debt reduction.

Our budget has also put an end to the so called "March Madness." Sadly—we're not talking about basketball here, but instead referring to the annual habit of year-end spending sprees that go throughout government and all agencies. This is fundamentally disrespectful to the taxpayer and—on behalf of the Premier, we are pleased to report that it's done. It's gone.

Balancing the budget will be an all-of-government effort. We are looking at every program, every agency, every board, every commission to drive efficiencies, find cost savings and enable the transformation and modernization of government services. We are also reviewing our capital investments and putting them at a level that is more sustainable.

During the provincial election, Premier Ford promised to find savings of four cents on every dollar. To date, our government has nearly doubled that and found about eight cents on every dollar spent. Over the next six years, this will enable our government to provide \$26 billion in much-needed relief to families, individuals, students, seniors and businesses. All this while protecting front-line jobs.

Leading this complex multi-year planning process is our colleague Peter Bethlenfalvy, President of the Treasury Board. His efforts have already resulted in substantial savings and cost avoidance. Thank you, Peter.

Members of the opposition are quick to grandstand whenever we talk about balancing the budget. If we discontinue a program because it is well past its "best-before date," they scream from the hilltops and declare it a "cut."

That is a reaction that is as predictable as it is irresponsible.

Because the basic math is irrefutable—it is only by returning to fiscal balance that we can continue to invest in the critical programs like health care, education and other services that the people of Ontario have come to rely on.

Balancing the budget is not just some random goal—it is both a fiscal and a moral imperative that is in the public interest. Balancing the budget is how we protect the things that matter most.

Ask any parent and they will tell you that one of the things that matters most to them is child care. The previous administration took an outdated and rigid "government knows best" approach. We disagree. Why don't we let parents decide what child care options work best for them?

That's why our government is proposing a new Ontario Childcare Access and Relief from Expenses—or, thankfully, CARE—tax credit for short.

This new CARE tax credit would provide about 300,000 families with up to 75% of their eligible expenses for child care in centres, home-based care, camps, and other settings.

The CARE tax credit would be one of the most flexible child care initiatives ever introduced in Ontario, putting parents at the centre of the decision-making process: not bureaucrats and politicians.

In addition, our government will be providing \$1 billion over the next five years to create 30,000 child care spaces in schools. These centres could be operated by not-for-profit or for-profit groups, and will offer children a safe learning environment and the opportunity to grow in a familiar setting.

Our government believes that it's time patients are put at the centre of health care.

For too long, previous governments have been pouring massive amounts of money into a system that is siloed, fragmented and extremely complicated to navigate. It has led to longer wait times and hallway health care.

We will put the patients first by moving towards an integrated delivery model and establishing Ontario health teams. These Ontario health teams will organize care delivery according to the needs in their local communities, ensuring that patients come first and that precious dollars are redirected to front-line services.

Our government will reduce the bloated health care bureaucracy and tear down the administrative silos by consolidating the six existing provincial health agencies and the 14 local health integration networks into a new, single agency.

We will also be providing \$17 billion in capital grants over the next decade to modernize and increase capacity at our hospitals.

To support our aging seniors, our government is well on its way to creating 15,000 new long-term-care beds. We are also committed to upgrading an additional 15,000 long-term-care beds to modern design standards. This initiative would represent an investment of \$1.75 billion over the next five years.

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At least two thirds of low-income seniors do not have access to dental insurance. Untreated oral health issues represent a significant burden on the health care system and contribute to hospital overcrowding. This is why our government is investing \$90 million to establish a new dental program for seniors.

The mental health and addictions system in Ontario has been challenged for too long. That's why our government is flowing \$3.8 billion over 10 years to support acute

mental health in-patient beds, community health and justice services, and supportive housing.

Under the leadership of the Deputy Premier and Minister of Health and Long-Term Care, Christine Elliott, we are confident that the health care system will continue to improve for the benefit of all individuals and families.

We also applaud the Minister of Seniors and Accessibility, Raymond Cho, for his work with some of our most vulnerable citizens.

In many ways, the future of our province is tied to the quality of our education system. This is the training ground for our next generation of leaders, our scientists and engineers, our plumbers and our electricians.

Unfortunately, the previous government failed our children when it came to teaching the basics. This lack of foundational knowledge has left too many of our kids ill-prepared for the challenges of the modern world. Our math scores have declined over the past 10 years, as many students struggled to meet the minimum provincial standard.

Our approach will be different. We are getting back to basics, respecting parents, and working with teachers to ensure our kids develop the skills they need to succeed in a highly competitive job market.

Our government held the largest public consultation on education in Ontario's history. This feedback helped develop our new, comprehensive plan entitled "Education that Works for You."

Our plan includes reforms, such as:

- a new math curriculum that will focus on math fundamentals for all grades;

- a renewed focus on science, technology and engineering, along with a new focus on the skilled trades and financial literacy; and

- we are also introducing a modern and age-appropriate health and physical education curriculum that will keep students safe.

To ensure that the rights of parents are respected and their voices heard, our government will begin drafting a Ministry of Education parents' bill of rights. Ontario will be the first province in Canada with a dedicated parents' bill of rights.

While we take steps to help move Ontario students to the head of the class, our opponents are quick to question our financial commitment to education.

Let me be perfectly clear, our government will increase funding to the education sector by \$1 billion over the next three years—to more than \$30 billion.

And we are investing \$13 billion in capital over 10 years, including \$1.4 billion this year alone.

We are making a substantial investment in our children, in our future.

We have taken great care to build a sustainable education plan where no teacher is being fired, despite what our opponents often claim.

Our hope and expectation is that our partners in Ontario's teachers unions will join us in this incredibly important journey.

Leading these reforms is the Minister of Education, Lisa Thompson. We believe the work she is doing will enable our students to find good career-oriented jobs in the modern global economy.

Good job.

Hon. Lisa M. Thompson: Thank you.

Hon. Victor Fedeli: The students of today are the workforce of tomorrow. To help them succeed, our government is making a college or university education more affordable. For the first time in Ontario's history, the government is reducing student tuition, saving parents and families about \$450 million every year.

We are also reforming the Ontario Student Assistance Program by putting it on a sustainable footing and focusing the program on those who need it most. In fact, starting this September, our government will ensure that 82% of grants will go to students with a family income of less than \$50,000. That's up from 76% under the previous government.

In order to equip more people with skills that are in demand, our government is increasing apprenticeship opportunities, and transforming employment and training services in the province.

We plan to do this by establishing a new governance framework through proposed new legislation to replace the Ontario College of Trades and Apprenticeship Act. Our plan would encourage employer participation in the apprenticeship system through a new financial incentive program. It would also create a new one-window digital portal for apprentices and promote the skilled trades as a pathway choice for younger students.

We applaud the Minister of Training, Colleges and Universities, Merrilee Fullerton, for helping prepare even more people for the world of work.

Ontario's employment and training programs were not focused on helping job seekers, including social assistance recipients, find and keep jobs.

In order to improve labour market outcomes and reduce the administrative burden in the employment and training system, our government is integrating social assistance employment services into Employment Ontario.

These reforms will provide wraparound supports to help social assistance recipients address barriers and access to employment supports.

To help people on Ontario Works find employment faster, recipients could earn up to \$300 per month without reducing their assistance. And ODSP recipients will get greater flexibility through an annual exemption of \$6,000, up from \$200 a month today.

We applaud the Minister of Children, Community and Social Services and minister responsible for women's issues, Lisa MacLeod, for her passion and determination to protect and support our most vulnerable citizens.

Protecting innocent, law-abiding citizens is a top priority of our government.

One person killed by gun violence is one too many. Regrettably, the number of victims has been on the rise. In order to combat gun- and gang-related violence, our government is investing \$16.4 million over two years to

create a province-wide community safety strategy. This will include establishing a provincial Guns and Gangs support unit to assist local police officers and prosecutors.

This funding is in addition to the \$25 million flowing to the city of Toronto over four years to help combat gangs and gun violence, and the \$2 million committed to supporting enforcement initiatives in the city of Ottawa.

Through our Comprehensive Police Services Act, we are finally treating our men and women in the police services with the respect they so deserve.

We applaud the Attorney General and minister responsible for francophone affairs, Caroline Mulroney, and Solicitor General Sylvia Jones for their leadership in this area.

The dream of home ownership has been out of reach for many first-time homebuyers, especially in large urban centres such as Toronto. In order to break down the many barriers for prospective buyers and builders, our government is developing a Housing Supply Action Plan. This action plan will make it easier to develop the right mix of housing where it is needed, lower the costs of development and make it easier to develop rental housing.

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And we want to ensure our municipal partners are getting the maximum value for every tax dollar they spend as well. That's why our government is providing one-time funding of \$200 million to 405 municipalities to help them improve their efficiency.

We applaud the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing, Steve Clark, who has developed an excellent relationship with our many valued municipal and housing partners.

Mr. Speaker, to tackle climate change and other environmental challenges, our government has developed a made-in-Ontario environmental plan. It affirms our commitment to protect the environment without burdening households and businesses with ineffective policies, such as the federal government's job-killing carbon tax.

Instead of a punishing carbon tax, our government will establish a \$400-million emissions reduction fund to speed up the development of low-carbon solutions and encourage private sector investment in clean technologies.

We congratulate the Minister of the Environment, Conservation and Parks, Rod Phillips, for his determination to protect our air, our water and our magnificent landscape for future generations.

Mr. Speaker, our government is putting people first. Everything we do, every decision we make, every dollar we spend, must meet one simple test: Is this good for the people?

For too long, government has refused to embrace a customer-first service model, because it didn't have to. It was government.

But times have changed and the government has changed too. We are moving the province into the 21st century. We are taking steps to improve consumer choice and convenience, and revolutionizing the way we deliver and expand services, like transportation.

A reliable, efficient and accessible transportation network is critical if we are to drive our economy forward and protect the environment.

Our current regional GO rail network is realizing only a fraction of its potential. That's why we are implementing the largest increase in GO rail service in five years. We are committed to providing two-way, all-day service every 15 minutes in core segments of the network. This includes additional GO rail service along the Kitchener line during the morning and afternoon rush hours, as well as year-round weekday GO rail service to Niagara Falls and St. Catharines.

We are committed to building a modern, efficient rapid transit system. By uploading the TTC's subway network to the province, we would be creating a truly integrated regional transit system. This would allow the province to get projects built better, faster and cheaper, which is good news for taxpayers and commuters.

Our government is making the single-largest capital contribution to new subway builds and extensions in Ontario's history. We are committing \$11.2 billion, of a total cost of \$28.5 billion, to support four rapid transit projects in the GTA—more than doubling the initial commitment we made during the campaign.

The four projects would be an extension of the Eglinton Crosstown light rail transit project west, the Yonge North subway extension, the Scarborough subway extension and a new Ontario subway line, a more functional version of the downtown relief line.

Our government is also supporting the Ottawa LRT Stage 2 project and the LRT project in Hamilton.

And to keep people moving in the north, our government will continue to review the transportation needs in this vast part of the province, including the return of passenger rail and enhanced bus service.

We are expanding our transit systems, but we are also expanding other vital transportation infrastructure. Our government is making smart investments in provincial highways, roads and bridges, with projects around Kenora, London, Pickering and Mississauga.

These major infrastructure projects are critical to the future growth of our province and we applaud both Transportation Minister Jeff Yurek and Infrastructure Minister Monte McNaughton for your leadership on these files.

When it comes to driving, it is clear that Ontario's auto insurance system is broken—and drivers deserve better. That's why our government is making transformative changes to the province's auto insurance system.

It starts with giving drivers more options when deciding which insurance coverage suits their needs and gives them more control over their rates. We will allow insurance companies to offer drivers discounts and a variety of options not previously available.

In addition, we will introduce a driver care card, which will streamline access to care by providing important information that will make the claims process easier to navigate.

And we will adopt a "care, not cash" default clause to ensure that a driver's auto insurance coverage will pay for

treatment instead of costly legal fees. It will also provide for an improved early treatment system, and a return to the default benefit limit of up to \$2 million for those who are catastrophically injured in an accident.

Speaker, we extend our appreciation to MPP Doug Downey, the parliamentary assistant to the Minister of Finance, for his excellent work on the auto insurance file.

We also thank Milton MPP Parm Gill, whose private member's bill on eliminating postal code discrimination would provide an even greater amount of fairness to drivers in Ontario.

The cornerstone of putting people first is consumer choice and convenience. That is why our government is taking steps to modernize the way we sell, distribute and consume alcohol in Ontario.

Consider this: There are more than 8,000 retail stores in Quebec selling beverage alcohol, but less than 3,000 retail stores in Ontario. The time for change is long overdue.

That's why our government is proceeding with a plan to expand the sale of beer and wine to corner stores, big box stores, and even more grocery stores.

In the meantime, we are moving ahead now with several initiatives to enhance consumer choice and convenience. We are creating a tailgating permit for eligible sporting events; introducing legislation permitting municipalities to create alcohol consumption areas, such as parks; and extending hours of alcohol service at licensed establishments, allowing them to start at 9 a.m.

To make government work better, we are moving forward with a digital-first strategy. To start with, we will digitize ServiceOntario's top 10 transactions, which include the issuing of driver's licences, vehicle permits and health cards. This will shift approximately 10 million in-person transactions to digital channels, with savings of up to \$33.5 million in the next five years.

Our government is also taking steps to make our internal systems more efficient.

We recently announced the creation of a central procurement process to dramatically change the way government makes purchases. By employing this bulk buying power, we will be able to save taxpayers as much as \$1 billion a year.

We have also embarked on an ambitious effort to ensure all government activities reflect and reinforce a renewed brand standard, and that includes a refreshed Trillium. This new visual identity will replace the expensive patchwork of brands that exist across government today. The centrepiece of this initiative will be a new Ontario licence plate that sends a clear message—that Ontario is “A Place to Grow.” We have been clear—we want to drive a new culture throughout Ontario and this branding will signal that change.

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Leading this revolutionary change through government is Government and Consumer Services Minister Bill Walker. We congratulate him on these excellent initiatives.

Mr. Speaker, there was a time when Ontario was the engine of Confederation.

After a decade and a half of economic mismanagement by the previous government, our engine is sputtering. Ontario has been trailing the national average in growth for most of the past 16 years.

But the word is quickly spreading that times have changed. Ontario is once again open for business and open for jobs. Our government has moved quickly to address our fiscal challenges and to create a pro-jobs environment. This includes the passage of the Making Ontario Open for Business Act, which, among other things, froze the minimum wage at \$14.

We applaud Labour Minister Laurie Scott for her leadership on this important file.

For decades, Ontario's economy has benefited from the strength of the auto sector. It supported hundreds of thousands of direct and indirect jobs in communities across the province. But clearly the sector continues to change, and change has not always been for the better.

Our message to all manufacturers—and their union leaders—is clear: There is a new government in Ontario. Do not make your decisions based on the failed ideological policies of the past 15 years. We say to them: Let's work together to build the kind of competitive environment that will create and keep jobs here in this province.

For our part, we have already introduced Driving Prosperity: a 10-year plan that sets out a vision for how industry, the research and education sectors, and all three levels of government can work together to strengthen the industry. Driving Prosperity is supported by three strategic pillars: competitiveness, innovation, and talent.

In addition, our government is supporting the reduction of payroll taxes, peeling away layers of red tape, and lowering hydro costs. Clearly, we are making progress and seeing results. We applaud the Minister of Economic Development, Job Creation and Trade, Todd Smith, for his leadership and vision on this critically important file.

Mr. Speaker, while our government takes deliberate steps to make Ontario open for business and open for jobs, the federal government is taking deliberate steps to make the cost of nearly everything more expensive. On April 1st, Ottawa imposed a job-killing carbon tax on the people of Ontario and three other Canadian provinces.

Our government considers the carbon tax to be a clear and present threat to the affordability of life's basic necessities. It will also increase costs for automotive manufacturing, transportation, mining and forestry, putting thousands of jobs at risk.

The federal government insists on punishing individuals, families and businesses in Ontario despite the fact that Ontario already leads Canada in greenhouse gas reduction targets.

We are fighting the carbon tax head on. We are challenging this tax in court and we are proposing to introduce the Federal Carbon Tax Transparency Act, which would ensure consumers are aware that this tax is driving up the price of gasoline all across the province. In addition, we will present a public campaign to educate people about the real cost of the carbon tax, while informing people about our Made-in-Ontario Environment Plan.

It should be clear to all of us: A carbon tax is not the only way to fight climate change.

Mr. Speaker, as a proud northerner, we know that we have the potential to make an even greater contribution to the cultural and economic success of our province.

But many northern communities face unique challenges to growth.

Our government is determined to turn this situation around through a number of initiatives, including:

- consultation on a proposed bill to repeal the Far North Act and amend the Public Lands Act in order to proceed with critical projects like the Ring of Fire;

- the creation of a mining working group to attract major new investments;

- the development of a forestry strategy to increase wood supply and create jobs;

- exploring options to share resource revenue with Indigenous partners and northern communities;

- creating more opportunities for Indigenous people and addressing the skilled labour shortage across the north by creating a new Northern Ontario Internship Program, and calling on the federal government to reform the national occupational classification codes; and

- developing a broadband and cellular strategy to expand access to rural and remote areas of the province that will allow more people to participate and compete in the digital economy.

We recognize the Minister of Energy, Northern Development and Mines and Minister of Indigenous Affairs, Greg Rickford, and the Minister of Natural Resources and Forestry, John Yakabuski, for their leadership on these files.

Mr. Speaker, farmers feed cities. This basic truth is critical to the social and economic well-being of the province. Ontario's food manufacturing sector is the largest in Canada, employing hundreds of thousands of people and contributing billions to our economy.

Our government is proposing amendments to the Farm Products Payments Act to modernize Ontario's financial protection programs for farm businesses. And we are exploring options to expand the Risk Management Program to better support farmers and producers in managing risks that are beyond their control.

We applaud the Minister of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs, Ernie Hardeman, for his passion and leadership on this file.

Monsieur le Président, notre gouvernement prend des mesures pour stimuler la création d'emplois dans nos communautés francophones.

C'est pourquoi le Programme d'appui à la francophonie ontarienne inclura le développement économique.

Ceci permettra aux entreprises, aux entrepreneurs et aux organismes francophones sans but lucratif de soutenir les programmes qui favorisent la croissance économique et culturelle.

Interjections.

Hon. Victor Fedeli: Thank you.

Mr. Speaker, sports are far more than simply playing games. They help people stay fit and active, learn the value

of teamwork and commitment, and get to learn first-hand the benefits of competition.

Ontario's rules and regulations for combative sports such as mixed martial arts, boxing and kick-boxing are out of date. That's why our government is planning to introduce new legislation to make it safer for professional and amateur athletes to participate in combative sports.

Mr. Speaker, Ontario's film and television industry generates billions of dollars in revenue and creates tens of thousands of jobs throughout the province. Our government will continue to offer five cultural media tax credits. This will encourage film and television production, computer animation and special effects, interactive digital media and book publishing.

We are committed to streamlining the administration of the tax credits, reducing red tape and enabling companies to receive their tax credits faster.

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We acknowledge the Minister of Tourism, Culture and Sport, Michael Tibollo, for his efforts—for your efforts, Michael—to advance culture and athletic excellence throughout the province.

Before closing, we also extend our appreciation to both my personal ministry staff as well as the dedicated public servants in the Ministry of Finance for their fine work in preparing this budget—all of them.

Your two favourite words, Mr. Speaker: To conclude, here are a few thoughts about being a provincial representative here at Queen's Park.

With many of us seeing this historic chamber for the first time, as we work in this historic chamber, we are reminded of the tremendous responsibility that rests upon the shoulders of all MPPs. We come from every corner of the province for one reason and one reason only, and that's to represent the people. It is a position of privilege that is earned through the trust and confidence of the many individuals and families who sent us here.

Our constituents look to us to make thoughtful but difficult decisions. Our government, all of our members, we are humbled by this responsibility, and seized with the task ahead.

We know the path will not be easy, but it is absolutely necessary to preserve our quality of life and secure a bright future for generations to come.

Today, our government is reminding the world that we are serious about fiscal sustainability, about protecting front-line services and making Ontario open for business and open for jobs.

This budget marks the beginning of a new era in this province. It is a plan that will lead us to a place where costs are lower. Where tax dollars are respected. Where government works for the people. By making smart long-term decisions, reinventing the way government delivers services and focusing our resources on the individuals and families in greatest need, the province is restoring trust, transparency and accountability, and is balancing the budget in a reasonable manner. Premier Ford, promise made, promise kept.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): I recognize the member for Timmins.

M. Gilles Bisson: Monsieur le Président, je propose l'ajournement du débat. Mr. Speaker, I propose adjournment of the debate.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): The member for Timmins is moving the adjournment of the debate. Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? Carried.

Debate adjourned.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): I'm going to ask the Minister of Finance if he wishes to introduce a bill at this time.

Hon. Victor Fedeli: Yes, I do.

INTRODUCTION OF BILLS

PROTECTING WHAT MATTERS MOST ACT (BUDGET MEASURES), 2019

LOI DE 2019 POUR PROTÉGER L'ESSENTIEL (MESURES BUDGÉTAIRES)

Mr. Fedeli moved first reading of the following bill:
Bill 100, An Act to implement Budget measures and to enact, amend and repeal various statutes / Projet de loi

100, Loi visant à mettre en oeuvre les mesures budgétaires et à édicter, à modifier ou à abroger diverses lois.

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

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

All those opposed will please say "nay."

In my opinion, the ayes have it.

Mr. Gilles Bisson: On division.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): On division. The motion is carried.

First reading agreed to.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Does the Minister of Finance wish to give a brief explanation of his bill?

Hon. Victor Fedeli: Nothing further, Speaker.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Thank you. I recognize the government House leader.

Hon. Todd Smith: Mr. Speaker, I move adjournment of the House.

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

This House stands adjourned until Monday, April 15, at 10:30 a.m.

The House adjourned at 1655.

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF ONTARIO
ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE DE L'ONTARIO

Lieutenant Governor / Lieutenante-gouverneure: Hon. / L'hon. Elizabeth Dowdeswell, OC, OOnt.
Speaker / Président: Hon. / L'hon. Ted Arnott
Clerk / Greffier: Todd Decker
Deputy Clerk / Sous-greffier: Trevor Day
Clerks-at-the-Table / Greffiers parlementaires: Tonia Grannum, Valerie Quioc Lim, William Short
Sergeant-at-Arms / Sergente d'armes: Jacquelyn Gordon

Member and Party / Député(e) et parti	Constituency / Circonscription	Other responsibilities / Autres responsabilités
Anand, Deepak (PC)	Mississauga—Malton	
Andrew, Jill (NDP)	Toronto—St. Paul's	
Armstrong, Teresa J. (NDP)	London—Fanshawe	Deputy Opposition House Leader / Leader parlementaire adjointe de l'opposition officielle
Arnott, Hon. / L'hon. Ted (PC)	Wellington—Halton Hills	Speaker / Président de l'Assemblée législative
Arthur, Ian (NDP)	Kingston and the Islands / Kingston et les Îles	
Baber, Roman (PC)	York Centre / York-Centre	
Babikian, Aris (PC)	Scarborough—Agincourt	
Bailey, Robert (PC)	Sarnia—Lambton	
Barrett, Toby (PC)	Haldimand—Norfolk	
Begum, Doly (NDP)	Scarborough Southwest / Scarborough-Sud-Ouest	
Bell, Jessica (NDP)	University—Rosedale	
Berns-McGown, Rima (NDP)	Beaches—East York / Beaches—East York	
Bethlenfalvy, Hon. / L'hon. Peter (PC)	Pickering—Uxbridge	President of the Treasury Board / Président du Conseil du Trésor
Bisson, Gilles (NDP)	Timmins	Opposition House Leader / Leader parlementaire de l'opposition officielle
Bouma, Will (PC)	Brantford—Brant	
Bourgouin, Guy (NDP)	Mushkegowuk—James Bay / Mushkegowuk—Baie James	
Burch, Jeff (NDP)	Niagara Centre / Niagara-Centre	
Calandra, Paul (PC)	Markham—Stouffville	
Cho, Hon. / L'hon. Raymond Sung Joon (PC)	Scarborough North / Scarborough-Nord	Minister for Seniors and Accessibility / Ministre des Services aux aînés et de l'Accessibilité
Cho, Stan (PC)	Willowdale	
Clark, Hon. / L'hon. Steve (PC)	Leeds—Grenville—Thousand Islands and Rideau Lakes / Leeds—Grenville—Thousand Islands et Rideau Lakes	Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing / Ministre des Affaires municipales et du Logement
Coe, Lorne (PC)	Whitby	
Coteau, Michael (LIB)	Don Valley East / Don Valley-Est	
Crawford, Stephen (PC)	Oakville	
Cuzzetto, Rudy (PC)	Mississauga—Lakeshore	
Des Rosiers, Nathalie (LIB)	Ottawa—Vanier	
Downey, Doug (PC)	Barrie—Springwater—Oro-Medonte	
Dunlop, Jill (PC)	Simcoe North / Simcoe-Nord	
Elliott, Hon. / L'hon. Christine (PC)	Newmarket—Aurora	Deputy Premier / Vice-première ministre Minister of Health and Long-Term Care / Ministre de la Santé et des Soins de longue durée
Fedeli, Hon. / L'hon. Victor (PC)	Nipissing	Chair of Cabinet / Président du Conseil des ministres Minister of Finance / Ministre des Finances
Fee, Amy (PC)	Kitchener South—Hespeler / Kitchener-Sud—Hespeler	
Fife, Catherine (NDP)	Waterloo	
Ford, Hon. / L'hon. Doug (PC)	Etobicoke North / Etobicoke-Nord	Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs / Ministre des Affaires intergouvernementales Premier / Premier ministre
Fraser, John (LIB)	Ottawa South / Ottawa-Sud	
French, Jennifer K. (NDP)	Oshawa	Third Deputy Chair of the Committee of the Whole House / Troisième vice-présidente du comité plénier de l'Assemblée législative

Member and Party / Député(e) et parti	Constituency / Circonscription	Other responsibilities / Autres responsabilités
Fullerton, Hon. / L'hon. Merrilee (PC)	Kanata—Carleton	Minister of Training, Colleges and Universities / Ministre de la Formation et des Collèges et Universités
Gates, Wayne (NDP)	Niagara Falls	
Gélinas, France (NDP)	Nickel Belt	
Ghamari, Goldie (PC)	Carleton	
Gill, Parm (PC)	Milton	
Glover, Chris (NDP)	Spadina—Fort York	
Gravelle, Michael (LIB)	Thunder Bay—Superior North / Thunder Bay—Supérieur-Nord	
Gretzky, Lisa (NDP)	Windsor West / Windsor-Ouest	First Deputy Chair of the Committee of the Whole House / Première vice-présidente du comité plénier de l'Assemblée
Hardeman, Hon. / L'hon. Ernie (PC)	Oxford	Minister of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs / Ministre de l'Agriculture, de l'Alimentation et des Affaires rurales
Harden, Joel (NDP)	Ottawa Centre / Ottawa-Centre	
Harris, Mike (PC)	Kitchener—Conestoga	
Hassan, Faisal (NDP)	York South—Weston / York-Sud— Weston	
Hatfield, Percy (NDP)	Windsor—Tecumseh	Second Deputy Chair of the Committee of the Whole House / Deuxième vice-président du comité plénier de l'Assemblée législative
Hillier, Randy (IND)	Lanark—Frontenac—Kingston	
Hogarth, Christine (PC)	Etobicoke—Lakeshore	
Horwath, Andrea (NDP)	Hamilton Centre / Hamilton-Centre	Leader, Official Opposition / Chef de l'opposition officielle
Hunter, Mitzie (LIB)	Scarborough—Guildwood	
Jones, Hon. / L'hon. Sylvia (PC)	Dufferin—Caledon	Solicitor General / Solliciteuse générale
Kanapathi, Logan (PC)	Markham—Thornhill	
Karahalios, Belinda (PC)	Cambridge	
Karpoche, Bhutla (NDP)	Parkdale—High Park	
Ke, Vincent (PC)	Don Valley North / Don Valley-Nord	
Kernaghan, Terence (NDP)	London North Centre / London- Centre-Nord	
Khanjin, Andrea (PC)	Barrie—Innisfil	
Kramp, Daryl (PC)	Hastings—Lennox and Addington	
Kusendova, Natalia (PC)	Mississauga Centre / Mississauga- Centre	
Lalonde, Marie-France (LIB)	Orléans	
Lecce, Stephen (PC)	King—Vaughan	Deputy Government House Leader / Leader parlementaire adjoint du gouvernement
Lindo, Laura Mae (NDP)	Kitchener Centre / Kitchener-Centre	
MacLeod, Hon. / L'hon. Lisa (PC)	Nepean	Minister of Children, Community and Social Services / Ministre des Services à l'enfance et des Services sociaux et communautaires Minister Responsible for Women's Issues / Ministre déléguée à la Condition féminine
Mamakwa, Sol (NDP)	Kiwetinoong	
Mantha, Michael (NDP)	Algoma—Manitoulin	
Martin, Robin (PC)	Eglinton—Lawrence	
Martow, Gila (PC)	Thornhill	
McDonell, Jim (PC)	Stormont—Dundas—South Glengarry	
McKenna, Jane (PC)	Burlington	
McNaughton, Hon. / L'hon. Monte (PC)	Lambton—Kent—Middlesex	Minister of Infrastructure / Ministre de l'Infrastructure
Miller, Norman (PC)	Parry Sound—Muskoka	
Miller, Paul (NDP)	Hamilton East—Stoney Creek / Hamilton-Est—Stoney Creek	
Mitas, Christina Maria (PC)	Scarborough Centre / Scarborough- Centre	
Monteith-Farrell, Judith (NDP)	Thunder Bay—Atikokan	
Morrison, Suze (NDP)	Toronto Centre / Toronto-Centre	
Mulroney, Hon. / L'hon. Caroline (PC)	York—Simcoe	Attorney General / Procureure générale Minister of Francophone Affairs / Ministre des Affaires francophones
Natyshak, Taras (NDP)	Essex	
Nicholls, Rick (PC)	Chatham-Kent—Leamington	Chair of the Committee of the Whole House / Président du comité plénier de l'Assemblée Deputy Speaker / Vice-président
Oosterhoff, Sam (PC)	Niagara West / Niagara-Ouest	

Member and Party / Député(e) et parti	Constituency / Circonscription	Other responsibilities / Autres responsabilités
Pang, Billy (PC)	Markham—Unionville	
Park, Lindsey (PC)	Durham	
Parsa, Michael (PC)	Aurora—Oak Ridges—Richmond Hill	
Pettapiece, Randy (PC)	Perth—Wellington	
Phillips, Hon. / L'hon. Rod (PC)	Ajax	Minister of the Environment, Conservation and Parks / Ministre de l'Environnement, de la Protection de la nature et des Parcs
Piccini, David (PC)	Northumberland—Peterborough South / Northumberland—Peterborough-Sud	
Rakocevic, Tom (NDP)	Humber River—Black Creek	
Rasheed, Kaleed (PC)	Mississauga East—Cooksville / Mississauga-Est—Cooksville	
Rickford, Hon. / L'hon. Greg (PC)	Kenora—Rainy River	Minister of Energy, Northern Development and Mines / Ministre de l'Énergie, du Développement du Nord et des Mines Minister of Indigenous Affairs / Ministre des Affaires autochtones
Roberts, Jeremy (PC)	Ottawa West—Nepean / Ottawa- Ouest—Nepean	
Romano, Ross (PC)	Sault Ste. Marie	
Sabawy, Sheref (PC)	Mississauga—Erin Mills	
Sandhu, Amarjot (PC)	Brampton West / Brampton-Ouest	
Sarkaria, Prabmeet Singh (PC)	Brampton South / Brampton-Sud	
Sattler, Peggy (NDP)	London West / London-Ouest	
Schreiner, Mike (GRN)	Guelph	
Scott, Hon. / L'hon. Laurie (PC)	Haliburton—Kawartha Lakes—Brock	Minister of Labour / Ministre du Travail
Shaw, Sandy (NDP)	Hamilton West—Ancaster—Dundas / Hamilton-Ouest—Ancaster—Dundas	
Simard, Amanda (IND)	Glengarry—Prescott—Russell	
Singh, Gurratan (NDP)	Brampton East / Brampton-Est	
Singh, Sara (NDP)	Brampton Centre / Brampton-Centre	Deputy Leader, Official Opposition / Chef adjointe de l'opposition officielle
Skelly, Donna (PC)	Flamborough—Glanbrook	
Smith, Dave (PC)	Peterborough—Kawartha	
Smith, Hon. / L'hon. Todd (PC)	Bay of Quinte / Baie de Quinte	Minister of Economic Development, Job Creation and Trade / Ministre du Développement économique, de la Création d'emplois et du Commerce Government House Leader / Leader parlementaire du gouvernement
Stevens, Jennifer (Jennie) (NDP)	St. Catharines	
Stiles, Marit (NDP)	Davenport	
Surma, Kinga (PC)	Etobicoke Centre / Etobicoke-Centre	
Tabuns, Peter (NDP)	Toronto—Danforth	
Tangri, Nina (PC)	Mississauga—Streetsville	
Taylor, Monique (NDP)	Hamilton Mountain	
Thanigasalam, Vijay (PC)	Scarborough—Rouge Park	
Thompson, Hon. / L'hon. Lisa M. (PC)	Huron—Bruce	Minister of Education / Ministre de l'Éducation
Tibollo, Hon. / L'hon. Michael A. (PC)	Vaughan—Woodbridge	Minister of Tourism, Culture and Sport / Ministre du Tourisme, de la Culture et du Sport
Triantafilopoulos, Effie J. (PC)	Oakville North—Burlington / Oakville-Nord—Burlington	
Vanthof, John (NDP)	Timiskaming—Cochrane	Deputy Leader, Official Opposition / Chef adjoint de l'opposition officielle
Wai, Daisy (PC)	Richmond Hill	
Walker, Hon. / L'hon. Bill (PC)	Bruce—Grey—Owen Sound	Minister of Government and Consumer Services / Ministre des Services gouvernementaux et des Services aux consommateurs
West, Jamie (NDP)	Sudbury	
Wilson, Jim (IND)	Simcoe—Grey	
Wynne, Kathleen O. (LIB)	Don Valley West / Don Valley-Ouest	
Yakubuski, Hon. / L'hon. John (PC)	Renfrew—Nipissing—Pembroke	Minister of Natural Resources and Forestry / Ministre des Richesses naturelles et des Forêts
Yarde, Kevin (NDP)	Brampton North / Brampton-Nord	
Yurek, Hon. / L'hon. Jeff (PC)	Elgin—Middlesex—London	Minister of Transportation / Ministre des Transports

**STANDING COMMITTEES OF THE LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY
COMITÉS PERMANENTS DE L'ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE**

Standing Committee on Estimates / Comité permanent des budgets des dépenses

Chair / Président: Peter Tabuns
Vice-Chair / Vice-président: Wayne Gates
Stan Cho, Jill Dunlop
Wayne Gates, Michael Gravelle
Stephen Lecce, Gila Martow
Jane McKenna, Judith Monteith-Farrell
Lindsey Park, Randy Pettapiece
Peter Tabuns
Committee Clerk / Greffier: Timothy Bryan

Standing Committee on Finance and Economic Affairs / Comité permanent des finances et des affaires économiques

Chair / Président: Stephen Crawford
Vice-Chair / Vice-président: Jeremy Roberts
Ian Arthur, Stephen Crawford
Doug Downey, Sol Mamakwa
David Piccini, Kaleed Rasheed
Jeremy Roberts, Sandy Shaw
Donna Skelly
Committee Clerk / Greffier: Timothy Bryan

Standing Committee on General Government / Comité permanent des affaires gouvernementales

Chair / Président: Dave Smith
Vice-Chair / Vice-présidente: Natalia Kusendova
Jessica Bell, Chris Glover
Christine Hogarth, Logan Kanapathi
Daryl Kramp, Natalia Kusendova
Amarjot Sandhu, Mike Schreiner
Dave Smith, Jennifer (Jennie) Stevens
Daisy Wai
Committee Clerk / Greffière: Julia Douglas

Standing Committee on Government Agencies / Comité permanent des organismes gouvernementaux

Chair / Président: John Vanthof
Vice-Chair / Vice-président: Taras Natyshak
Roman Baber, Rudy Cuzzetto
Amy Fee, Vincent Ke
Andrea Khanjin, Marie-France Lalonde
Taras Natyshak, Rick Nicholls
Jeremy Roberts, Marit Stiles
John Vanthof
Committee Clerk / Greffière: Jocelyn McCauley

Standing Committee on Justice Policy / Comité permanent de la justice

Chair / Président: Parm Gill
Vice-Chair / Vice-président: Aris Babikian
Roman Baber, Aris Babikian
Nathalie Des Rosiers, Jill Dunlop
Parm Gill, Lindsey Park
Ross Romano, Prabmeet Singh Sarkaria
Sara Singh, Monique Taylor
Kevin Yarde
Committee Clerk / Greffière: Jocelyn McCauley

Standing Committee on the Legislative Assembly / Comité permanent de l'Assemblée législative

Chair / Présidente: Jane McKenna
Vice-Chair / Vice-président: Vijay Thanigasalam
Robert Bailey, Rima Berns-McGown
Lorne Coe, Michael Coteau
Mike Harris, Faisal Hassan
Jane McKenna, Christina Maria Mitas
Sam Oosterhoff, Gurratan Singh
Vijay Thanigasalam
Committee Clerk / Greffière: Valerie Quioc Lim

Standing Committee on Public Accounts / Comité permanent des comptes publics

Chair / Présidente: Catherine Fife
Vice-Chair / Vice-présidente: Peggy Sattler
Toby Barrett, Catherine Fife
Goldie Ghamari, Jim McDonell
Norman Miller, Suze Morrison
Michael Parsa, Peggy Sattler
Kinga Surma
Committee Clerk / Greffier: Christopher Tyrell

Standing Committee on Regulations and Private Bills / Comité permanent des règlements et des projets de loi d'intérêt privé

Chair / Président: Kaleed Rasheed
Vice-Chair / Vice-président: Will Bouma
Will Bouma, Paul Calandra
Lorne Coe, Stephen Crawford
Mitzie Hunter, Laura Mae Lindo
Paul Miller, Billy Pang
Kaleed Rasheed, Amarjot Sandhu
Jamie West
Committee Clerk / Greffier: Eric Rennie

Standing Committee on Social Policy / Comité permanent de la politique sociale

Chair / Présidente: Nina Tangri
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Deepak Anand, Doly Begum
Jeff Burch, Amy Fee
John Fraser, Joel Harden
Belinda Karahalios, Robin Martin
Sheref Sabawy, Nina Tangri
Effie J. Triantafilopoulos
Committee Clerk / Greffier: Eric Rennie