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of Ontario



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(Hansard)**

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(Hansard)**

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Mercredi  
15 mai 2019

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Speaker: Honourable Ted Arnott  
Clerk: Todd Decker

Président : L'honorable Ted Arnott  
Greffier : Todd Decker

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Hansard Reporting and Interpretation Services  
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Salle 500, aile ouest, Édifice du Parlement  
111, rue Wellesley ouest, Queen's Park  
Toronto ON M7A 1A2  
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## LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF ONTARIO

Wednesday 15 May 2019

## ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE DE L'ONTARIO

Mercredi 15 mai 2019

*The House met at 0900.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott):** We'll begin this morning with a moment of silence for inner thought and personal reflection.

Let us pray.

*Prayers.*

### ORDERS OF THE DAY

#### TIME ALLOCATION

Resuming the debate adjourned on May 14, 2019, on the amendment to the motion for time allocation of the following bill:

Bill 107, An Act to amend the Highway Traffic Act and various other statutes in respect of transportation-related matters / Projet de loi 107, Loi modifiant le Code de la route et diverses autres lois à l'égard de questions relatives au transport.

**The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott):** Further debate? Further debate? I recognize the member for London–Fanshawe.

**Ms. Teresa J. Armstrong:** Thank you, Speaker. That was very kind of you, to spend some time and ask for further debate, and allow for us to wake up a little bit this morning, to stand up and debate. Obviously, I'm standing here today, and we're going to talk about time allocation.

We started our day this morning by listening to you about having our personal reflections, taking some time for thoughts and personal reflections. I took that opportunity to stand in my place and take some time to have some personal thoughts and reflections about what the day is going to look like today. I see the Speaker's eyes widening a little bit. I'm sure he's wondering, on a personal reflection level, what question period is going to look like today. I think we all think about that.

I hope when we come here at the beginning of the day and we start our day off with some thoughts from the Speaker and a prayer, that we sometimes translate those things into our day and how we run this Legislature and how we treat each other.

Now, we are talking about time allocation today. It's been a pattern of behaviour of this government to time-allocate every bill to process through this Legislature. I think if we reflect on those kinds of things and we look at what's happening in this Legislature, we're not really considering outside of these walls what people are saying, what their feedback is. Because this government isn't about consulting on a broader level beyond the bubble that they work in, and that's the bubble of the Premier's office.

Time allocation of Bill 107, like all the bills before it, really causes us to pause for concern. What is this government so opposed to hearing—to travelling a bill to certain parts of the province, like in the north? With transit and highways and transportation, I'm sure the people in the north have something to say about this bill and why they were left out of the bill. But this government doesn't want to hear it, and they limit the time for presentations.

They ask people to submit their intent to speak on this bill and present during committee up until Thursday. It's always a rapid kind of reaction to legislation. And, really, you're going to get better results if you actually take the time to plan out legislation and hear from the people you represent. You're going to get a better product. This government is in such a hurry to fast-track their agenda that they're missing real voices of the people they represent. I'm sure that they have had correspondence and emails, and even silent sit-in protests when it comes to library cuts, but they don't want to hear it. They don't want to hear any other voices besides the ones that speak to what they agree to.

When you time-allocate these bills, you limit debate, and then you're also limiting public participation during consultation because, if you're not travelling it, you're not allowing enough time—days, perhaps—for presentations in the committee. Not everybody can just uproot their lives if they have jobs, if they have children, if they have—people living with distance challenges: It might take hours to get here for someone from Thunder Bay who may want to contribute to a bill.

It's not every bill that you have to travel and it's not every bill that you may need more days of consultation or committee work on. We understand that. But this government just takes a one-size-fits-all approach, and it's not going to work, just like in health care, when you talk about public health. It's not going to work for everybody, just like when you talk about ambulance stations—cutting that back. It's not going to work for everybody. You're going to make things worse. You're going to cause a trickle effect of problems in your own communities.

We see that in Toronto when a mayor sends out letters to MPPs' ridings of this government telling them that it's the wrong way to go. They're doing the consultation for you, and that's sad, because we really want a government to involve public input. That's what democracy looks like. It's actually hearing differences of opinion and then formulating your legislation around those differences. You may not agree with it, but, believe it or not, great ideas come from listening to people with different perspectives when it comes to legislation.

With that, my time is up, and I'd like to wrap up.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls):** Further debate?

**Mrs. Nina Tangri:** I'm pleased to rise today in support of the time allocation of Bill 107. This bill is just one of the many ways our government is taking swift action to deliver on our promises to the people of Ontario and this province: a better place to live, work and grow.

Some 342 days ago, the people of Ontario voted for change, and our government has been at lightning pace to deliver the change the province so desperately needed after 15 years under a reckless previous administration. We reformed OHIP+ to support those in greatest need. We ended the 143-day strike and got students at York University back to class. We took swift action to fix the hydro mess. We invested tens of millions of dollars into community safety and correctional services and took action to support our police officers, who keep our communities safe. We took action to end hallway health care. We cut red tape to make it easier to do business in Ontario, while protecting Ontarians' safety. We made it more affordable for students to attend university and college. We launched a \$30-billion infrastructure program. We introduced the LIFT and CARE credits to make life more affordable for families. We are fighting the regressive, job-killing federal carbon tax.

I could continue with all the great things we're doing, but let me get back to the proposals to get Ontario moving. We've already made substantial announcements in transportation, which my constituents in Mississauga—Streetsville are excited about. For example, by making GO Transit free—yes, free—for children 12 and under to use, we've allowed more families to travel into Toronto and beyond and helped get cars off our highways. We introduced two-way, weekday service from Niagara Falls to Union Station four years ahead of when the service was previously expected to be introduced. We unveiled our vision for transit development in the city of Toronto. We committed to building the Ottawa, Hamilton and, in Mississauga, the Hurontario LRT projects.

**0910**

This bill has so much more, but with less than 10 days before we return to our constituencies, we need to take action to ensure this bill passes and we can get to work. This is why we are time-allocating this bill. The time allocation will ensure that the bill still goes through the proper committee processes of public hearings and clause-by-clause considerations, while also ensuring that we can move as swiftly as possible to implement the measures if the bill is passed.

The bill has six schedules or parts, which contain provisions to keep our roads safe and protect front-line workers, school children and motorcyclists. The bill also has measures to enhance the province's ability to improve public transportation.

Our government has taken action to ensure that transit projects across Ontario can go ahead and get Ontarians moving, but the city of Toronto has been stuck in a holding pattern for many, many years. I came to Ontario from England over 34 years ago, where there was an extensive

subway system in London—the tube, or the underground, as we call it. When I got on the subway here in Toronto, I saw a few lines across a map and was a little confused before I realized that was it. And now, many years later, when Toronto is a world-class city with over three million people in the city and six million people in the GTA, the map looks largely the same. We need to immediately get shovels in the ground and make up for the time lost over the years when study after study and vote after vote would happen at Toronto city council, and still nothing has happened.

The proposed legislation would amend the Metrolinx Act to give the province increased authority over new subway projects, either through taking on sole responsibility for the planning, design and delivery of the specified project, or decision-making authority for projects that the province would not fully control. It would also include the ability to scope the city and TTC's role with respect to these projects and ensure that work already under way, along with these key assets, will be transferred to the province.

Speaker, my constituents complain that they spend too much time and money interacting with government agencies, especially when it comes to their vehicles and licensing. As a driver myself, I agree. Complementing the initiatives proposed and under way by our dedicated and hard-working Minister of Government and Consumer Services, we are making further proposals to offer online services to the people of Ontario. For example, the digital dealer registration project will allow dealerships to apply for needed permits, plates and stickers online without having to attend ServiceOntario, allowing customers to drive away with their vehicles sooner.

Last month ended the Drive Clean program, at the end of its usefulness, saving Ontarians up to \$40 million a year. We've cancelled several driver and vehicle fee increases in the past months, allowing Ontario drivers, vehicle owners, farmers and businesses to keep more money in their pocket.

This legislation is in line with our commitments to the people of Ontario during the election. But, Speaker, more important than transit and more important than cost savings is the safety of our road users, our front-line workers and children. We are proposing several regulatory changes and amendments to the Highway Traffic Act to this effect.

Residents of my community have long been voicing their concerns about the safety of children on school buses. We've all seen videos or perhaps first-hand instances of drivers passing a stopped school bus with their lights and stop signs activated. This behaviour by drivers is dangerous and irresponsible, and I'm proud to be part of a government that is finally taking action to increase student safety.

We plan to introduce a new administrative monetary penalty framework for improperly passing a school bus. Municipalities will continue to collect and keep revenues from these fines, making it easier for them to implement a school bus camera framework to catch the drivers putting our children at risk. Once the framework is in place, we will move to enact regulations that establish the rules for using stop-arm-camera evidence for both provincial offences and the administrative penalties. The AMP system

allows municipalities to deal with these offences outside of the court system, saving time and money and freeing up court resources to deal with other matters.

We are also proposing to mandate that driving instructors have a blood alcohol concentration of zero and have no drugs in their body while providing driver instruction. Novice drivers are far more likely to be involved in collisions than an experienced driver, and we need instructors to not only set a proper example for our new drivers, but to also be as alert and aware of their surroundings as possible to keep the occupants of the vehicle and other road users safe.

These are just a few of the actions that we are taking.

Contrary to the rhetoric coming from the other side of the House, our government is 100% committed to the safety of our road users, our road workers and our emergency personnel. Our government has made investment after investment into community safety.

Just this week, I had the privilege to join the Minister of Infrastructure, the Solicitor General and the member from Mississauga–Lakeshore to announce a \$20-million investment in my riding to replace the nearly 70-year-old Port Credit OPP detachment with a facility with direct access to North America's busiest highway and the world's busiest truck route, Highway 401. When the Port Credit detachment located in southern Mississauga was built, the 427 wasn't built and the 401 was a short stub of the over 800 kilometres it spans today. This is just one of the steps we are taking to modernize our province's resources and protect community safety.

I hope that the opposition can put partisan politics behind them and recognize that getting Ontario moving and further ensuring the safety of motorists, children and road workers cannot wait. We need to take action now to protect our highways and roads, while making it easier for Ontarians to access services and for people and goods to be able to move more effectively and more efficiently. Please join me and support the time allocation of this bill.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls):** Further debate?

**Mrs. Amy Fee:** Good morning. It is my honour to stand in this House today to speak to the time allocation of Bill 107.

As the member from Mississauga–Streetsville just pointed out, it is vitally important that we do move ahead with time allocation on this bill because there are so many important safety measures in it, and we are at that time in our legislative calendar when we do need to move ahead with legislation. To me, it is also extremely important to time-allocate this bill because of one key component, and that is to make roads safer for our children on the way to and from school. There are also a few parts of this piece of proposed legislation that I will touch on in my time this morning, including the changes that will help hold drivers who blow by school bus stop signs accountable, work towards making our highways safer and making it easier to access government services, and how this bill will help commuters from my riding of Kitchener South–Hespeler.

Again, for me, the most critical component of this bill, if passed, is that it will ensure that municipalities have the

authority to make sure that people who ignore school bus stop signs and drive past them will be held accountable. Protecting our children should always be our top priority. As a school board trustee in Waterloo region, I worked towards a pilot project for these school bus stop-arm cameras after hearing from parents who were concerned—and also after witnessing it at my own children's bus stop. There were many times—some weeks it happened more than once—when I would see drivers on my street in Kitchener run right past a school bus with the stop sign out and the lights flashing. Sometimes those drivers would just whiz by; other times, they would slow down; and sometimes they would even be stopped and then just go through as if they didn't have the patience to wait any longer for the children to get on the bus. To me, as a parent—and at that time, as a school board trustee—and as a community member, it was horrifying to see that this was what drivers in my own neighbourhood were doing.

**0920**

When that pilot project was launched by the Waterloo Catholic and Waterloo Region District School Boards, six school buses were equipped with those stop-arm cameras. The data they collected was also horrifying, I would say it was actually unbelievable, what we learned. Over just 23 school days, 97 stop-arm violations were recorded, and keep in mind that was on just those six buses. That was nearly 100 times that a child could have been seriously hurt or worse. It also means that every day in Waterloo region at least four drivers were breaking the law and potentially putting dozens of children at risk. What that data also shows us is that if we took that data from those six buses and put it out across all of the buses in Waterloo region, there could be up to 130 school bus stop-arm violations every day. So I'm proud of the work that Minister Yurek has put into this legislation to protect students and to ensure that drivers get a clear message that this kind of behaviour is not just against the law but is incredibly dangerous too.

That is why it is so important that we time-allocate this bill. This is also one of the main reasons why I was so disappointed and, quite frankly, baffled by the fact that the NDP voted down the first reading of Bill 107 without even looking at it. Protecting children across the province by ensuring their safety and well-being should never be a partisan issue. While I like to believe that the NDP members opposite take their roles as the official opposition seriously, it's incomprehensible why they would have felt the need to oppose such a crucial piece of legislation.

Every day, I'm hearing from people in Kitchener South–Hespeler about commuting and transit issues. It gives me pride to stand here today and say that Minister Yurek and his parliamentary assistant, Kinga Surma, have been working extremely hard on not just improving GO Transit service to Kitchener, which is up by 25% in the last year, but also to make our highways safer.

They're also working within Bill 107 to improve the transit system in Toronto, a transit system that many people from Kitchener and Cambridge use to get to work, events or to see family in the GTA. If passed, this bill will

make sure that new subway lines are built quickly to get people to work faster, home sooner and to family and friends and events in the city faster. We all want that seamless transit experience, and that means one that goes beyond city and regional boundaries. As Minister Yurek has said, we have waited long enough for this.

Tens of thousands of people, including from Kitchener and Cambridge, transfer from GO Transit to the TTC every day. Within this legislation, the upload of the TTC is an important step in building our regional transit to get people moving. With the upload, we will be able to deliver more transit expansion options, and quicker. Not only are we seeing now the largest spend on subway expansions in our province's history, at \$28.5 billion, but we're going to finish the Ontario Line sooner, in 2027, two years ahead of the city's target date.

Also important to residents, especially the commuters and parents in my riding, are the changes this legislation could mean for highway safety. We want to ensure that all new drivers know that it is never safe to drive under the influence. We are introducing a new offence for any driving instructor who violates a zero blood alcohol or drug presence requirement. We think driving instructors should be leading by example in keeping our roads and young drivers safe. Certainly, as a parent of four children, I am, like most parents, not looking forward to when they learn to drive, but this proposed legislation, I think, will help with those nerves just a little bit.

Andrew Murie, the chief executive officer at MADD Canada, is happy with this proposal, saying, "In establishing and enforcing a zero blood alcohol content and zero drug presence for instructors, the Ministry of Transportation is reinforcing that responsibility and sending a strong message to both instructors and students, about the importance of always driving sober."

One frustration that I have heard time and time again from drivers is the danger that can be created when someone is driving too slowly in the left-hand lane. It can be frustrating but also dangerous. The driver moving slowly can be rear-ended, and some drivers may let out their frustration by then passing on the right, which can be extremely dangerous and as well can lead to risky moves that are just fuelled by that frustration. That's why we're enhancing road safety on our highways by introducing in this legislation tougher penalties for people who drive slowly in the left lane.

We're also putting more protections in place for front-line roadside maintenance, construction, tow truck and recovery workers from careless and dangerous drivers by strengthening those penalties. This is just another reason why it is so important that we time-allocated this bill. When people leave their loved ones to go to work, they should feel confident that they will be able to make it home safely to them.

From CAA: They are pleased to see the number of safety measures proposed in this bill, including the additional protections for tow truck operators.

As reported by 570 News in Kitchener this week, tow truck driver Andrew McDonald had a very close call on

Highway 400 just over four years ago. While helping a CAA member with a flat tire, he was clipped by a mirror on a dump truck. Andrew said, "The hit knocked me over and threw me in front of the member's van. I wasn't badly hurt, but the experience spooked me, especially since at the time I was a single father."

As reported in that same article, in the last five years, the OPP have laid over 9,000 charges against drivers who have failed to slow down and move over for tow trucks, police and other emergency personnel on our roads.

Acting OPP deputy commissioner of traffic safety and operational support Dave Quigley stated to 570 News that, "These people count on drivers to give them the safe space they need so that they can make it home" safe "to their families at the end of their workday."

If passed, this bill will put more protections in place for those vulnerable roadside workers. Again, this is just another reason why it was so key that we time-allocate this bill.

Also part of these proposed changes are some changes that I've been asked about in my office and at different events around Waterloo region, like Ride for Dad and the newly renamed Harry Watts Memorial Ride for National Service Dogs. There are changes that would benefit motorcyclists and make highway travel safer for them. If this bill passes, single-occupant motorcyclists will be allowed to use HOV lanes on our highways, something that is common in most jurisdictions in North America. We will also provide more choice for motorcyclists by changing the handlebar height restrictions to allow for the high-styled handlebars.

Finally, I'd like to talk about changes that are included in Bill 107 that were championed by my riding neighbour Kitchener-Conestoga MPP Mike Harris. This bill takes key aspects of his private member's bill with the launch of a new digital dealer registration pilot project. Car dealerships that are involved in the pilot will be able to perform in-house registrations for any new vehicles that are purchased at their locations. This pilot will aim to make that process of buying a new vehicle that much easier for both the customers as well as the dealers.

In the few short minutes, Mr. Speaker, I hope you have heard some of the key aspects of this legislation and what makes me proud that Minister Yurek brought this forward, and all the hard work he has put in it, and why it is so important that we time-allocate this motion.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls):** Further debate?

**Ms. Effie J. Triantafilopoulos:** I am also pleased to join the debate on time allocation for Bill 107, the Getting Ontario Moving Act. Our government's policy on transportation and transit is clear: to keep our roads safe and protect front-line workers, schoolchildren and motorcyclists. We want to get commuters to work sooner and home faster and to families and friends quicker. This is truly about quality of life. No one wants to waste time in traffic.

With this bill, we have an additional aim: We want to get people to work or home safer. This bill puts safety first because the safety of drivers and our families is one of the things that matters most. It strengthens rules to protect motorists and to protect people working at the side of the road—another of the things that matters most. It puts



greater penalties on careless and distracted drivers—drivers who cause too many accidents.

This is an important bill designed to help increase safety on the highways, cut red tape to allow businesses and citizens to use our roads better, and also upload Toronto's subway to finally get new subway lines built.

I will be speaking today about the safety and red-tape measures which are going to make a difference for people in my community, but I know that my constituents in Oakville North–Burlington will also benefit from the subway upload. Faster transit in Toronto through new subway lines will benefit everyone in the GTA and across Ontario. It means faster times for commuters and makes our region more attractive to small and medium-sized businesses.

#### 0930

So do faster and safer roads. Commuters in my community have very long commute times. A 2017 report found the average daily commuting time to the Toronto downtown core from Oakville was 127.5 minutes, and from Burlington, it was 177.5 minutes. I can attest to this, as I routinely do this commute, Speaker. And 73% of Halton commuters drive alone, the highest number in the GTA.

Our government will always work to protect what matters most, and that is true when we look at transportation, whether roads or transit. We will cut red tape, but we will also put safety first, and we will keep and enhance those rules that keep people safe. In Ontario, we are truly blessed with some of the safest highways in the world. In North America, we've ranked the lowest or second-lowest in fatality rates among all jurisdictions for 18 consecutive years. People in Halton region share in this excellent system, but we can always make it better.

Halton region has a dedicated, well-trained police service, with over 1,000 sworn officers and civilian staff. Our government wants to make sure that Halton police, the OPP and every other police force in Ontario have the tools they need to keep our roads safe, and this bill will help. In Halton, our police issued 50,858 tickets for traffic violations in 2018. That comes out to one ticket every 10 minutes, 24 hours a day, seven days a week. Almost a third of these were for speeding up to 29 kilometres per hour over the limit. More than 2,000 tickets were for distracted driving. One person in Halton is injured in a distracted driving collision every hour, and the number of deaths in Ontario caused by distracted driving has doubled since the year 2000. The National Safety Council says that distracted driving is a factor in about 25% of all motor vehicle collisions in Canada. This is why our local police need more powers and tougher penalties so that they can work to keep us safe on the roads, and Bill 107 offers greater powers.

Driving instructors are required to have a blood alcohol concentration of zero and to have no drugs in their body while providing driving instructions. A police officer may demand that a driving instructor provide a sample of breath or oral fluid for analysis by the appropriate equipment. Driving instructors teach Ontario's young people how to drive. They provide knowledge, but they also should be providing an example. A zero blood alcohol level is fair and should have been put in a long time ago.

Bill 107 also strengthens the protection of roadside workers such as maintenance, tow truck and recovery workers from careless drivers. Currently, the act states that when a sentence is being imposed for careless driving, the court may consider as an aggravating factor whether bodily harm was caused to a person who was vulnerable, including a pedestrian or cyclist. The act is amended to refer to persons working upon the highway, in addition to pedestrians and cyclists.

The bill provides for tougher penalties for those who drive slowly in the left-hand lane, to improve the flow of traffic and road safety. Left lanes are supposed to be for overtaking vehicles. This is one of Halton region police's key safe driving tips, helping to ensure passing occurs only on one side in a multi-lane roadway, making traffic safer and more predictable.

I'm proud of our government's record on school transportation and school bus safety. Our April budget announced that our government is increasing the student transportation grant by \$92.2 million, giving school boards more resources for school buses and school bus safety. It's illegal to pass a stopped school bus with its lights flashing, and yet 17,000 people a day in Ontario drive past a stopped school bus. Speaker, this puts our students at risk, so we intend to put a camera in every school bus to record the make, model and licence plate numbers of cars that pass buses, an action that I know will make a difference.

When the education minister announced funding for a new elementary school in northeast Oakville, I was reminded that a good education requires safe transportation of our students to school and back home. When the students start going to the new school next year, I want to see each of the school buses equipped with a camera to take them safely to school and home. Let's remind drivers that they cannot pass a stopped school bus and ensure that those who do face a serious penalty.

With this bill, we put safety first, but we also make some red-tape reforms:

- making it easier for charter buses in Ontario by matching international standards. This will encourage charters to bring tourists into the province;

- improving access for smaller commercial trucks from the USA, which are currently not eligible for registration under international agreements and face fines if they enter Ontario. This will encourage our cross-border trade;

- modernizing rules for grading and construction zones; and

- allowing high-styled handlebars for motorcycles and letting them ride in the safer HOV lanes so that they do not get boxed in, if in the centre lane.

A big part of safety on the roads is the flow of traffic. This is why we are making changes when it comes to driving in left-hand lanes, but also why our government will trial speed limit increases to 110 kilometres per hour. Three 400-series highways will be trialed, including the Queen Elizabeth Way from St. Catharines to Hamilton, a highway used by thousands of my constituents every day. The Minister of Transportation announced these trials just

last week on May 10, saying that the government's number one priority is safety and that each of the pilot locations was carefully chosen based on a number of factors, including its ability to accommodate higher speed limits. The Ontario Safety League supports our trial.

Our government is committed to rolling back the ruinous red tape and overregulation that damages business investment in Ontario and places layers of unneeded bureaucracy on residents of the province. We will get rid of rules that serve no purpose but we will never eliminate rules that protect what matters most: the health and safety of people in Ontario. This bill puts safety first. It makes the rules stronger to help protect motorists and workers at the side of the highway and puts in place greater penalties for distracted and careless drivers. We will give our police and municipalities greater powers to keep residents, especially our children, safe on our roads.

It's a credit to our police and to our law-abiding citizens that we have some of the world's safest roads. Let's keep it that way and use the powers of this Legislature to help make them even safer.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls):** Further debate?

**Mrs. Daisy Wai:** I am proud to stand and support Bill 107, the Getting Ontario Moving Act. This comprehensive piece of legislation will keep our roads safe, protect front-line workers, school children and motorcyclists. Our government is proposing legislative and regulatory amendments that, if passed, would upload authority for new subway projects to the province, cut red tape for our province, create jobs and help make sure that Ontario roads remain among the safest in North America.

**0940**

Depending on the time I have, I may have to just focus on how we'll get the subway right into York region.

We are committed to building much-needed transit and getting millions of commuters moving again. The province has announced a \$28.5-billion expansion to Ontario's transit network, not just to Richmond Hill. It is the largest investment to build new subways in our history. This is the most money ever invested to get shovels in the ground and to get new subways built. Our government is investing in transportation to bring relief and new opportunities to transit users and commuters.

I have heard loud and clear from my constituents in Richmond Hill and from people across Ontario: They want transit that works, and they want it now. People are tired of sitting in their cars, stuck in traffic. They are tired of taking multiple buses just to get to the subway. This is why we need connected, effective and efficient transit. This is why we need subways. This is why we need transit that works for the people.

People have waited long enough, and we're taking action to deliver transit faster. The province can deliver better transit faster because we can move things along more quickly. We have the resources and the decision-making abilities. We can issue zoning orders. We can compel utilities and prioritize relocation work.

Not only that, we're also proposing legislation that would make our highways safer by targeting dangerous and careless drivers and improving vehicle safety.

Every day, construction workers and roadside maintenance crews put their lives at risk while on the job. That is why we made it a priority to protect front-line roadside maintenance, construction, tow truck and recovery workers from careless and dangerous drivers by strengthening applicable penalties.

Far too often, Ontario drivers blow by school buses, putting our kids in danger. We are continuing our efforts to keep children safe by allowing a new administrative monetary penalty framework that gives municipalities the tools they need to target drivers who blow by school buses and threaten the safety of children crossing roads to their school or home. The measure may make it less costly for municipalities to implement a school bus camera framework, saving the province and municipality time and money while increasing the safety of the over 800,000 children who travel on those buses to and from school every single day.

We are keeping our youth safe when they're learning to drive, affirming that alcohol, drugs, and illegal substances never mix with driving, by introducing a new offence for any driving instructor who violates a zero blood alcohol or drug presence requirement.

We also understand the challenges that drivers have getting to where they need to go. We need to improve the flow of traffic and enhance the road safety on our highways by introducing tougher penalties for driving slowly in the left-hand lane. We are proposing increased fines for slow-moving drivers who travel in the left-hand lane, because when people drive dangerously slow, they are putting the safety of others at risk.

In everything we do—every program, policy or service change—we put the experience of real people at the centre of our decision-making. I would like to reiterate how important it is for us to support this act so that we can have our traffic flowing properly. Thank you very much to all the other speakers who are speaking on this same motion.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls):** Further debate? Further debate?

Pursuant to standing order 47(b), I'm now required to put the question. Mr. Harris has moved an amendment to government notice of motion number 61 relating to allocation of time on Bill 107, An Act to amend the Highway Traffic Act and various other statutes in respect of transportation-related matters. Is it the pleasure of the House that Mr. Harris's motion carry? I heard a no.

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

All those opposed to the motion will please say "nay."

In my opinion, the ayes have it.

A recorded vote being required, it will be deferred until after question period today.

*Vote deferred.*

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls):** Orders of the day. I recognize the government House leader.

**Hon. Todd Smith:** No further business, Mr. Speaker.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls):** This House will now stand recessed until 10:30 this morning.

*The House recessed from 0946 to 1030.*

## INTRODUCTION OF VISITORS

**The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott):** I'll just begin by reminding the members that the standing orders provide for five minutes of introduction of guests. I would ask the members, as they're introducing their guests, to keep their comments brief and to ensure that there are no political statements in the introductions.

**M<sup>me</sup> France Gélinas:** It gives me great pleasure to introduce nursing division president Jackie Walker. She is with 35 front-line nurses from hospitals, long-term care and home care, all members of SEIU Healthcare Canada. Welcome to Queen's Park.

**Ms. Jill Dunlop:** Good morning, Mr. Speaker. I would like to welcome the best campaign sign crew from my riding of Simcoe North, Frank Takacs and Bob VanVliet.

I would also like to welcome teachers and students from Patrick Fogarty Catholic Secondary School, who are here for the Democracy Day program. I look forward to meeting with them this afternoon.

**Hon. Greg Rickford:** Brenda Chambers-Ivey is from Kenora and she is the regional advocate for Ontario at Cystic Fibrosis Canada. We welcome her to this magnificent place.

**Ms. Judith Monteith-Farrell:** I'd like to welcome Sheena Woods, Kaitlyn Holdt, Cathy Bishop and Sandra Kendell from my riding of Thunder Bay—Atikokan, who are here with SEIU today.

**Mr. Doug Downey:** I'd also like to welcome the students from Patrick Fogarty, but in particular Alex Lassaline, who is the son of the former EA of the Minister of Education.

**Mr. Percy Hatfield:** Good morning. We have more than 40 representatives from the Ontario Harness Horse Association here today for lobby day. There's a reception in the dining lounge at 5 p.m. Everyone is invited. I won't list them all, but I would like to welcome seven of them, if I may: Brian Tropea, Jim Whelan, Nathan Bain, Ken Hardy, Randy Waples, Mark Williams and Jo Jo Chinto. Welcome to Queen's Park.

**Mrs. Marie-France Lalonde:** This morning, I had the great pleasure to meet with a group of RPNs who are here in this Assembly today to discuss the challenges and solutions that they're proposing to health care. I would like to introduce Sandi Jones, Larisa Zhuravlyov and Jamie Amato.

**Hon. Victor Fedeli:** I'd like to introduce Macrina Perron, who is a North Bay constituent who is here today. Welcome, Macrina.

**Mrs. Jennifer (Jennie) Stevens:** I'd like to welcome all the brothers and sisters from my local union, SEIU, here this morning. Welcome.

**Mrs. Gila Martow:** I just want to make sure, Mr. Speaker, that you're going to be introducing the former MPP for Thornhill, my mentor and my friend Peter Shurman.

**The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott):** Welcome, Peter. The member for Brampton Centre.

**Ms. Sara Singh:** Thank you, Speaker, and thank you for getting the riding right. It looks like your memory is getting better day by day.

I have the great pleasure of introducing the parents of page Nailani, Yanet and Larry Cavero, who are visiting from the great riding of Brampton Centre. Welcome and thank you so much for being here today.

**Hon. Sylvia Jones:** Speaker, please allow me an indulgence: from Cystic Fibrosis Canada, guests Louise Taylor, Ann Phrazyn, Nancy Turner, Margaret Hicks, Macrina Perron, Chantal Fillion, Danielle Weil, Jack Segal, Jillian Lynch, Marina Ayvazyan, Sasha Haughian, Jamie Larocque and Caroline Rigutto. Welcome to Queen's Park.

**M<sup>me</sup> France Gélinas:** J'aimerais souhaiter la bienvenue à Chantal Fillion, qui est descendue de Nickel Belt pour nous parler de la fibrose kystique. Elle a un enfant qui a la fibrose kystique. Bienvenue, Chantal.

**Mr. Daryl Kramp:** Today, I have the pleasure of welcoming my soulmate for so many years, my wife Carol Ann; my grandson, Ky Graham; my granddaughter, Ainsley Philips; and two wonderful friends of theirs, Brock Kelsh and Ben Bailey. Thank you, and welcome.

**Miss Monique Taylor:** It gives me great pride to welcome back to the Legislature once again Michau van Speyk, Faith Munoz, Angela Brandt, Kowthar Dore, Reshma Younge, Amanda Mooyer and her son Izak Lynch—welcome, Izak—and Bruce McIntosh. Welcome to Queen's Park.

**Hon. Michael A. Tibollo:** It gives me great honour this morning to introduce my daughter Mercedes Tibollo, who is at the Legislature for the first time since coming home from school.

**Hon. Doug Ford:** I'd like to welcome the Ontario provincial acrobatic gymnastics girls' team. I look forward to seeing you after question period.

**Mr. Stephen Lecce:** I want to introduce a friend of mine, Leanna Vilella, a regional councillor from the region of Niagara who is also a great affordable housing advocate in the province of Ontario. Thank you for joining us in the people's House.

**Mr. Stephen Crawford:** It's an honour for me to introduce a good friend of mine, Megan McElwain.

**Hon. Ernie Hardeman:** I'd like to welcome a class from the Oxford Reformed Christian School here today. Welcome.

**Mr. Taras Natyshak:** I'd like to welcome SEIU Health-care nurses to Queen's Park today: Suzanne Churchill, Catherine Morrison, Cathy Bishop and Leigh Frederick. Welcome to Queen's Park.

**Mr. David Piccini:** I'd like to welcome to Queen's Park Laurie Robinson, chair and executive director of the Indigenous Advanced Education and Skills Council. It was an honour to join you on September 26 or 28, I think it was, for the launch of the quality assurances framework. Thank you for the work you're doing to build a brighter future for students, graduates and employers in our Indigenous communities. Thanks for being with us today.

**Ms. Mitzie Hunter:** It's my pleasure to welcome members of SEIU who are here today: Felipe Noriega, Sheena

Woods, Suzanne Churchill, Jason Clynyk and Camolle Reid, who is from Scarborough. I want to thank them for all the work they do for patients.

**Mr. Sam Oosterhoff:** I'd also like to welcome to the Legislature today the regional councillor from Welland for Niagara, Leanna Villella. Welcome to Queen's Park.

**The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott):** From the Chair, I am pleased to also welcome the member for Thornhill in the 39th and 40th Parliaments, Peter Shurman, who has already been introduced. Welcome back, Peter. We're delighted to have you here.

It is now time for oral questions. I recognize the leader of the official opposition.

**Ms. Andrea Horwath:** Speaker, before I get started, on behalf of, I suspect, all MPPs in the Legislature, I think it's appropriate to give a warm welcome to the 2,500 13- to 21-year-old athletes and their coaches who are here in the GTA this week to participate in the first Special Olympics Ontario Invitational Youth Games, along with their families and fans.

Of course, the Special Olympics showcase incredible talent and also incredible values. It's great to have these athletes competing. Congratulations to everyone involved, and good luck and success in your sport.

## ORAL QUESTIONS

### PUBLIC HEALTH

**Ms. Andrea Horwath:** My question is to the Premier. Yesterday the city of Toronto announced that, in addition to the \$85-million reduction in funding to public health that they're already grappling with, the Premier plans to slash another \$20 million from their budget. The government has opted to surprise them with this round of cuts, just like they did with the first ones. Why are municipalities being hit with cut after cut with no warning, no consultation and no apparent plan?

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

**Hon. Christine Elliott:** Thank you very much for the question. We have already communicated with the city of Toronto that we will be providing them with \$114 million for public health for the coming year, and that there is no suggestion, there has been no announcement, and nothing has come from the Ministry of Health to the city of Toronto to suggest that there are any further changes to that original plan.

Whatever was announced yesterday was announced—I have no idea why, but it was not from our office. There is no truth in any suggestion that there is any change to the original announcement that we will provide \$114 million for public health to the city of Toronto. Regardless of any changes or whatever else they do, that money will be provided by the Ministry of Health.

1040

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

**Ms. Andrea Horwath:** Well, I think what the minister responded with is exactly reflective of the problem we have, Speaker. If the government has a plan for public

health, they haven't shared it with the people on the front lines, who actually do the work every day.

In North Bay, they're wondering whether their brand new health unit will soon be abandoned. Medical officers of health across Ontario are wondering how their local units can be merged without sacrificing the needs of their communities. Every municipality is wondering if there's yet another cut the Ford government is waiting to spring on them.

If the government has a plan, why are so many front-line public health providers in the dark about it?

**Hon. Christine Elliott:** Through you, Mr. Speaker, I would like to say to the leader of the official opposition that there has been very clear communication with both the city of Toronto and with the Association of Municipalities of Ontario. In fact, a letter went out to them yesterday, indicating that with respect to the boundaries and with respect to—

*Interjections.*

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

**Hon. Christine Elliott:** The money has already been discussed, but with respect to the boundaries, I understand there have been some suggestions out there that the boundaries have been completed. They have not. They are going to be completed in working with the municipalities and working with the city of Toronto through the technical working group. That is a discussion that's going to be ongoing, and the local boards of health clearly understand that.

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

**Ms. Andrea Horwath:** From the responses of this minister, I think what everybody clearly understands is she has no plan. It's cut, cut, cut without a plan, Speaker.

This government has given regional public health providers no reason whatsoever to trust them, because they have no plan. Cuts are announced by the day around here. Schemes are drawn up on the backs of napkins with zero consultation. And in the midst of all of this chaos, organizational structures and transitional plans are nowhere to be seen.

Instead of plowing ahead with reckless cuts and plans to eliminate 25 out of 35 health units, why doesn't the government reverse these cuts and work with public health units to keep Ontarians healthy and safe, and actually contribute to the end of hallway medicine?

*Interjections.*

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

We are five minutes into question period. I think the government side would expect and anticipate that the Speaker should be paying attention to the questions that are being asked. I need to be able to hear the questions. It's completely out of order and very disrespectful to the whole House for so many—not all of the government members, clearly, but a number of government members to be just screaming across the floor. It's unacceptable behaviour.

Start the clock. Minister to reply.

**Hon. Christine Elliott:** Thank you very much, Speaker. Again, through you, I would like to say, let's talk about chaos. Let's look at what we inherited last June when we became government: a \$15-billion deficit, a health care

system in chaos, no long-term-care beds for people, 33,000 people waiting for a long-term-care bed, 1,000 people a day being treated in hospital hallways and storage rooms, wait-lists everywhere and no mental health and addictions plan.

We have a plan that has been clearly articulated to the people of Ontario, a plan to modernize our health care system, to bring it into the 21st century. Making sure that we can streamline and modernize our public health system is very important. Public health is important. The local public health units are being given enough money to make sure that they can cover all of the essentials: vaccinations, school programs, helping people with special needs. They will be able to do that, and we look forward to working alongside them through the transition teams to figure out the exact details. But make no mistake: There is a plan, and we are following through on that plan.

#### MUNICIPAL FINANCES

**Ms. Andrea Horwath:** My next question is to the Premier. But I can assure the minister that chaos is in the mirror for her and her Premier.

Yesterday, Toronto council passed a motion asking the province to reverse cuts to public health, child care, paramedic and other services. It won the support of every councillor who was not the Premier's nephew. Like municipalities across Ontario, Toronto is warning that they will either have to make deep cuts or issue a second Doug Ford tax hike of up to \$180—

**The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott):** I'm going to interrupt the Leader of the Opposition. We refer to each other by our ministerial title or our ridings.

The member can continue.

**Ms. Andrea Horwath:** —or issue a second Ford government tax hike of up to \$180 per household. What does the Premier prefer?

**Hon. Doug Ford:** Through you, Mr. Speaker: I don't have to be taught any lessons by the Leader of the Opposition about how the city spends their money. I'll tell you that.

I've never seen more wasted money in my entire life—because I spent four years down there straightening out the mess of a previous government. All there have been are increases in taxes and spending. The people of Toronto have to look at one thing. Look at their tax bill. Look at their water bill. Look at their garbage bill. The taxes have gone through the roof.

When I was at the city of Toronto, we maintained a zero per cent tax increase the very first year and found \$774 million. Right now, the city of Toronto, Mr. Speaker, when I left it was a \$9.6-billion budget; it's over \$13 billion—that's almost a 50% increase in spending. They have to start looking at watering stumps—that's what they're wasting money on—of trees, having a \$10-million fleet of cars downstairs, sitting there—

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

**Ms. Andrea Horwath:** Well, Speaker, sadly, Toronto is not alone. Municipalities across Ontario are facing the

exact same challenge. The region of Peel says they now face a \$45-million shortfall, thanks to the Ford government cuts. The mayor of Ottawa says the city budget has been thrown into a period of chaos, and Toronto says they're caught between a rock and a rock.

The Premier said he would avoid deep cuts, layoffs and tax hikes. I want to repeat that, Speaker. The Premier said he would avoid deep cuts, layoffs and tax hikes. Why is he now offering the people of Ontario all three?

**Hon. Doug Ford:** Through you, Mr. Speaker: The people in this province elected us to straighten out the financial mess that the Liberals and the NDP put us in. When we came down here, we opened the books and found a \$15-billion deficit. We have the largest sub-sovereign debt in the entire world.

The future of the young people up in the stands is at risk. If we don't take care of the budget, look at the finances—we have two choices in this province, Mr. Speaker. We can go with socialism that doesn't work anywhere in the world, continuously spend money, lose 300,000 jobs like the previous administration, or you can find efficiencies in government. You can create 175,000 jobs, like we did. It was unprecedented. We're lowering taxes on business, lowering taxes on residents; making sure we lower heating and gas costs. That's being responsible. Socialism does not work.

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

**Ms. Andrea Horwath:** Well, the problem for the Premier is that no matter how many people he blames or how loud he bellows, the people of Ontario just don't believe him anymore. His only ally left at city hall is his nephew. It seems he can't show his face in public without getting booed. Isn't it time for the Premier, now, to finally admit that his reckless cuts will in fact make life less affordable and destroy services that families rely on?

*Interjections.*

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

The Premier to reply.

**Hon. Doug Ford:** Speaker, they can get personal. They can talk about my nephew, who is the only person down there with a fiscal bone in his body, the only person who cares about the taxpayers. He's a super bright young man who would run circles around each and every one of them. If there's someone taking care of finances, I'd let him take care of my finances over the Leader of the Opposition, because if it was up to the Leader of the Opposition—she has already bankrupted every single person in this province—she'd continue to spend and tax without worrying about anything.

If you want to take care of health care, if you want to take care of education, we have to drive efficiencies. We found 8% efficiencies through the great work of our team and the finance minister. We're putting money back in the pockets of each and every Ontario resident. But even more importantly, Mr. Speaker, the economy is on fire because we've created the environment to thrive and prosper and grow in this province, the likes of which this province—

*Interjection.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott):** Stop the clock. I apologize to the Premier for having to cut him off. I could not hear what he was saying.

Restart the clock. Next question.

1050

#### EDUCATION FUNDING

**Ms. Andrea Horwath:** My next question is also to the Premier. Yesterday, the Premier insisted that officials at the Toronto District School Board were lying when they pointed out the reckless classroom cuts in the Ford government budget. Today, the Waterloo region Catholic board reports that they, too, will be facing a steep funding cut despite increased enrolment, and the Thames Valley board in London says that they are planning to eliminate 300 teaching jobs.

Does the Premier think that these school boards are also making reckless, inaccurate claims?

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

**Hon. Lisa M. Thompson:** On behalf of the Premier and our entire government, I want to suggest to everyone in this House that they need to tone down the rhetoric, because you're doing nothing but creating anxiety and stress for teachers, students and parents alike.

I want to refer to an article that was in the Woodstock Sentinel Review just today. It's coming from the Thames Valley school board: "While no teachers are in danger of losing their jobs, they may be 'changing roles,'" said the school board associate director. "There are no layoffs as a result of this because of retirements"—we talked about that right from the get-go, Speaker.

The fact of the matter is, school board to school board to school board—we're hearing from some from eastern Ontario. They're choosing not to jump into the game that the party opposite is trying to facilitate. They are not going to make things political. They're going to wait for all the pieces of the puzzle to come together so that they can have a holistic approach to making sure that they have the right balance when it comes to—

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

**Ms. Andrea Horwath:** Speaker, students and their parents are watching with dismay as teachers get layoff notices and courses disappear. It's not just Toronto—

*Interjections.*

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

**Ms. Andrea Horwath:** Students at Brampton—

*Interjections.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott):** Stop the clock. The government side will come to order or I will start naming you individually and calling you to order individually—if necessary, warning; if necessary, naming.

Start the clock. The Leader of the Opposition had the floor.

**Ms. Andrea Horwath:** Students at Brampton Centennial learned that 30 classes were being cut in the next school year. Neighbouring Mayfield Secondary is losing 42 courses. The Thames Valley board says that 1,620 different classes

will disappear next year across that school board. These cuts are depriving students of opportunities to learn.

Why doesn't the Premier have the integrity to at least admit that his cuts have consequences?

**Hon. Lisa M. Thompson:** I ask right back to the Leader of the Opposition: Where is her integrity? Because she is continuing to fester and propagate misinformation that is absolutely misleading parents and students and—

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

**Hon. Lisa M. Thompson:** Withdraw.

You know, Speaker, it's actually disheartening the manner in which this opposition party is conducting themselves, because when I speak to teachers, they recognize and are explicitly pointing out how friends of the party opposite are playing games. Those friends are creating a lot of chaos.

I encourage all school boards from one end of this province to another to do the right thing. Students should not have to suffer because of the games the party opposite and their friends are playing. The fact of the matter is, we're going to be working with school boards to make sure there is no longer wasteful management with our board governance review, and we look forward to kicking that off in the very near future.

#### GOVERNMENT'S RECORD

**Mrs. Robin Martin:** My question is for the Premier. For far too long, regular Ontarians were left behind by their government. Fifteen years of Liberal mismanagement brought higher taxes, less accountability and less transparency in government. Life in Ontario simply became harder under the former Liberal government. Crippling legislation burdened our province with red tape and regulations that held our province back.

Thankfully, under the leadership of this Premier, our government has moved rapidly forward, keeping our promises and bringing real change to the people of Ontario.

Speaker, can the Premier discuss a few of the accomplishments our government has achieved since the June election?

**Hon. Doug Ford:** I want to thank the fabulous MPP from Eglinton–Lawrence, one of the great, great ridings in Toronto. We hold more seats in Toronto than any of the other parties, so it says a lot about our government.

On August 17—I went on, a couple of days ago, on our accomplishments, and we have such a long list. I'll start off on August 17. We expanded hospice care in my friend's North Bay riding here. We put \$2 million in, 10 beds, and supported the hospice care there.

On August 22, we gave parents a voice with public education. For the first time ever, they actually had a voice. We heard from 72,000 parents, the largest consultation in Ontario's history.

We lowered energy costs after the Liberals and the NDP had jacked energy costs up to be the highest in North America. People couldn't afford to pay their hydro bills; companies couldn't—

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

**Mrs. Robin Martin:** Regular Ontarians were left high and dry for 15 years under the former Premiers Kathleen Wynne and Dalton McGuinty. Hard-working families in rural and northern Ontario were not supported by their government. Entrepreneurs and small-business owners were not supported by their government. And Speaker, our students were not supported by their government.

The widespread desire for change in our province could not have been more clear when Ontarians headed to the polls last year. A government based on trust, accountability and transparency resonated across the province.

Mr. Speaker, could the Premier expand further on the policies our government has brought forward to deliver on our promises for the great people of Ontario?

**The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott):** Before I ask the Premier to respond, I remind all members we refer to each other by our ministerial title or our riding, however it's applicable.

The Premier to reply.

**Hon. Doug Ford:** I want to thank the great member from Eglinton–Lawrence once again for the question. On August 29—we have a long list here; there's no government that has accomplished more in less than a year than we have, ever—we gave people a voice to decide the future of government services.

On August 30, we committed to upholding free speech on publicly funded universities and colleges. Mr. Speaker, when I travel around universities and colleges, a lot of the students came up to me. They were sick and tired of the profs indoctrinating their philosophy onto the students—wouldn't let them have free speech. There's free speech in colleges and universities because of this government.

We began building a better regional transit system across Ontario, expanding GO trains, expanding the \$28.5-billion budget that we put forward for the transit system in the greater Toronto area, because the city of Toronto, once again, talked for four years, spent hundreds of millions—

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

#### GOVERNMENT ADVERTISING

**Mr. Taras Natyshak:** My question is to the Premier, who seems a little bit rattled this morning. Speaker, I want to start by expressing my condolences to the Premier for being booed yesterday in what he said was the first time ever by a gang of about 1,000 left-wing socialists—

*Interjections.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott):** Okay. Stop the clock. The member for Mississauga East–Cooksville will come to order. The government side will come to order.

Start the clock. The member for Essex.

**Mr. Taras Natyshak:** Thank you very much, Speaker. I hope he's well enough to answer my question.

With each passing day, the Premier's plan to waste millions of dollars on partisan advertising and forcing businesses to display Conservative campaign stickers draws more and more criticism from the left-wing thugs and

radicals out there. This morning, the Canadian Taxpayers Federation, a notorious Marxist sect, and the famously left-wing Toronto Sun denounced the Premier's plan.

Speaker, is he finally willing to reconsider this colossal waste of public money and abandon his wasteful plan?

*Interjections.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott):** Stop the clock again. Once again, I would implore the government members to allow me to hear the questions that are being asked. I can't follow the questions when there's constant yelling from the government side. You would expect me to enforce the standing orders, I think, and I can't if you're yelling constantly from the government side at the member who has the floor and is asking the question.

Start the clock. The Premier to reply.

1100

**Hon. Doug Ford:** Through you, Mr. Speaker: First of all, last night was a great opening, a fabulous opening, so many smiles on these kids' faces. They were absolutely so encouraged; a great, great event.

I find it ironic coming from the member from Essex. He didn't bother even showing up. At least we showed up. He didn't even bother showing up, and neither did the Leader of the Opposition. So throwing stones in glass houses is pretty staggering.

I want to remind the member from Essex, I've spent my whole life helping children with special needs through Rotary. Mr. Speaker, for 23 years, I helped through Rotary, going to events, helping children.

That's what it's all about. It's not about getting into gutter politics and worrying if you get a cheer or a boo. It's about being there for the kids. Because you know something, Mr. Speaker? It wasn't the kids booing. I can tell you they were happy there. We're going to continue supporting the Special Olympics.

*Interjections.*

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

Supplementary question?

**Mr. Taras Natyshak:** Speaker, it sounds like the folks at the event last night would have wished that the Premier hadn't showed up at all.

The fact is, with his plan, the Premier has—

*Interjections.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott):** The government side will come to order.

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

**Mr. Taras Natyshak:** Thank you very much, Speaker.

With his plan, the Premier has now united virtually everyone in the province against them. When the chamber of commerce, the taxpayers federation and the Toronto Sun say that the Ford government has got it wrong, they have truly lost their way. Instead of trying to defend the indefensible, why doesn't the Premier finally admit that this can't be defended, stop forcing businesses to carry Conservative campaign stickers, stop wasting taxpayers' money and abandon this partisan ad campaign today?

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

**Hon. Victor Fedeli:** You know, Speaker, the Premier and I were in New York a couple weeks ago and I'll tell you, the business community there, as well as the business community in Ontario, are thrilled with what we're doing: \$880-million savings from cutting the carbon tax; \$1.3 billion saved by freezing minimum wage at \$14 and giving the businesses a chance to get caught up; \$1.4-billion savings by freezing the WSIB; \$1.4 billion reinvested through the accelerated capital costs; \$300 million when we did not increase the Liberal tax, backed by the NDP, and 170,000 jobs created as a result of this support.

I think the business community has spoken very loud and very clear that they know we're open for business and open for jobs.

### MISSING CHILDREN

**Mr. Deepak Anand:** My question is regarding public safety, and it is for the Solicitor General.

This week, there was an Amber Alert. It was issued for a missing boy. When a child is missing, police and first responders are in a race against time to prevent a potential nightmare. For affected families and the community at large, this alert system can be a true lifeline.

Mr. Speaker, this is a great way to work together. When an Amber Alert is issued, the police and the public work together to share information, locate the missing child and bring him or her home safe and sound.

For public interest and information, can the Solicitor General please explain how the Amber Alert system works and why it is vital for the speedy recovery of our missing children in communities across Ontario?

**Hon. Sylvia Jones:** The member for Mississauga–Malton is absolutely right. When a child is missing, time is of the essence and absolutely critical. Amber Alerts make safe return for these children critical and is frankly a shared priority and responsibility for all of us. We thank the police and all Ontarians who take the time and effort to increase their vigilance when they receive an Amber Alert. They're doing their part, and we need to do our part as citizens.

Amber Alerts are issued through the national Alert Ready system. In Ontario, the OPP sends Amber Alerts at the request of local police services. A number of recent Amber Alerts have led directly to police finding those children, and often many, many hundreds of miles away from where they were taken, so the fact that Amber Alerts go province-wide is critical to assisting the police. I thank them for their service, and I really hope that everyone understands the importance of the Amber Alert system.

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

**Mr. Deepak Anand:** Thank you, Minister. Thanks for the amazing explanation of the Amber Alert system. It is important, and it works.

Recent Amber Alerts have unfortunately resulted in some complaints. We all have heard stories of people calling 911 to complain that their sleep has been disturbed or that their TV time has been interrupted. These complaints

happened again yesterday, when the Toronto Police Service tweeted that their communication centre's 911 lines were being used for this purpose.

Mr. Speaker, can the Solicitor General share her views regarding people who have used the 911 number as a complaint hotline while officers were scrambling to find a missing child?

**Hon. Sylvia Jones:** The member raises a disturbing and frankly unfortunate situation. He's absolutely right: The 911 system, which I think we can all appreciate is an emergency response system, has been used by a very limited number of Ontario residents to complain about Amber Alerts. It's not only inappropriate; it's frankly dangerous. People who use 911 as a complaint hotline are using up critical emergency resources and potentially slowing down response times during real emergencies.

When a child is missing, we all have a role to play as members within our community. Many children have been located as a direct result of Amber Alerts, and, as I said previously, often hundreds of kilometres away from where the child was taken. But Speaker, it only works if everyone receives them and pays attention to them. You don't have to know the child to be vigilant and aware of the information that is shared with the system.

The bottom line is clear: A missing child is an emergency, and Amber Alerts are a tool that we use, that our emergency responders use to successfully retrieve these children. Please understand and appreciate that 911 is not a complaint line.

### CHILD CARE

**Ms. Doly Begum:** My question is to the Premier. In the estimates released last week, we saw that this government is reducing capital investment into child care by over \$90 million this year. This represents about a 90% cut in child care capital funding this year, dramatically limiting the number of new child care spaces that could have been built under this government.

Can the Premier explain how cutting capital funding and capital investments into new child care spaces by 90% will address the shortage of affordable, quality child care in Ontario?

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

**Hon. Lisa M. Thompson:** Again, we're getting child care back on track in Ontario after 15 years of a lack of accountability. There was a letter written to me on May 13, and it came from the Association of Day Care Operators of Ontario. In the letter it said that "having worked provincially with licensed child care owner-operators located in the GTA, for example, for more than 30 years, ADCO has the understanding that further investigation into how municipalities, specifically the city of Toronto and other Ontario municipalities, should be conducted"—because it may be that there hasn't been enough oversight over the last 15 years. The reason for suggesting this is simple. "Like a number of other Ontario municipalities, the city of Toronto has been engaged in practices that we believe are less than optimal if the goal is to expand access to licensed



child care, make it more affordable for families or optimize provincial dollars allocated for these purposes.”

Speaker, we're getting child care back—

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

1110

**Ms. Doly Begum:** I just want to clarify to the minister: My question was about the capital investment cuts of about \$93.6 million, in case the minister has no clue about that.

This huge reduction in capital funding—through you, Speaker—is yet another child care cut for parents to come to terms with. So far, this government has cut the funding that municipalities receive to support day care subsidy operating costs, which is about 6,000 spaces that are at risk now, and they're cutting funding that helps keep child care—

*Interjections.*

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

The member for Scarborough Southwest has the floor. She should be allowed to ask her question without interjection. I ask, once again, the government side to come to order. And I'm going to give her some extra time so that she can ask her question.

**Interjection:** Of course you do.

**The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott):** I'd like to know who said that, because I would warn them if I knew.

Start the clock. The member for Scarborough Southwest.

**Ms. Doly Begum:** Thank you, Speaker. We're facing a child care crisis, and the fact that this government is trying to shut me down for asking my question is disrespectful. It's extremely disrespectful, because we are facing a child care crisis and people are suffering. Children are suffering, and it's not—

*Interjections.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott):** Stop the clock. I'm going to call the Minister of Government and Consumer Services to order. I'm going to call the Minister of Economic Development, Job Creation and Trade to order. I'm going to call the member for Mississauga East—Cooksville to order.

Start the clock. The member can ask her question.

**Ms. Doly Begum:** Thank you, Speaker. My question is to this government: When is this government going to start listening to parents and actually invest in proper child care?

**Hon. Lisa M. Thompson:** In my first response, I addressed the mismanagement in operating funds and I talked about getting child care back on track. Now let's talk about the investment that we're making. We're investing upwards of \$2 billion to get child care back on track and we are creating 30,000 new spaces, 10,000 of which are going to be in schools.

We're doing so much more. We're working with our partners. We're ensuring that day care is finally accessible, affordable and flexible for parents. We're allowing parents to have access to home care if they work shift work. We're making things right in this province.

Previously, under the Liberal administration, if you had a child in grade 1 and a child in JK, you couldn't drop them off at the Y for a before- or after-school program. Now

they can do so because we've listened to parents and we're getting it right.

Parents have asked us to make child care affordable, accessible and flexible, and that's exactly what we're doing, no matter what anyone opposite says.

#### NORTHERN ONTARIO

**Ms. Mitzie Hunter:** My question is to the Premier. Last week I travelled to Sudbury for the FONOM conference. I was fortunate to meet so many municipal leaders from northeast Ontario. Many leaders expressed concern about this government's callous and cruel changes to our health care system. Of particular concern is the downloading of costs to municipalities with no consultation.

The government's cuts forced the Ontario Telemedicine Network to let go 15% of its employees. Last year the OTN conducted 900,000 patient consultations and saved nearly \$72 million in travel grants. The OTN enables greater access to health care services in regions where distances are vast. Think of the vast geography of the north. The truth is, cuts go deeper in the north.

Why is this government advancing policies that disproportionately disadvantage northern Ontarians, many of whom already have difficulties accessing services? One of the northern reps says, "When you cut telehealth, this cuts deeper in the north." Why are you doing that, Premier?

*Interjection.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott):** I'm going to call the Minister of Children, Community and Social Services to order.

The Premier to reply.

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

**Hon. Steve Clark:** I want to thank the honourable member for the opportunity to talk about the fact that the Minister of Tourism, Culture and Sport and I were also at FONOM last week in Sudbury. We enjoyed our interaction with municipal officials from the north.

But, Speaker, through you, do you know what the member opposite didn't talk about? She didn't talk about her record in government, where we were saddled with a \$15-billion deficit. After 15 years of waste, mismanagement and scandal, we were elected on June 7 last year to clean up that fiscal mess. We are protecting what matters most. At the same time, we're continuing our dialogue with our municipal partners.

The FONOM meeting was excellent. We had a great opportunity to exchange information regarding the priorities of the north. But make no mistake: This member didn't talk about her record when she was up in Sudbury.

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

**Ms. Mitzie Hunter:** In fact, my record was brought up. When I was minister, I increased funding for mental health services in the north, recognizing the unique needs that are in the community.

I'm glad the Minister of Tourism, Culture and Sport was there, Speaker, because the interlibrary loans also came up, and it was a sore point. This loan allows northern and rural

libraries to access resources at low cost, and it's another casualty of this government's slash-and-burn agenda. It's a small thing, but it signals that there is an importance in north-south relationships, by the exchanging of books. Libraries are one of the easiest, most cost-effective ways to allow people, regardless of their socio-economic backgrounds, a chance to learn and to grow. Education is a right. Limiting people's access to knowledge is irresponsible governance.

Does this Premier think that taking books away from seniors and kids is an effective way to balance the budget?

**Hon. Steve Clark:** We will take no lessons from this member. One of her ministers referred to the north as "no man's land," so I will take no lessons from her.

In fact, she should talk about her record. As Minister of Education, she closed many, many rural schools—rural schools in my riding, rural schools all across this province. I will take no lessons from that member regarding her lack of standing up for rural municipalities and northern municipalities in terms of education.

I'll take no lessons from that member in terms of the \$15-billion deficit she saddled myself but also my children and my grandchildren with.

We were elected on June 7 together clean up their mess. That's exactly what we're going to do.

#### ONTARIO BUDGET

**Mr. Parm Gill:** My question is for the Minister of Finance. A little over a month ago, our government unveiled our plan to protect what matters most through our first budget. Every member of our caucus is proud to stand in this Legislature and support the plan we have put forward. After 15 years of Liberal tax-and-spend policies, Ontarians were left footing the bill with nothing to show for it. Those days are over.

We're giving \$26 billion in relief to Ontario's hard-working families, individuals and businesses. Today we're taking another step forward in making that plan a reality. As the minister prepares to begin third reading on the Protecting What Matters Most Act this afternoon, could he share the work we're doing to bring relief to Ontario families?

**Hon. Victor Fedeli:** Thank you to the member from Milton. We have made it clear that we are protecting what matters most and we are putting people first. That is why our budget includes the CARE Tax Credit. CARE is designed to give parents, not the government, control over the choices they make for their children, and provides 300,000 families with up to 75% of their eligible child care expenses. That is why our budget also introduces a \$90-million investment in dental care for 100,000 low-income seniors; \$1.75 billion for a five-year investment in new long-term-care beds; a \$1.4-billion investment for school renewals this year alone.

1120

We're cleaning up the financial mess we inherited from the previous government, and we're disappointed the NDP aren't supporting the—

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

**Mr. Parm Gill:** It's a relief to see a government respecting the hard-working families and individuals of Ontario, putting money back in people's pockets and putting people first.

Our government is also bringing much-needed relief to the job creators of our province. For far too long, businesses have been told they need to do more for the government, and they have been burdened with higher taxes and unnecessary red tape. Those days are over, as well. Ontario is now open for business and open for jobs, and we're seeing the results. Businesses are growing, investments are returning to Ontario, and jobs are being created.

Could the minister inform the House on the action our budget takes to bring relief to businesses in Ontario?

**Hon. Victor Fedeli:** In addition to supporting families and seniors, our budget also shows that Ontario is open for business and open for jobs.

The Ontario Job Creation Investment Incentive will provide faster capital investment writeoffs, encouraging businesses to immediately invest in Ontario and create new jobs. We scrapped the Liberal cap-and-trade carbon tax, paused the increase in minimum wage, lowered WSIB premiums, stopped the \$300 million in new Liberal taxes that were supported by the NDP.

Speaker, we have created the environment where businesses can and will succeed. Again, that's why 170,000 jobs have been created since Premier Ford was elected. Our plan is working. Ontario is open for business and open for jobs, and our results speak for themselves.

#### EDUCATION FUNDING

**Ms. Peggy Sattler:** My question is to the Premier.

Speaker, Thames Valley District School Board released a preliminary review of what the government's cuts to education will mean to students in the London area. The associate director of the board said that what it comes down to is "less choice for students." The board is projecting 329 fewer teachers over four years, which means 1,620 secondary school courses will no longer be offered. That's a lot of shop, technology, photography, drama, Indigenous studies, law, horticulture, arts and music classes gone—the kinds of programs that excite students, that get them to school in the morning.

Will the Premier admit that his cuts to education are taking away opportunities for students and jeopardizing their futures?

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

**Hon. Lisa M. Thompson:** Speaker, it's an absolute honour every day to stand in this House and tell everyone listening and present how we're getting education back on track.

No matter what gets said by any of the members in the opposition party, they're doing nothing but fearmongering and people are getting very tired of it.

The fact of the matter is, we are excited by what our plan holds, given the reaction that we're getting. In terms of opportunities, we're actually focusing in on what matters in terms of ensuring students have the life skills and the

job skills. We're investing over \$2 million over five years in financial literacy. We are increasing our investment in STEM by \$66.5 million. We're increasing awareness and exposure to technology and skilled trades and apprenticeship programs. We're increasing our investment, if you will, in math funding. And we're getting the Indigenous curriculum right, once and for all—

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

**Ms. Peggy Sattler:** What the official opposition is doing is actually sharing what the school boards are saying. School boards are very clear about the impact of the layoffs on students.

In Thames Valley, they were also clear that attrition funding will not come close to making up the loss of \$17 million in base teacher funding that has been cut. The school board is also losing 100 positions that were funded by the local priorities grant, including educational assistants, social workers and other education workers who support students with special learning needs.

Speaker, cutting supports for students with special needs and eliminating 1,620 classes will deny students opportunities to learn new skills, explore their interests and achieve their potential. Does the Premier really think that removing special education supports and limiting opportunity will help students succeed?

*Interjections.*

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

**Hon. Lisa M. Thompson:** Speaker, you know, I'm actually very disappointed in that member opposite because she knows better. If she had read the budget, she would have seen we're investing in special education, and our partners in education know we are committed to investing over and above what was absolutely off-track by the previous administration. We're investing \$90 million. We're getting special education back on track after so many years of oversight and absolute disarray.

The fact of the matter is, I'm disappointed in the member opposite as well because she's cherry-picking out of an article. She chose not to read this particular quote: "While no teachers are in danger of losing their jobs, they may be 'changing roles.'"

Speaker, people are seeing through this thin veil of rhetoric and they're coming to us, saying they're tired of the nonsense. The encouragement and the support we're getting to get education back on track is phenomenal. Again, we're investing—

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

#### ONTARIO PROVINCIAL POLICE

**Mrs. Nina Tangri:** Good morning, Mr. Speaker. My question is for the Solicitor General. Mr. Speaker, we formed government on a promise to provide police with the tools, resources and supports they need to do their jobs effectively. This includes new facilities that are capable to meet the demands of modern police operations. After 15

years of Liberal neglect, our government is making investments to keep our communities safe, and last fall our government announced a \$182-million investment to replace several aging OPP facilities with nine new detachments across the province.

Mr. Speaker, could the Solicitor General please update the members of the Legislature on how these new OPP detachments will improve public safety across Ontario?

**Hon. Sylvia Jones:** Thank you to the member from Mississauga–Streetsville for her question, but more importantly for hosting my friend and colleague the Minister of Infrastructure and me on Monday, where we were able to announce, in her riding of Mississauga–Streetsville, a ground-breaking for a new OPP detachment that will focus on highway safety. This \$20-million investment will ensure Ontarians can continue to receive the modern, cost-efficient and first-class road and highway safety services they deserve.

For over a century, the OPP have protected law-abiding families and citizens across our province. As this new building takes place, it will be a source of pride for the entire OPP operation, as well as the people who rely on them to keep Ontario's busiest highways safe.

Our actions taken together send a clear message that while we rely on the OPP to have our backs, the OPP can be confident that Premier Ford and our government has theirs.

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

**Mrs. Nina Tangri:** Thank you to the Solicitor General for that excellent response. It's encouraging to hear about our government's commitment to giving our OPP the tools they need to keep our roads safe. They do great work.

Mr. Speaker, a \$20-million investment is no small feat. The previous Liberal government, supported by the opposition NDP, left this province with a \$15-billion deficit. When it comes to critical projects like this, it is important that our government gets it right. Will the Solicitor General please tell us more about how our government is going about getting this project done in a responsible manner?

**Hon. Sylvia Jones:** I would like to refer the supplementary to the Minister of Infrastructure.

1130

**Hon. Monte McNaughton:** I'd like to thank the member from Mississauga–Streetsville and a number of caucus members for joining us for this important announcement.

Mr. Speaker, this week is Police Week, an opportunity to support our police officers and our OPP and all they do to keep our families safe. I was with the Solicitor General on Monday to do just that. I agree with the member: With projects like this, it's important that we get it right. Having been left with a fiscal mess by the previous government, we're committed to finding smart ways to build infrastructure in the right place and at the right time.

I'm happy to say that this state-of-the-art facility will be delivered through a public-private partnership through our agency, Infrastructure Ontario. IO has a proven track record of delivering projects on time and on budget.

Mr. Speaker, we're putting people at the centre of every decision that we make, and we're keeping our roads safe

and supporting the great work done by the Ontario Provincial Police.

#### GOVERNMENT FISCAL POLICIES

**Mr. Gurratan Singh:** My question is to the Acting Premier. The Conservatives' budget cuts are expected to cost Peel region \$45 million. The Premier talks about making life more affordable, yet these cuts are doing the exact opposite. By downloading costs, Peel region will be forced to increase property tax by \$68 per family while cutting programs and services that families rely on.

Why does this Conservative government believe both in cutting services and raising taxes for Bramptonians?

**Hon. Christine Elliott:** To the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing.

**Hon. Steve Clark:** We've made it very clear, Speaker. In every speech that I've given since I was appointed Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing and every consultation that I've had with our municipal partners, I've indicated that we were in a financial mess. After 15 years of waste, mismanagement and scandal, supported 97% by the NDP, we needed to take a different fiscal path. We asked every one of our partners, just like we're looking at every line in every program in every service, to do the same.

Again, I find it passing strange that this member would bring this up, because we've been extremely clear. We have a budget that the finance minister has tabled that protects what matters most to Ontarians: health and education. We've asked every single organization that we do business with to look for efficiencies as well. One of the very first bills I put on the table was to look at the city of Toronto and make it more effective and more efficient. We saved them \$25 million that they went ahead and spent on other things—

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

**Mr. Gurratan Singh:** The people of Brampton were left behind by the last Liberal government. This Conservative government is taking things from bad to worse with its cuts to health care and education. Now the region of Peel is facing cuts to housing, child care and social assistance. On top of it all, the Premier's tax hike of \$68 per family will make life even more unaffordable. Brampton is the ninth-largest city in this country and is one of the fastest-growing. People need investment to ensure that the people of Brampton receive the resources and services they deserve, not more cuts.

Will the Premier cancel his tax hike, reverse these cuts and give Peel region the support that it deserves?

**Hon. Steve Clark:** In fact, Speaker, what the honourable member forgets is that the mayor of Brampton, whom he refers to, was once the Leader of the Opposition, and he talked about the importance of reining in deficits so that we can protect the programs that matter most to Ontarians. His mayor preached the same fiscal restraint when he sat in this Legislature, as did, quite frankly, Mayor Tory when he was Leader of the Opposition.

Again, Speaker, we've worked with our municipal partners; 405 out of Ontario's 444 municipalities received

funds in the last fiscal year, some \$200 million, to provide municipal modernization, to look at shared service agreements, to look at doing things differently, trying to provide efficiencies and effective spending.

Again, we will continue to consult our municipal partners. We have a process with both AMO and the city of Toronto. We will continue to talk to our partners about how we can work together on making sure that we're an effective and efficient partnership. Make no mistake, Speaker: I want to be perfectly—

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

#### ENERGY POLICIES

**Mr. Amarjot Sandhu:** My question is for the Minister of Energy, Northern Development and Mines. We know the minister represented the people of Ontario by speaking against Bill C-69 at the Senate hearings in Ottawa. He stood up for Ontario's nuclear energy sector because it is an integral part of our economy and it's a success story everyone in this province should be proud of.

Our government for the people respects the nuclear industry, which is why we extended the life of the Pickering generating station. We protected those jobs and we are very lucky to have a minister responsible for energy who champions Ontario's nuclear sector.

Bill C-69 threatens this job-creating sector of our economy, and our government will never stand by while misguided legislation is being proposed.

Can the minister please tell us more about why our government is opposed to Bill C-69?

**Hon. Greg Rickford:** Mr. Speaker, in terms of energy infrastructure in this country, the member from Brampton West couldn't be more right. This is of national concern. This bill has the potential impact to shut down major energy projects across this country.

In Ontario, we will not stand idly by as scaled-up nuclear projects are now going to be at risk with this bill. Major hydro dam projects will be at risk as a result of this. Some of the largest natural gas infrastructure expansion plans that we have in this province will be at risk.

Mr. Speaker, we stand by the newly minted and terrific energy minister from Alberta, Minister Sonya Savage—and Minister Bronwyn Eyre; two great women in Saskatchewan and Alberta who stand with us against this for the projects it represents that will be at risk in their provinces, at risk here in Ontario, and put the entire country's energy future at risk. That's a fact.

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

**Mr. Amarjot Sandhu:** I would like to thank the minister for his answer. Ontarians can take comfort knowing that our government will not stand by while burdensome regulations are imposed on our industries that will take our country backwards.

Mr. Speaker, it's clear that with Bill C-69 and Trudeau's carbon tax, the federal government is waging a war against the most important industries that create good jobs

in Canada and Ontario. We believe Bill C-69 contradicts several of Canada's economic goals and it would grind to a halt natural resources and economic development across the country, and certainly in Ontario. This is unacceptable for our government. We believe in creating new economic opportunities for all the people of this province.

Can the minister please highlight why this bill would be so detrimental to Canada and Ontario's economic success?

**Hon. Greg Rickford:** I would be happy to, Mr. Speaker, but something tells me I don't have to. Listen to what the Canadian Manufacturers and Exporters CEO said this morning: "Manufacturers in every region of the country see Bill C-69 as a direct threat to future resource development and the well-being of their essential suppliers and customers."

Diane Francis, a real columnist with the Financial Post, said: "Obviously, resource development will stop cold. This is a bill written by economic ignoramuses.... This is not legislation. This is sabotage."

Mr. Speaker, it gets worse. We know the NDP have been in cahoots with the Liberals provincially and federally. The former member from Brampton East announced that gas and oil pipelines, the whole sector, is off limits for them. Why is the provincial NDP fine with Bill C-69?

#### PUBLIC HEALTH

**Mr. Joel Harden:** I interrupt that Andrew Scheer campaign ad with a question for the Premier.

Days ago, we learned the Ottawa Public Health boundaries will be massively expanded from Kingston all the way to the Quebec border, without any additional resources. Speaker, covering 29,000 square kilometres and about 1.7 million people, this new public health unit will be forced to do more with less.

Dr. Paul Roumeliotis, CEO of the Eastern Ontario Health Unit warns, "The bigger the health unit, the less local ability to be able to taper your needs and your community programs to the population's needs." That's not fear-mongering, Speaker; it's fact-mongering by experts.

Will the Premier listen to health care experts and put the brakes on this reckless decision?

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

**Hon. Christine Elliott:** In fact, what we are doing is modernizing the system, as we're modernizing our total health system, to be able to respond to the crises that are going to occur, we know, from time to time. But we want to make sure that the local public health units have the resources that they need in order to do their work. In fact, we've heard from many of them that the smaller units are having trouble attracting the people with the skills and the experience they need in order to do their work.

1140

With the changes we are making, they will be enabled, they will be able to get the people that they need to do the work, and they will be able to concentrate on the areas within their specific geographic area, while the province uploads some of the bigger-picture campaigns, like anti-smoking campaigns and so on, that will allow the local

units to be able to tend to their own geographic area and their own concerns, which vary from place to place, as the member will know.

**The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott):** Supplementary question? The member from Kingston and the Islands.

**Mr. Ian Arthur:** Speaker, through you back to the Premier: When public health is done on the cheap, it puts lives at risk. Asking a single public health unit to cover vastly different communities with different needs across a huge geographic area is a recipe for disaster.

Kingston, Frontenac, Lennox and Addington Public Health is one of the most effective public health units in the province. I'm sure that the member from Hastings-Lennox and Addington would agree. I've had meetings with stakeholders in the community. They talk about the differences even between Kingston and the rural areas around Kingston and the different needs they have and how to serve them.

It has led the charge against Lyme disease, developing a physician education program and creating a Lyme network for doctors that was adopted nationally. Our health unit is successful and it knows our community and the surrounding area. In what world, Speaker, does it make sense to dismantle the organizations that are exceeding expectations?

**Hon. Christine Elliott:** In fact, Speaker, the member and I can agree that public health units are extremely important, and we are going to continue to consult with the public health units, going forward, with respect to the issues that they're facing and the needs that they have. But we need to make sure that they're going to be ready to deal with outbreaks of infectious diseases and other things that we know are going to happen.

We are confident that, with the resources they will be receiving from the Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care, if they concentrate on their priorities, which they are required to do—as we're required to focus provincial resources on the things that matter most to people, protecting what matters most—they will be able to fulfill their critical components like vaccinations, programs for children with special needs, meals programs, programs for expectant mothers and others. I am confident that with the monies they will be receiving and with the boundaries that will be decided upon in consultation with the units and with municipalities, they will be able to do their effective work, continuing now and into the future.

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

#### VISITORS

**The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott):** I'm going to remind members that the standing orders provide for five minutes for introduction of guests in the morning before question period and in the afternoon at 1 o'clock, but I've been asked by the member from Niagara Falls to recognize him on a point of order.

**Mr. Wayne Gates:** Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I'd like to welcome a couple of guests from my riding:

Shannon Miller, Matthew Miller, Tanner Unyi, and Melissa Unyi. Thank you very much for coming, and I'm sure you enjoyed question period this morning.

#### ADJOURNMENT DEBATE

**The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott):** The government House leader, on a point of order.

**Hon. Todd Smith:** Speaker, I seek unanimous consent to put forward a motion without notice regarding the late show for the member from Kitchener Centre scheduled for tonight, Wednesday, May 15, 2019.

**The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott):** The government House leader is seeking the unanimous consent of the House to put forward a motion without notice regarding the late show tonight, regarding the member for Kitchener Centre scheduled for this evening. Agreed? Agreed.

**Hon. Todd Smith:** Speaker, I move that the late show scheduled for Wednesday, May 15, 2019, standing in the name of the member for Kitchener Centre, be moved to Tuesday, May 28, 2019.

**The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott):** The government House leader has moved that the late show scheduled for Wednesday, May 15, 2019, standing in the name of the member for Kitchener Centre, be moved to Tuesday, May 28, 2019. Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? Carried.

*Motion agreed to.*

#### DEFERRED VOTES

#### TIME ALLOCATION

**The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott):** We have a deferred vote on the amendment to government notice of motion number 61 relating to allocation of time on Bill 107, An Act to amend the Highway Traffic Act and various other statutes in respect of transportation-related matters.

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

*The division bells rang from 1145 to 1150.*

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

On May 14, 2019, Mr. Harris moved an amendment to government notice of motion number 61 relating to allocation of time on Bill 107.

All those in favour of Mr. Harris's motion will please rise one at a time and be recognized by the Clerk.

#### Ayes

Anand, Deepak	Hardeman, Ernie	Parsa, Michael
Baber, Roman	Harris, Mike	Phillips, Rod
Babikian, Aris	Hogarth, Christine	Piccini, David
Bailey, Robert	Jones, Sylvia	Rasheed, Kaleed
Barrett, Toby	Kanapathi, Logan	Rickford, Greg
Bethlenfalvy, Peter	Karahalios, Belinda	Roberts, Jeremy
Bouma, Will	Ke, Vincent	Romano, Ross
Calandra, Paul	Khanjin, Andrea	Sabawy, Sheref
Cho, Raymond Sung Joon	Kramp, Daryl	Sandhu, Amarjot
Cho, Stan	Kusendova, Natalia	Skelly, Donna

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

**The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott):** All those opposed to Mr. Harris's motion will please rise one at a time and be recognized by the Clerk.

#### Nays

Andrew, Jill	Hassan, Faisal	Rakocevic, Tom
Armstrong, Teresa J.	Hatfield, Percy	Sattler, Peggy
Arthur, Ian	Hillier, Randy	Shaw, Sandy
Begum, Doly	Horwath, Andrea	Singh, Gurratan
Bell, Jessica	Hunter, Mitzie	Singh, Sara
Berns-McGown, Rima	Karpoche, Bhutla	Stevens, Jennifer (Jennie)
Bisson, Gilles	Kernaghan, Terence	Stiles, Marit
Burch, Jeff	Lalonde, Marie-France	Tabuns, Peter
Fife, Catherine	Lindo, Laura Mae	Taylor, Monique
Fraser, John	Mamakwa, Sol	Vanthof, John
French, Jennifer K.	Mantha, Michael	West, Jamie
Gates, Wayne	Miller, Paul	Wynne, Kathleen O.
Gélinas, France	Monteith-Farrell, Judith	Yarde, Kevin
Glover, Chris	Morrison, Suze	
Harden, Joel	Natyshak, Taras	

**The Clerk of the Assembly (Mr. Todd Decker):** The ayes are 68; the nays are 43.

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

Are the members ready to vote on the main motion, as amended?

**Interjection:** Same vote.

**Interjection:** No.

**The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott):** Are you prepared to vote on the main motion, as amended?

*Interjections.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott):** Mr. Hardeman has moved government notice of motion number 61 relating to allocation of time on Bill 107, An Act to amend the Highway Traffic Act and various other statutes in respect of transportation-related matters. Is it the pleasure of the House that the amended 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.

Call in the members. This will be another five-minute bell.

*The division bells rang from 1154 to 1155.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott):** Mr. Hardeman has moved government notice of motion number 61 relating to the allocation of time on Bill 107.

All those in favour of the motion, as amended, will please rise one at a time and be recognized by the Clerk.

**Ayes**

Anand, Deepak	Hardeman, Ernie	Parsa, Michael
Baber, Roman	Harris, Mike	Phillips, Rod
Babikian, Aris	Hogarth, Christine	Piccini, David
Bailey, Robert	Jones, Sylvia	Rasheed, Kaleed
Barrett, Toby	Kanapathi, Logan	Rickford, Greg
Bethlenfalvy, Peter	Karahalios, Belinda	Roberts, Jeremy
Bouma, Will	Ke, Vincent	Romano, Ross
Calandra, Paul	Khanjin, Andrea	Sabawy, Sheref
Cho, Raymond Sung Joon	Kramp, Daryl	Sandhu, Amarjot
Cho, Stan	Kusendova, Natalia	Skelly, Donna
Clark, Steve	Lecce, Stephen	Smith, Dave
Coe, Lorne	MacLeod, Lisa	Smith, Todd
Crawford, Stephen	Martin, Robin	Surma, Kinga
Cuzzetto, Rudy	Martow, Gila	Tangri, Nina
Downey, Doug	McDonnell, Jim	Thanigasalam, Vijay
Dunlop, Jill	McKenna, Jane	Thompson, Lisa M.
Elliott, Christine	McNaughton, Monte	Tibollo, Michael A.
Fedeli, Victor	Miller, Norman	Triantafilopoulos, Effie J.
Fee, Amy	Mulrone, Caroline	Wai, Daisy
Ford, Doug	Nicholls, Rick	Walker, Bill
Fullerton, Merrilee	Oosterhoff, Sam	Yakabuski, John
Ghamari, Goldie	Pang, Billy	Yurek, Jeff
Gill, Parm	Park, Lindsey	

**The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott):** All those opposed to the motion, as amended, will please rise one at a time and be recognized by the Clerk.

**Nays**

Andrew, Jill	Hassan, Faisal	Rakocevic, Tom
Armstrong, Teresa J.	Hatfield, Percy	Sattler, Peggy
Arthur, Ian	Hillier, Randy	Schreiner, Mike
Begum, Doly	Horwath, Andrea	Shaw, Sandy
Bell, Jessica	Hunter, Mitzie	Singh, Gurratan
Berns-McGown, Rima	Karpoche, Bhutula	Singh, Sara
Bisson, Gilles	Kernaghan, Terence	Stevens, Jennifer (Jennie)
Burch, Jeff	Lalonde, Marie-France	Stiles, Marit
Fife, Catherine	Lindo, Laura Mae	Tabuns, Peter
Fraser, John	Mamakwa, Sol	Taylor, Monique
French, Jennifer K.	Mantha, Michael	Vanthof, John
Gates, Wayne	Miller, Paul	West, Jamie
Gélinas, France	Monteith-Farrell, Judith	Wynne, Kathleen O.
Glover, Chris	Morrison, Suze	Yarde, Kevin
Harden, Joel	Natyshak, Taras	

**The Clerk of the Assembly (Mr. Todd Decker):** The ayes are 68; the nays are 44.

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

*Motion, as amended, agreed to.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott):** This House stands in recess until 3 p.m.

*The House recessed from 1159 to 1500.*

**INTRODUCTION OF VISITORS**

**Mrs. Amy Fee:** I'd like to welcome someone who is actually just arriving to Queen's Park now. He is the best friend since childhood of my legislative assistant, Brandon Crandall. His name is Dovi Lipton and he's actually visiting from Israel. He's happy to come here today and get to see our Parliament. I'd like to welcome again Dovi Lipton to the Legislature today.

**M<sup>me</sup> France Gélinas:** I would like to introduce Denise Magi, who is the president of the Myalgic Encephalomyelitis Association of Ontario, better known as MEAO. As well, members of the Task Force on Environmental Health: Adrianna Tetley, who is the CEO of Alliance for Healthier Communities, and Keith Deviney, the former CEO of MEAO. They are making their way to Queen's Park, to the gallery. Welcome to Queen's Park.

**MEMBERS' STATEMENTS****GASOLINE PRICES**

**Mr. Gilles Bisson:** Mr. Speaker, all of us, unfortunately, are in a situation where we have to drive to get where we have to go—for most of us in this chamber, and for people in our ridings, especially if you live in rural or northern Ontario, where you don't have transit the way you do in the city of Toronto to get from point A to point B.

Imagine the frustration, Mr. Speaker, when people look at the price of gas, where, within a 45-day period, we went from 95 cents a litre to \$1.47. Clearly, something is going on at the pumps. The Premier can play this game of trying to blame everything on the carbon tax. Yes, 4.4 cents is real, but 4.4 cents is not the big part of the problem here.

How do you explain that at the gas pumps in Timmins, as across Ontario, you have a price differential that goes from 95 cents a litre to \$1.47 a litre without the price of the barrel going up? Clearly people are being gouged at the pumps. Clearly this is profit-taking on the part of gas companies that are saying to themselves, "We can gouge the market." You've got a Ford government that is playing this fake game of trying to blame everything on carbon pricing rather than doing their job and protecting the consumer.

If we can sell a case of beer in Cornwall for the same price we sell a case of beer for in Kenora, if we can sell milk or we can transport natural gas and sell it at a competitive price from one end of the province to the other, certainly we can do the same here in Ontario when it comes to gas. I say to the government, call the NDP gas price regulation bill to committee. Let's hear from the experts and let's once and for all do something to protect consumers and do something real when it comes to consumer protection.

**JASON HELMOND**

**Ms. Andrea Khanjin:** I wanted to update this House on Jason Helmond's achievements. As you may recall, I had Jason come visit this Legislature. He's a Special Olympian, both in Summer and Winter Olympics. We did a statement to recognize him for all his efforts in this House.

But I have an update for everyone. Jason had organized his Razors of Hope event this past weekend that I attended with the member from Barrie–Springwater–Oro-Medonte.

Jason's Razors of Hope is a fundraiser for the Terry Fox Foundation in Barrie.

His original goal was to fundraise about \$5,000. Mr. Speaker, he went above and beyond his goal. He fundraised \$5,400, and his head is a little lighter from the shave that he received from community members, and many other communities had joined them. They're feeling a little lighter on the top of their heads, but it's for a very good cause.

I did want to congratulate Jason, who now, over the past four years, has fundraised over \$18,000 for the Terry Fox Foundation. Thank you, Jason.

#### RESEARCH AND INNOVATION

**Ms. Catherine Fife:** The Ford government has established a pattern. When making policy decisions, they willfully ignore sound evidence and research. Now they have gone so far that they have cut funding for organizations that drive research and innovation.

Yesterday, funding for the Ontario Institute for Regenerative Medicine was cut. Their work put Ontario on the leading edge of stem cell research, attracting high-quality researchers who are producing life-saving work. One of their most promising projects was working to prevent lung damage in premature babies. To add insult to injury, their funding was cut before they could even finish conducting a review of their return on investment as a research institution.

Funding has also been cut to the Mowat Centre, which provided research and analysis on public policy. Ironically, they were doing good enough work that the government cited them in their own budget.

Last week, Communitech in Kitchener-Waterloo laid off 15 people after the government cut their funding by 30%. They support 1,400 companies and have helped establish Waterloo region as a global innovation leader. For every public dollar invested in Communitech, 22 are returned to the economy.

From growing our tech sector to stem cell research to public policy, these organizations were producing results. Yet the Ford government still gave them the axe, because with Fordian logic, if the source of the facts is eliminated, the facts don't exist, leaving policy decisions to be made based on feelings or the desires of the Premier's friends.

It's a dark day in Ontario when facts are so callously disregarded. This is definitely not for the people.

#### MYALGIC ENCEPHALOMYELITIS ASSOCIATION OF ONTARIO

**Ms. Natalia Kusendova:** It is my pleasure today to welcome the Myalgic Encephalomyelitis Association of Ontario, or MEAO, to Queen's Park for their advocacy day.

For 28 years, MEAO has been at the forefront of educating Ontarians and front-line care providers, advocating on behalf of and supporting Ontarians living with chronic

fatigue syndrome, fibromyalgia and environmental sensitivities.

As a nurse and as an MPP, I have come to appreciate and value the important role of patient advocacy organizations such as MEAO in improving the health and well-being of Ontarians. Today I want to reiterate our government's commitment to work with MEAO to ensure no Ontarians feel like their government isn't taking their medical issues seriously.

To that end, our government today released the final report of the Task Force on Environmental Health. We will work to shine a light on these challenges and advance real, meaningful solutions as part of our work to build a health care system that truly works for the people of Ontario and is centred around the patient.

Thank you again to everyone involved in MEAO for your tireless advocacy on behalf of Ontarians living with chronic fatigue syndrome, fibromyalgia and environmental sensitivities. I hope you will continue this important work.

#### PUBLIC HEALTH

**Mr. Wayne Gates:** I'd like to rise today and talk about the merging of the Niagara public health board with four other communities, including Hamilton. Make no mistake about it: This is a cut. The government is downloading the cost of public health to our municipalities by reducing the funding formula. In Niagara alone, this means that in the next few weeks public health will likely have to ask the region for \$350,000 just to keep the programs afloat. This is Mike Harris all over again—fake a balanced budget by downloading the costs on to towns and cities, which then have to raise property taxes to cover the shortfall.

Instead of cutting people's public health services or causing their property taxes to skyrocket, why doesn't this province look at the fact that we have one of the lowest tax rates in the country for major corporations? Why don't we ask them to pay their fair share, instead of balancing this budget on our health care needs?

I dare the Premier to ask voters: What's more important, our public health system or ensuring that CEOs make as much profit as possible? I can guess the answer and I hope the Premier can too.

It's time to prioritize the right things in this province. Stop the cuts, stop the downloads and defend our public health system.

#### HIKE FOR HOSPICE

**The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott):** I recognize the member for Ottawa South on a point of order.

**Mr. John Fraser:** I seek unanimous consent to do a member's statement on behalf of my colleague from Thunder Bay—Superior North.

**The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott):** The member for Ottawa South is seeking unanimous consent of the House



to deliver a statement now on behalf of the member for Thunder Bay–Superior North. Agreed? Agreed.

1510

**Mr. John Fraser:** I thank my colleagues for allowing me to take the member's spot.

I simply want to celebrate Hike for Hospice, which happened in Ottawa last week, in my hometown of Ottawa, to support Hospice Care Ottawa—both hospice sites, as well as their home-visiting teams. It was a great event. Hundreds of families were out there to help support hospices in our community.

Hospice Care Ottawa does an incredible job for families at the most vulnerable time in their lives, and I can't say enough. They served over 400 families in residential hospice this year, and hundreds and hundreds of other families at home. I can't say enough about the volunteers and the donors and the staff of the May Court Hospice and our west-end hospice as well. We're trying to develop one in the east end.

I just wanted to say thank you and celebrate hospice in Ottawa. I appreciate the Speaker's indulgence.

Switching gears: On another note, it's at a request—and I will explain this to you sometime later, Mr. Speaker. But I would like to say that, in the end, that's the best way to make a grilled cheese sandwich.

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

## ONTARIO BUDGET

**Mrs. Robin Martin:** Protecting what matters most: That is what the people of Ontario sent us to Queen's Park to do. That's why we have put forward a responsible approach to restoring sustainability to Ontario's finances, one that provides and protects critical public services like health care and education, and one that puts an end to the failed fiscal policies of the former Liberal government, who spent \$40 million every day more than they had and racked up the largest subnational debt in the world.

The rising interest on our debt—\$12 billion a year—amounts to the single largest cut to front-line services in Ontario's history, and we pay it every year. That's why we have made much-needed adjustments in this year's budget and why we expect our partners to do their part as well, because more than 90 cents of every dollar spent by the government of Ontario is transferred elsewhere: to institutions like municipalities, hospitals and school boards. We're asking our partners to do the same things that we are doing by carefully reviewing their spending, minimizing administrative expenses and prioritizing what matters.

Despite all the griping we hear from the opposition, our budget is a “surprisingly modest” plan to balance in five years—and those are the words of Marcus Gee, not a known Conservative.

Because of our hard work, we can invest an additional \$2 billion in health care and education this year, spending more on health care and education than any government in our history.

Speaker, this is what responsibility, fiscal balance and protecting what matters most looks like, and this is what we promised we would do and what we are doing.

## YORK MEMORIAL COLLEGIATE INSTITUTE

**Mr. Faisal Hassan:** I rise today on behalf of the people of York South–Weston. As many of you already know, last week, two devastating fires ripped through York Memorial Collegiate Institute. At its height, it was a six-alarm fire with over 150 first responders on-scene. Fortunately, the staff and students were able to evacuate the building safely, no doubt due to the diligent and professional teachers and staff at York Memo.

I would like to acknowledge the brave efforts of our first responders, who worked day and night to ensure the safety of the students, staff and neighbours of York Memo. York Memorial, designed to pay tribute to the former city of York's fallen soldiers of World War I, was set to celebrate its 90th anniversary this year. Its approximately 880 students are now temporarily at George Harvey CI, whose students and staff have been excellent hosts.

Last night, the TDSB held a meeting with local trustee Chris Tonks, senior TDSB staff, and York Memo students, teachers and parents. The community was clear: York Memorial is a historic structure, community hub and beloved school.

On Monday, this government committed before this House to working with the TDSB to ensure that York Memorial is restored. We thank the government for their support, and we fully expect that they will live up to that commitment.

## CAMBRIDGE RIVERS' EDGE GARDENERS

**Mrs. Belinda Karahalios:** In Cambridge and Waterloo region, as you are no doubt aware, we're lucky to have a number of groups and organizations where people with common interests can come together with neighbours and community members. Today, I would like to highlight one of those groups, the Cambridge Rivers' Edge Gardeners.

The Cambridge Rivers' Edge Gardeners incorporated as the Cambridge Area Horticultural Society two years ago, in May 2017. Since the society began with its mission “to provide opportunities for family and friends to embrace nature and build partnerships,” they've held weekly summer garden tours, hands-on workshops, visits to public gardens, trail walks, community partnering events, as well as hosted guest speakers.

Last month, on April 13, I had the pleasure of joining the group at their Stepping into Spring Symposium at the Avenue Road Baptist Church in Cambridge. I want to congratulate Cambridge Rivers' Edge Gardeners on a successful and fun symposium and, of course, to give my thanks to vice-president and symposium and membership chair Lori Bennett-Davies and the Cambridge Rivers'

Edge Gardeners for inviting me to join them this year. I look forward to ushering in spring with them all again next year.

#### CHILD CARE

**Ms. Effie J. Triantafilopoulos:** Parents in my riding of Oakville North–Burlington need and deserve access to high-quality, affordable child care. In our budget, our government has acted to help these families because we want to protect what matters most.

My community is fast-growing, with lots of young families, many of whom commute long distances to work and struggle to find child care that is affordable. Halton region statistics from 2018 state that parents are paying, on average, \$1,500 per month for child care in Oakville and Burlington.

To help meet these needs, our government introduced the Ontario Childcare Access and Relief from Expenses—CARE—Tax Credit. Across Ontario, 300,000 families would be eligible to receive up to 75% of their expenses. Parents would have choice and be able to use their support for a broad range of options, including child care centres, child care at home and summer camps.

We will also help support the wages of child care workers. Eligible staff will be supported by increases of up to \$2 an hour and home providers for up to \$20 a day. We also committed up to \$1 billion over the next five years to create up to 30,000 child care spaces, including 10,000 spaces in new schools in 2019, including a new school in my riding of northeast Oakville.

We are committed to supporting quality child care for every family that needs it and that needs our help in Ontario.

#### REPORTS BY COMMITTEES

##### STANDING COMMITTEE ON ESTIMATES

**Mr. Peter Tabuns:** I beg leave to present a report from the Standing Committee on Estimates on the estimates selected and not selected by the standing committee for consideration.

**The Clerk-at-the-Table (Ms. Tonia Grannum):** Mr. Tabuns from the Standing Committee on Estimates presents the committee's report as follows:

Pursuant to standing order 60, your committee has selected the estimates 2019-20 of the following ministries for consideration: Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care, seven hours, 30 minutes; Ministry of Education, seven hours, 30 minutes; Ministry of Transportation, seven hours, 30 minutes; Ministry of Infrastructure, seven hours, 30 minutes; Ministry of Children, Community and Social Services, seven hours, 30 minutes; Ministry of the Environment, Conservation and Parks, seven hours, 30 minutes; Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs, 15 hours.

Pursuant to standing order 61(a), the estimates 2019-20 of the following ministries and offices not selected for consideration are deemed to be passed by the committee and are reported back to the House: Ministry of the Attorney General: 301, ministry administration, \$320,507,400—

1520

**Mr. Gilles Bisson:** Dispense.

**The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott):** Dispense? Dispensed.

Pursuant to standing order 61(b), the report of the committee is deemed to be received, and the estimates of the ministries and offices named therein as not being selected for consideration by the committee are deemed to be concurred in.

*Report deemed received.*

#### INTRODUCTION OF BILLS

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

Ms. Shaw moved first reading of the following bill:

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

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

*First reading agreed to.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott):** Would the member care to give the House a brief explanation of her bill?

**Ms. Sandy Shaw:** I would. Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

This bill enacts the Nancy Rose Act (Paediatric Hospice Palliative Care Strategy), 2019. The act requires the Minister of Health and Long-Term Care to develop and implement a paediatric hospice palliative care strategy for Ontario. The goal of the strategy is to create equity of access to high-quality paediatric hospice palliative care across Ontario. The strategy shall also include the development of targeted supports for families of children receiving hospice palliative care, including mental health supports.

#### VISITORS

**The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott):** Point of order: the member for Scarborough Southwest.

**Ms. Doly Begum:** I just wanted to take a moment to welcome the wonderful cohort of fellows from the Muslim Youth Fellowship who are in the Speaker's gallery today. I hope you enjoy.

## PETITIONS

### LIBRARY SERVICES

**Mr. Michael Mantha:** These hundreds of petitions come from the libraries in Espanola, Little Current, Webbwood and Tehkummah. They read:

“Support Ontario’s Public Libraries.

“To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

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

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

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

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

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

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

“—to continue to maintain base funding for Ontario public libraries.”

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

### FISH AND WILDLIFE MANAGEMENT

**Mrs. Amy Fee:** I have a petition on the eastern hybrid wolf.

“To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

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

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

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

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

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

I fully support this petition. I will affix my name to it and hand it to page Olivier to bring to the table.

### EDUCATION FUNDING

**Ms. Marit Stiles:** I’m pleased to present these hundreds of signatures submitted by Rachel Little and Bryan Smith. They come from across Ontario and from the communities of Woodstock, Cambridge, Goderich, Clinton, Ingersoll and Stratford.

It reads as follows:

“Whereas the Ontario provincial government has announced a significant class size increase for grades 4 through 12, mandatory e-learning and other detrimental changes to our public education;

“Whereas cutting the number of teachers in the classroom and increasing the number of students is not in the best interest of our children’s education and will lead to less one-on-one support for students;

“Whereas mandatory e-learning for students will further reduce one-on-one and face-to-face support while also neglecting different learning styles and underprivileged groups;

“We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to oppose these damaging cuts and implement:

“—a fully-funded public education system that includes no increases to class average caps or that otherwise increases the number of students per class;

“—excellent needs-support for all students;

“—no mandatory e-learning;

“—thorough and transparent consultations with board trustees, educators and Ontario families.”

I’m very pleased to support this petition. I’ll affix my signature and hand it over to page Kate to table with the Clerks.

### MUNICIPAL GOVERNMENT

**Ms. Effie J. Triantafilopoulos:** “To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“Whereas the government of Ontario has announced a review of Ontario’s eight regional municipalities, the county of Simcoe, and their lower-tier municipalities, including Halton region and the town of Oakville; and

“Whereas municipal governments are responsible for funding and delivering the important local services residents rely on every day; and

“Whereas Halton region has maintained a AAA credit rating for 30 consecutive years due to effective governance and prudent fiscal policies; and

“Whereas the town of Oakville is recognized as Canada’s best place to live;

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

“That the town of Oakville remain a distinct municipality within a two-tier region of Halton municipal governance structure.”

I want to pass this petition on to legislative page Zoe, and I affix my signature.

#### LIBRARY SERVICES

**Ms. Bhutla Karpoche:** This petition is entitled “Don’t Cut Our Library Services....”

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

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

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

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

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

“—to continue to maintain base funding for Ontario public libraries.”

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

#### SERVICES D’URGENCE

**M<sup>me</sup> France Gélinas:** J’aimerais remercier M<sup>me</sup> Melanie Portelance de Northern911 communications pour m’avoir laissé ces pétitions. On l’appelle « Interventions d’urgence 911.

« Alors que lorsque nous sommes confrontés à une urgence nous savons tous que nous appelons le 911 pour de l’aide; et

« Alors que l’accès aux services d’urgence par le biais du 911 n’est pas disponible dans toutes les régions de l’Ontario, mais la plupart des gens croient qu’ils le sont; et

« Alors que plusieurs personnes ont découvert que le 911 n’était pas disponible alors qu’elles faisaient face à une urgence; et

« Alors que tous les Ontariens » et Ontariennes « s’attendent et méritent d’avoir accès au service 911 partout dans la province; »

Ils demandent à la province « de fournir une intervention d’urgence 911 partout en Ontario par des lignes téléphoniques ou cellulaires. »

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

#### LIBRARY SERVICES

**Mr. Joel Harden:** My colleagues from Davenport and Algoma–Manitoulin have read out the full text of this petition, so I won’t read out the whole text of this petition, but I just want you to know, Speaker, that I have about 500 signatures here from Ottawa, Pakenham, Carleton Place, Cornwall, Brockville, Russell, Embrun, Limoges, St. Bernardin, St. Isidore and Petawawa—a lot of signatures here, and I’ll just read the final statement:

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

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

“—to continue to maintain base funding for Ontario public libraries.”

I want to thank these citizens for their interest in our public library system. I’m happy to sign this, and I’ll be giving this to page Wolfgang for the Clerks’ table.

#### LIBRARY SERVICES

**Ms. Sara Singh:** I would like to present this petition on behalf of people across Ontario and especially those in the community of Brantford.

“To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

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

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

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

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

“—to continue to maintain base funding for Ontario public libraries.”

I'm happy to sign my name to this and send it off with page Rishi.

**The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott):** I apologize to the member for Mississauga–Streetsville and recognize her now.

#### LAND USE PLANNING

**Mrs. Nina Tangri:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

“To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“Whereas property owners spend unnecessary time and money dealing with complex rules in the Planning Act; and

“Whereas increased costs and red tape for lenders are passed on to consumers; and

“Whereas municipalities currently need to charge for and deal with inadvertent joining of properties upon the death of one joint owner; and

“Whereas Bill 88, a proposed amendment to the Planning Act, will reduce red tape and regulatory requirements; and

“Whereas Bill 88 will leave more money in people's pockets; and

“Whereas Bill 88, the amendment to the Planning Act, will enhance transparency and predictability in the Planning Act;

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

I pass this on to legislative page Maria, and I sign my name to this.

#### AUTISM TREATMENT

**Ms. Teresa J. Armstrong:** I have hundreds of petitions. I'd like to thank Mary Bartlett for sending in these petitions.

“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 sign this petition, Speaker, and give it to page Kate to deliver to the table.

#### LIBRARY SERVICES

**Ms. Jill Andrew:** This petition is entitled “No Cuts to Libraries.

“To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“Whereas libraries perform a vital function storing and sharing information in our communities and are integral to healthy, strong communities;

“Whereas the Ontario Library Service—North and the Southern Ontario Library Service programs ensure that smaller libraries in rural communities have equal access to all of Ontario's library collections; and

“Whereas libraries are particularly important spaces for people who face geographic and socio-economic barriers to accessing information and technology;

“We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to: reverse the budget cuts to our libraries and reinstate the necessary funding to keep our libraries strong.”

I absolutely support this petition. I have signed it and handed it to Jadon for tabling.

#### INJURED WORKERS

**Ms. Doly Begum:** I recently attended an Injured Workers Speakers School. They collected these petitions by the injured workers. I'm happy to read them out here in the Legislature. The petition reads:

“Petition to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

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

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

“Whereas decades of cost-cutting have pushed injured workers into poverty and onto publicly funded social assistance programs, 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 am happy to support this petition and will give it to page Leo.

## AUTISM TREATMENT

**M<sup>me</sup> France Gélinas:** I would like to thank Josee and Chad Pharand, Jasmine Maynard, Diana Bedard and Chantal Chartrand for these petitions. They read as follows:

“Whereas the PC government of Ontario recently announced plans to overhaul the Ontario Autism Program, implementing a two-tiered age- and income-based funding model, and effectively removing funding for any significant duration of comprehensive applied behavioural analysis (ABA) from all children living with the autism spectrum disorder (ASD); and

“Whereas in 2003 and again in 2016, previous age caps on comprehensive therapy were removed by former” Liberals “because the age cap was recognized to be unfair and discriminatory; and

“Whereas ABA is not a therapy, but a science, upon which interventions including comprehensive treatment is founded and duration and intensity of treatment are the key components in predicting outcomes—not age; and

“Whereas accredited peer-reviewed empirical evidence in the treatment of children with ASD has repeatedly shown that for some children with ASD, comprehensive ABA therapy is best practice and the only suitable intervention; and

“Whereas wait-lists for services have increased in length as a result of the 66% increase in costs...; and

“Whereas it is unacceptable for the Premier of Ontario or his government to drastically reduce essential supports for some of the ... most vulnerable children without consideration of their individualized needs;”

They “petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to immediately reassess the changes to the Ontario Autism Program and redesign the direct funding model to be administered with a needs-based approach in order to ensure that all children with ASD for whom continuous or comprehensive therapy has been prescribed by a qualified clinician are able to obtain these services in a timely manner regardless of their age or family income.”

1540

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

## ORDERS OF THE DAY

PROTECTING WHAT MATTERS MOST  
ACT (BUDGET MEASURES), 2019LOI DE 2019 POUR  
PROTÉGER L'ESSENTIEL  
(MESURES BUDGÉTAIRES)

Mr. Fedeli moved third 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):** I look to the Minister of Finance to lead off the debate.

**Hon. Victor Fedeli:** I'm truly looking forward to the next hour. Yes, you heard it, Speaker.

**Hon. Todd Smith:** Settle in.

**Hon. Victor Fedeli:** Settle in. Get comfy. Do whatever it is you like to do while we're here talking for the next hour.

Speaker, this is a copy of the budget, Protecting What Matters Most. I'm going to spend the next hour talking about—

*Interjections.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott):** I need to remind the minister that we don't use props in the chamber.

**Hon. Victor Fedeli:** Speaker, I would never use a prop in this chamber. I consider the budget book, which was introduced in this chamber, to be the most important document we have in this Legislature this year, because this provides an overview of the 2019 budget and, quite frankly, it's not only our path to balance but it's our path to recovery. I take your point, and I apologize for holding a copy of the budget up. I do know the Legislature rules, and I apologize for that.

I think it's important to recognize the title of this book. It is called Protecting What Matters Most. There are three government initiatives that support the key agenda. Number one is, indeed, protecting what matters most. The second key initiative that supports our agenda is—you'll hear it over and over from me—putting people first. Everything that we do will be about—whether it's the driver, it'll be putting the drivers first; whether it's the students, through lower tuition, it's putting the students first—the people, the families, the seniors, the students. It's all about the people, and we are putting people first. Finally, as you'll see, the key initiative in order to make all that happen is, we will be promoting Ontario's Open for Business, Open for Jobs Strategy, because that's how it will all come together.

We talk about restoring fiscal balance in a responsible and sustainable manner. I have talked about that many times. We've got a five-year path to balance, and the government is balancing our budget, the people's budget, in a responsible manner. We're restoring accountability, sustainability and trust. That has been broken in the past. Balancing the budget is not an end in itself. Instead, it is the only way that we can ensure that the key Ontario public services have the sustainable funding that is needed for generations to come. That's why it is so critical and that's why we spend so much time talking about the path to balance—balancing the budget.

We also talk about the three key initiatives protecting what matters most. The government is delivering on our commitment to improve the public services that individuals and families count on. That's why you'll hear me talk a little bit later about the fact that we're spending \$1.3 billion more on health care and \$700 million more on education, and there are other sub-budgets in there that are all increased, which I'll talk about in a moment.

We're also protecting what matters most by providing more choice and access to child care. We're putting

patients first by ending hallway health care. We're moving forward with a new education plan. We're improving community safety. We're building high-quality infrastructure. Those are the pieces, Speaker, that are helping us protect what matters the most.

The second item is putting people first. This comes, again, in a wide variety because the people of Ontario are front and centre in this government's decisions. Everything we do is about putting the people first.

I've told this story in the Legislature a few times, but I think it bears telling it again. When we got elected, when all of the Progressive Conservative caucus members were elected, we assembled for the very first time. The Premier, first of all, bought us pizza for lunch because he said there are no more of these legislative lunches. Every week when we meet as a caucus, somebody here will be in charge of buying lunch. We're all going to take turns. It was a great signal that the party with the taxpayers' money is over and that the Premier was safeguarding every penny, putting more money back in the pockets of people. It was a small gesture, but an incredibly important signal that he sent to our caucus: "I want you to watch every penny. I want you to watch every nickel and every dime that is spent on behalf of the taxpayer."

He gave us all a desk placard. Yes, he paid for it himself. It says "For the people." It's a placard that sits on every one of our desks. Mine happens to sit between my cellphone and my stand-up desk that my computer is on. Now, I say "cellphone" because it's an interesting point, that in order to save money, we looked—I didn't even know I had a landline in my office. I've never used it. We didn't realize the cost that was involved in filling our entire office with landlines when every one of us has a cellphone. Mine is a BlackBerry. I'm an Ontario supporter, Speaker.

My sign that says "For the people" is in between those. It's fascinating that when you pick up your phone, your device, to make a call, and you see that "For the people" sign, or when I'm standing at the stand-up desk about to hit the "send" button on an email that's going to set off a chain of events, the Premier says, "I want you to ask yourself, is what you are about to do for the people?" That phone call that you are going to make, is it doing something for the people? Is that "send" button you're going to hit that's going to launch \$2 billion of child care savings for families—you're about to do that. Is that for the people? Every single thing that you do needs to be for the people. That is all about putting people first and that's what we, on this side, are looking at doing, Speaker.

The people of Ontario are front and centre in the government's decisions. Our province is making it easier for people to access government services. I'll talk about that in a minute. That's what being for the people is. That's what it means to put the people first. The government is improving affordability in Ontario and we're delivering value for money for services that matter most such as subways and transit here in the GTA, as an example.

The government is treating adults like adults when it comes to choice and convenience for alcohol and gaming. We're putting the people first.

## 1550

The third key item is the fact that for the first time in 15 years, Ontario is now open for business, open for jobs. Ontario is creating an environment—in fact, we're creating the environment—where businesses can thrive, grow and create jobs. The government is helping to connect workers to good, local jobs while encouraging job creation, investment and trade.

Speaker, to that very point, the Premier and I were in New York a couple of weeks ago. It was amazing to hear from the investment community—two types: first, the investors who are buying our bonds. We have a debt, brought almost entirely by the previous Liberal government, supported by the NDP. The debt was \$347 billion when we took office. That is the largest subnational debt on the planet. We have about \$36 billion that we need to borrow this year from markets around the world. About 70% to 80% is in Canadian funds, and about 20% to 30% is either in US dollars or euros.

First of all, so far, in the first two weeks of our post-budget bond sales, we've hit almost \$5 billion in sales. They're selling relatively well—many of the issues are oversold—and half of the money has been raised in US dollars. That's quite significant this year.

In New York, the investors, the bond investors that we spoke of, as well as companies looking to move somewhere, to relocate or to expand somewhere—these are those kinds of investors—were unbelievably excited about Ontario. When we talk, as I will in a moment, about so many of the reasons why they should come to Ontario—what makes Ontario open for business, open for jobs—they saw that. They were excited. They bought our bonds, and they are coming to look at Ontario as a location, a destination, for them to set up shop, hire people and begin to expand and grow their businesses. We saw that firsthand when we were in the United States. They know, Speaker, that we are now open for business and open for jobs.

What they really liked was the fact that we have a plan. It's a reasonable plan; it's a responsible plan. But what they all really liked—families throughout Ontario, and the business community throughout Ontario, and the business community in New York—was the fact that we have a plan to tackle Ontario's debt burden.

Nobody has paid attention to debt, certainly not the Liberal government, who racked up debt in an unbelievable fashion. After about 10 years they doubled—think about it: It took 130-some years to get our debt to the \$120-billion, \$130-billion mark, and it took the Liberals 10 years to double it and then add about another \$100 billion onto that over the next five years. It's just astounding that they went on such a spending spree. It got to the point where they were using the Visa card to pay off their Mastercard every single month.

Imagine this: They left us a \$15-billion deficit, and we have interest payments of over \$13 billion a year. Almost every penny that that previous government was borrowing every year was just to pay the interest—just the interest, Speaker, not any programs, nothing; just borrowing to pay

interest. That's why we say they are using the Visa card every month to pay off their MasterCard every month. That is absolutely unsustainable and takes away the opportunity to continue to do what we're doing, and that's increasing the budget for health care by \$1.3 billion, increasing the budget for education by \$700 million and all of the other programs.

In fact, we have a plan to return to a balanced budget in five years. It's a five-year plan. Before the budget, I talked about it in this way, Speaker. When we were asked, "What is your path to balance? When are you going to balance the budget?" we said, "I liken this to Goldilocks. It can't be too quick, because that would be harmful to the Ontario economy. It can't take too long because, well, anybody can do that, other than obviously the Liberals, because they never did." Speaker, the balance needed to be just right and this five-year path to balance is, indeed, just right.

The treat about it is that it had four magic words in it, as well: "no new tax increases"—none. This five-year path to balance not only has no tax increases whatsoever, it also returns \$26 billion back to the people of Ontario. I'll outline that \$26 billion in tax relief as I go through this presentation today.

So we have had people, of course, say, "You know, Vic, could you not have balanced quicker and given us tax relief?" Speaker, we've done both at the same time. We balance in five years and provide tax relief immediately. We began as soon as we were elected. We began returning tax relief to the people of Ontario. In fact, in the fall economic statement which came out on November 15, by that time, we had already returned \$2.7 billion in those first weeks that we were in office. We returned \$2.7 billion back to families, individuals, seniors, students and, yes, businesses. It was a remarkable relief for those families to have that money returned to them, to have less costs, to have their taxes not go up in January as the Liberals had planned with several hundred million dollars in tax increases in January.

Speaker, we took the recommendations of Ernst and Young Canada. We took their line-by-line review, together with each of the cabinet ministers, their parliamentary assistants and our caucus. With the multi-year planning process, we have found efficiencies that are projected to generate savings and cost avoidance.

During the campaign, we said we will find four cents on every dollar. If you can't find four pennies on every dollar of fat in a government, you are not doing your job. Speaker, we're proud to say that we have generated savings and cost avoidance of almost eight cents on every dollar spent, on average, over the path to balance. It's by generating these savings and ensuring that we're getting value for money on every penny spent that the government is able to provide this \$26 billion in relief to individuals, families, seniors, students and businesses, while eliminating the debt. That brings us to balance in five years. In fact, we project a surplus of \$300 million in that last year.

Speaker, we're proposing that we strengthen the fiscal accountability and reporting so that no future government

can put the people in the state that we are in, the state that we inherited today.

#### 1600

It's shocking to accept the fact that the previous Liberal government was spending \$40 million a day more than they took in. That just is absolutely mind-boggling—\$40 million a day, every day, more than they took in. The Financial Accountability Officer talked to us about these kinds of things. Because throughout the last government, we would come to the time when the government is supposed to turn over to us their quarterly report. They just never would. We have laws in Ontario that demand that the government turn over documents to the people of Ontario, the opposition, the Legislature and sitting MPPs. August 15, February 15—there are all kinds of dates that the law in Ontario says the government must turn these documents over. The Liberals ignored it. Sometimes they gave them late; other times they just never bothered to file these documents.

The Financial Accountability Officer wrote about this frequently. He said, "The MPPs in the Legislature do not have the correct, updated and true financial information in order to make decisions in the Legislature." He was talking to the government as well, as he was the opposition: "You do not have that information to make those decisions."

So we have said that we will strengthen fiscal accountability and reporting. We have introduced—and I certainly hope the NDP will back us on this. We are proposing the Fiscal Sustainability, Transparency and Accountability Act. That is the first change in the strengthening of the Legislature in 15 years. It adds the word "sustainability," because that means you cannot continue to use your Visa card to pay your Mastercard bill every single month. Sustainability is now at the centre of Ontario's fiscal policy. It needs to be sustainable and it needs to be transparent. You need to be able to see the numbers at all of the reporting times. And you need to have accountability. That strengthening of the accountability and compliance will equal responsible fiscal management. I know that that's something the NDP aren't quite aware of, but there really is such a thing as responsible fiscal management. That's what we are going to be providing to the people of Ontario, because for the first time in 15 years, we will be restoring the public's trust in Ontario's finances.

The budget also approaches, as I've said, something that the previous government would never have considered: actions to reduce the debt burden—this debt that's hanging over our heads. This is something that absolutely needs to be addressed. And so, in our path to balance, in our fiscal plan, we have actions to reduce the debt burden. That is our debt burden strategy.

It's interesting that the previous government continued to add so much to debt, even during the good times in Ontario. We saw the recession. We saw what happened to every province in Canada, but we saw all of the other provinces coming back out of deficit and beginning to tackle their debt very quickly—Ontario, not so much.



They went on a spending spree—15 years of a spending spree.

The recession ended 10 years ago, and here was a government that in the 10th year following a recession was still adding \$15 billion a year onto their debt. So we have introduced a debt burden strategy as well. Our path to balance shows us that with the work that we've done in the few short months we've been in government, we have presented a budget that shows that this past year will be an \$11.7-billion deficit. We have reduced that \$15-billion deficit by \$3.3 billion. That is the first achievement with respect to balancing the budget.

In the medium-term outlook, this coming year we forecast our deficit to be down almost \$5 billion, to \$10.3 billion, falling to \$6.8 billion the following year, to \$5.6 billion, to \$3.5 billion, and then balance and surplus. That is Ontario's path to balance the budget. That is a reasonable path. That is a responsible path. It is a path, Speaker, that protects what matters most, and that's our health care, our education and our core public services.

As I've said, we are delivering \$26 billion in relief to individuals, families, seniors, students and businesses. I'll just give you a quick synopsis of some of this money, Speaker. We have eliminated over \$3 billion in tax increases that were planned or imposed by the previous government. This past January, there were hundreds of millions of dollars about to hit seniors. There were hundreds of millions of dollars that were about to hit families. There were hundreds of millions of dollars that were about to hit businesses.

I'll give you an example: the passive income tax. It's a complicated formula, but passive income tax is something that the federal government has now removed. They've added a tax. This was for business people who don't have a pension, to be able to use some of the corporate money and be able to earn interest on that money for their future and not pay a tax on it. That's a passive income tax. The federal government said, "We want to put our mitts on that money," and the Liberals in the province of Ontario said, "Yes, we want our mitts on it too." It was going to take place on January 1. We put a stop to that, and it saved 7,900 businesses from up to \$40,000 in new taxes each.

Speaker, that money—I'm a lifelong business person, a lifelong entrepreneur. If you get a nickel, you put that right back into your business. If you get a dime, you can't wait to put that back into your business, because you know that every time you invest in your people and your business, it's going to grow and return even more. That \$40,000 that those 7,900 business people were spared went right back into the economy. They all either hired people, bought equipment—and I'll tell you the proof of that in a moment.

What we also did was that we cancelled, very quickly, the cap-and-trade carbon tax. That will save families and businesses almost \$10 billion in the life of this plan. That's money that's going right back into the economy. If you remember, the Auditor General told us, Speaker, told this Legislature that the cap-and-trade carbon tax did absolutely nothing to affect greenhouse gases—absolutely nothing. It was all photo-op environmentalism. We know that now.

The saddest part is that that money, that almost \$2 billion a year, was going—80% of it, the Auditor General told us, was accruing to either Quebec or California, the other two in this cap-and-trade triangle. That 80%, all of the sweat, all of the money out of pockets of Ontario families and businesses, all of those billions coming out of our pockets, was heading directly south to California or directly east to Quebec—80% of that value. We only accrued 20% of the value, but we got nothing out of it for greenhouse gases. It was all a tax grab. All that pain—\$1.9 billion a year of pain to get 20% of that money back into the government's coffers. What a huge price to pay. What a huge way to stifle business, to throw water on the entrepreneurial flame.

**1610**

In the \$26 billion in relief, we're providing \$2 billion through the implementation of the LIFT program. That is the Low-income Individuals and Families Tax Credit. What that means is the government will return \$2 billion to the low-income earners in Ontario. Anybody earning minimum wage will not pay provincial income tax in the province of Ontario. That is exclusive to Ontario and that is a \$2-billion return of money back into the pockets, in this case, of low-income individuals and families.

There's another \$2-billion program, and that is the Childcare Access and Relief from Expenses Tax Credit. We call it CARE—thankfully—for short. I'll talk a little bit more in detail about that, but that returns \$2 billion to 300,000 low- and middle-income families to help pay for their child care. This is above and beyond any of the existing child care programs. This is on top of all of that.

We've also cancelled over \$150 million of Liberal-scheduled fee increases. This is for services like driver's fees, registration fees and fishing licences. Things on those fees that were all scheduled to increase under the previous government, we've cancelled them all—\$150 million more back into the pockets of families, seniors and individuals.

We saw what was happening south of the border when US President Trump said, "I'm going to slash taxes, I'm going to make it easier for businesses to access the capital cost allowance," and he has done what he said in terms of doing that. What happened to Ontario is that their marginal effective tax rate fell from in the high twenties—almost 30%—down to 16%, attracting businesses to leave Ontario and open in the States.

So whatever he did worked from that perspective and it hurt Ontario. It hurt Canada, but it primarily hurt Ontario, because, at one time, our biggest advantage over the United States businesses just across the border, whether it's in Michigan, Ohio, Pennsylvania, New York, any of the border states—our biggest advantage in Ontario was the huge gap in the tax rate. They were almost 30%.

Well, whether we like it or not, it was done, and it had a huge effect. Quite frankly, they were eating our lunch. This is what was happening to us. They were stealing our lunch money, to be perfectly frank.

Businesses in Ontario having to decide, "Do we have our capital expenditures"—if they're a multinational—

“and do we invest it in Ontario or do we invest it in the States?” The States put in an accelerated capital cost allowance, and that means they can write the machinery expenses off immediately. That was killing us. They had a red tape reduction program adding to the pain of Ontario.

So we looked at what we needed to do and we said, “We promised corporate tax relief,” and the business community said, “Instead of a corporate tax cut, give us right now the accelerated capital cost allowance. Let us write our equipment off right away, just like they do in the States.” And we did that, Speaker. In fact the Ontario Job Creation Investment Incentive, as we call it, which is the long name for an accelerated capital cost allowance, is almost \$4 billion. It’s \$3.8 billion in corporate income tax relief that we end up delivering earlier on our government’s commitment to cut corporate taxes. That not only is a promise made, promise kept; that’s a promise made very early in our mandate, instead of a promise kept very late in the mandate.

The corporate community is extremely appreciative of the fact that we are now lowering our marginal effective tax rate down to about 12%. It’s now, once again, lower than the American number, and it gives us this advantage. So we’ve got tax advantage and cutting red tape. We’re doing all the things that we need to do, and I’ll talk a little bit about the success of that, Speaker, in a moment, because that has turned into an unbelievable success story for the province of Ontario. In fact, a sneak peek: Just a couple of days ago, when we announced the job numbers for the last month alone, the job numbers were 47,100 new jobs created in the province of Ontario. When I talk a little bit more about all of the business incentives, we’ll give you the reveal of the full number.

We’re going to bring electricity price relief. This will be increased funding of almost \$4 billion to help families with their electricity bills as well. Speaker, those are only a few of the items that, when put together, are part of the \$26 billion of relief we’re providing to families.

Earlier we talked about putting people first. Here in the GTA, we’re uploading the Toronto Transit Commission’s subway network. We have committed to the largest and the most historic new subway construction in the greater Toronto-Hamilton area, the GTHA. We are committed—\$28.5 billion total projected cost. Ontario’s share of that will be \$11.2 billion. This is, without question, the most significant, the most historic investment in transportation in the history of Ontario.

We are expanding GO Transit rail service. We’re modernizing the GO Transit customer experience. We’re adopting a market-driven, transit-oriented development strategy. That means we’re going to put the transit where it needs to be. We’re going to have partners involved in that. A good example was Mimico and Woodbine recently, where those partners are investing in the extensions themselves and will be able to build upwards. Where the province doesn’t have to dig into the taxpayers’ pockets to pay for these things, the private sector will. The private sector can benefit from—whether you want to call it air rights or however you want to term it, the private sector

then gets involved in a future opportunity. That is a market-driven, transit-oriented development strategy. That is going to be a big part of how transit will get done.

We’re also investing approximately \$1.2 billion to expand Ottawa’s LRT network and \$1 billion to build Hamilton’s new LRT. We are doing what we said we would do, Speaker.

Also, it’s not always transit. There are roads and massive investments in roads. We’re also helping the drivers on the roads by putting people first. We’re implementing the Putting Drivers First blueprint. This is the most comprehensive change to Ontario’s auto insurance in decades. It’s going to allow the insurers to offer more products today than they have. It’s going to offer insurers more ways to help lower insurance costs. It’s going to allow drivers to have options, a menu to pick and choose what type of insurance they want to have.

**1620**

You’re going to hear me talk in a minute about modernizing the government, transforming the government, digitizing the government. Part of the digitization will be that your auto insurance will no longer have to be the little pink slip in your glove compartment. It will be on an app, which is digitizing and saving money for the consumers.

Our Putting Drivers First auto insurance system—you’ll hear more and more about that as we roll that out.

But putting people first, also in our budget, talks about expanding choice and respecting consumers. That’s part of what a government does. We are going to be expanding the sale of beverage alcohol to improve choice and convenience. That’s what it’s all about. We’re going to be respecting the consumers.

We’re going to establish a competitive market for legal, online gambling, to respect consumers’ preferences. You can’t hide from the fact that people in Ontario are going online to gamble and, quite frankly, they’re on the grey-market sites. We will put out a competitive market for legal, online gambling to happen here in the province of Ontario.

I’ve got to tell you, one of the calls that we get in our office is thank-you calls from Legions. We are strengthening consumer protections. We’re reforming ticket sales. The Legions call and say thank you, thank you, thank you.

We are going to continue—

*Interjections.*

**Hon. Victor Fedeli:** There you go. You might as well say thank you for that.

We are lowering the cost of energy. We are phasing out ineffective energy conservation programs, thereby saving the taxpayers of Ontario about \$442 million.

I talked about the fact that we will be adopting a Digital First strategy for government services. I can talk a little bit about that one particularly.

Our Digital First approach—and it’s “digital first,” not “digital only”—will offer simpler, faster, better service. It will enable the adoption of digital practices right across government. It’s going to eliminate the outdated approaches that we have, including at ServiceOntario, that prevent the delivery of customer-oriented service. You go

to a bank and you can bank online, you can bank 24/7, but you can't do that kind of thing with the government of Ontario. Why? Because we've never had to compete before. We've never had to compete with anybody. So you end up getting complacent.

We are going to offer a Digital First strategy. It's going to allow information-sharing. It's going to support a digital government. It's going to support economic growth.

We are working right now, in our Digital First strategy, for people who want to receive the services online. Right now, in order to renew your driver's licence, your vehicle registration or your health card, you need to go to a ServiceOntario facility. We are going to put the top 10 items that you can have done at a ServiceOntario—we're going to put those online. Now, in the comfort of your home, office or wherever you are, on your device, you will be able to take the top 10 things: your driver's licence, your vehicle registration, your health card and others. This will save 10 million in-person transactions. They will be gone, and we'll revert that to a digital channel.

That's what we mean by modernizing government. That's what we mean by transforming government. That's what we mean by digitizing—in this case, digitizing government.

That move alone, that one tiny move, will save the taxpayers of Ontario \$33.5 million. That's what we're talking about when we say we're going to digitize.

Let me give you a couple of examples of what we mean when we say we're going to modernize government, transform government. These aren't just slogans or bumper stickers. We're putting people first. We're putting the taxpayer first.

Here's an example: About 10 years ago, when I was mayor of the city of North Bay, I was invited by the government to attend the ribbon-cutting of the brand new OPP centre in North Bay—beautiful. I went, assisted the then minister with the ribbon-cutting. I thanked the government for their investment, patted the minister on the back, said, "What a great job. This is a beautiful centre. Thank you very much," got in my car, drove back to my office. I drove by the old OPP centre. It was quite a large property, on the highway—Highways 11 and 17 together.

A year later, I'm driving down the highway, 11-17, and the building is still there, empty. Five years later, I drive down the highway, and the building is still there, empty. In the winter, you see the smoke coming out the chimney. You see the five acres of land. The parking lot is plowed within an inch of its life. It's empty. The building is empty. There are no cars in the parking lot, but it's plowed, and smoke is coming out the chimney. Summertime, the lawn is cut; it's pristine. In the fall, the leaves are raked. This is year after year. Ten years later, I'm still driving by the empty OPP building.

Now, I'm telling you, Speaker, the Auditor General said to the previous government in her annual report—it would be either two or three years ago now—"You have 810 empty properties throughout Ontario that are not being used that you are paying hundreds of millions of dollars to keep empty. You've got to do something with

those. You should be selling them." Nothing. That's a little bit of work, so of course the Liberal government doesn't do it. They leave those buildings. I'm driving by; 10 years I'm driving by that empty building, watching our tax dollars go up the chimney, go up in smoke.

So we get elected and one of the first programs we do is put many of these empty buildings for sale. I went home to North Bay one of the Thursday afternoons. We got out the for-sale sign, called the media and banged in the for-sale sign at the OPP station on Highways 11 and 17 in North Bay this past winter. Speaker, two weeks ago Thursday—well, we sold that property, it closed, and we got the cheque that day. So instead of the cost of \$1.1 million that the taxpayer has paid to keep that building empty, absolutely empty, for all those years, instead of continuing paying those operating and maintenance costs, we now no longer own the property. We got a cheque for \$700,000 for that one building, put the cheque in the bank, and scratched it off the list of payments that we have to make—\$1.1 million we paid, Speaker.

The person who bought that building is putting a viable business in there. That person is now going to hire employees to work in that business—quite a few employees, from what I understand, into that building. The city of North Bay is now collecting business taxes for the first time in the history of that building.

You talk about win-win-win. That is exactly what we mean by "transforming government," "modernizing government." Speaker, we're just doing that in a business-like way. How can you drive by these unused, unrequired, unnecessary assets, right across everywhere in Ontario, for all those years, for more than a decade, and not do anything about it?

I was so thrilled—I don't have all the details but I was so thrilled to see our Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing and our Minister of Government Services announce the sale of a second property, two or three blocks from here, on Grosvenor: \$33 million for that 0.9 acres of property—\$33 million. Instead of paying \$2.6 million in costs to keep that building empty over the last 10 years, we now scratch the costs off and put \$33 million in the bank. The organization that bought that will be putting a couple of units up, of which I understand 240—my numbers may be a bit off; I don't have my notes on that in front of me—are affordable housing units. That's making the best possible use of that 0.9 acres, Speaker. That's exactly what you would expect a government to do, considering the Auditor General told us to do that all those years ago. Nobody listened. Nobody listened. Now, Speaker, we listened.

**1630**

We are transforming government. We're transforming those empty assets into cash, into jobs and into something off the balance sheet in the negative, to scratch off those expenses.

Now, as I said earlier, we're protecting what matters most, and, quite frankly, nothing matters more than our children. We have introduced one of the most flexible child care initiatives ever introduced in the province of

Ontario. As I said earlier, it's the Childcare Access and Relief from Expenses Tax Credit—thankfully, we call it CARE. Speaker, it's because we care. This is providing \$2 billion in relief for 300,000 low- and middle-income families across the province of Ontario. This provides up to 75% of their child care costs, up to \$6,000 per child under the age of seven, up to \$3,750 for children between the ages of seven and 16, and up to \$8,250 per child with a severe disability. This is part of the \$26 billion that we are returning to the people of Ontario. That is a big part of our child care program.

But, Speaker, there's a second part of it as well. We are investing a billion new dollars to create up to 30,000 child care spaces in Ontario, including 10,000 of those spaces—these are in schools; 30,000 of them in schools and up to 10,000 of them in new schools in the province of Ontario. Speaker, that is how you protect what matters most and, in this case, our children.

Speaker, you protect what matters most by investing in health care. Now, there are many ways to tackle hallway health care, but I am just going to talk about the fact that, despite what you continue to hear from the opposition, we are spending \$1.3 billion more this year than the health budget of last year. Hospitals specifically will see an increase of \$384 million. Home and community care spending and long-term-care facilities will receive \$267 million more. Long-term-care facilities in Ontario will see an increased investment, a new investment, \$1.75 billion of new money to build 15,000 long-term-care spaces and renovate 15,000 more. Almost 7,000 of those sites have already been announced, and many are actually under way as we speak, Speaker—\$1.75 billion.

We are making a historic \$3.8-billion investment in mental health: \$1.9 billion from the federal government and \$1.9 billion from the provincial government. This is historic, Speaker. This is new money; this is additional money. We are adding \$17 billion over the next 10 years for capital improvements to our hospitals.

One final item—and it has a lot to do with hallway health care, just like the long-term-care beds have a lot to do with hallway health care. This is one. As an MPP, nothing is more troubling than being in the constituency office on a Friday afternoon when a low-income senior comes in holding their face. You know they've got trouble with their teeth, and they don't have any money for getting any work done. It pains us.

I've watched for eight years. We begged the previous government to do something about it, and nothing happened. Speaker, we, and we alone, by the sounds of it—it sounds like the NDP are not supporting this. We alone are spending \$90 million every year to provide free dental care for 100,000 low-income seniors.

That's what it means to protect what matters the most. That item alone—if anything you want to point to, it's that item alone that tells you that this government is protecting what matters most. We are committed to making every single dollar count and building a health care system that puts the patient first.

Speaker, protecting what matters most also includes an increase of \$700 million in the education system. We're

building an education system for success. We're investing almost \$13 billion in education capital grants, including \$1.4 billion for school renewal this year alone. That money is already going out the door. We're investing, as I said, \$700 million more. Once again, despite the continued opposition, they need to understand that the \$1 billion in 30,000 new child care spaces is new money. A \$700-million increase in the year-over-year budget, Speaker: This is what's happening in the education department in Ontario.

Protecting what matters most also means improving safety and security in our communities: \$16.4 million over two years will be spent to combat gun- and gang-related violence all across Ontario, plus \$2 million to the Ottawa Police Service for the very same thing.

We're modernizing the justice system. We're responsibly managing the retail of cannabis because we are improving safety and security in communities. The federal government legalized cannabis right across the country. Here in the province of Ontario, we are doing the responsible thing. We have put cannabis online for online sales to begin with until we were prepared to see the private sector open up to 25 stores. The sad news is, the federal government has completely bungled the launch of cannabis by not having any supply. The whole idea of our approach—our careful, cautious approach—was to protect the safety of our kids, protect the safety on our roads and to combat the illegal growth and sale of cannabis. Speaker, it's pretty hard to do that last one when you've got a federal government who has no idea what has happened to the supply right across the country and here in the province of Ontario—when our Prime Minister has to go on TV before Christmas and say, “I hope the supply gets fixed in the next two or three months but certainly over the course of the next year.”

We have done the responsible thing. While many other provinces jumped in and saw stores open that are now closing, the hours are reduced or the number of days they're open are reduced, here in Ontario we've taken the slow and steady, correct, businesslike approach. Think about it: This has been under prohibition for almost 100 years. We've only been in this business a few months, Speaker. It's a brand new business. So we have done the correct thing. We have done the mature thing. We have gone out and had these facilities opened through the private sector, where we did not have to use any taxpayer dollars.

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**Mr. Deepak Anand:** It's amazing.

**Hon. Victor Fedeli:** You said it. It really is an amazing transformation. It's an amazing process.

I spoke earlier about the fact that the business community saves \$880 million through cap-and-trade, \$1.3 billion by freezing minimum wage, \$1.4 billion from freezing WSIB, \$1.4 billion through the accelerated capital cost. I think I'll correct myself: I meant to say \$1.3 billion saved in minimum wage. Cutting red tape, lowering energy and not going through the tax increases of the Liberal government—all of that has resulted in the creation, since the day

we were elected, of 170,000 jobs in the province of Ontario, Speaker.

I thank you for the opportunity to be able to speak about protecting what matters most.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls):** Questions and comments?

**Mr. Jeff Burch:** I have to say, that was a difficult hour. How can any government in this day and age make a budget and completely ignore climate change and our responsibility to mitigate it and eventually stabilize it? This government has no plan whatsoever. They believe supporting programs to clean up trash is an environmental plan. Not only do they not have a plan, but they're spending billions of taxpayer dollars fighting someone else's plan—a market-driven plan that puts a price on carbon, a plan that they themselves agreed with just a year ago. This minister, when he was kissing up to a different leader, was perfectly fine with carbon pricing. It must be interesting when your principles are infinitely flexible.

There's nothing Conservative about a government that does not conserve, that ignores issues of environmental sustainability and refuses to acknowledge the green shift that modernizing economies all over the world are taking part in.

This is a brutally cruel budget. It's as simple as that. It cuts \$1 billion from the neediest citizens of our province while saying nothing about poverty, precarious employment and a shortage of jobs that pay a living wage. There are almost 400 pages in this budget. A reference to alcohol happens 35 times. There's not one mention of poverty, yet this minister suggests that this is a budget for the people. It's a budget for developers. It's a budget for friends of the government. It's a budget for wealthy citizens who got a tax break from this minister in his first budget. That's who this is for. It's not for the people of Ontario. It's for the friends of this government. It's a shame that the first budget of this government would be so narrow-minded as to not have any kind of a plan for the environment, only a plan to reward the friends of this Premier and this government.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls):** Further questions and comments?

**Mr. Paul Calandra:** I want to commend the Minister of Finance and his entire team for bringing this budget forward.

Yesterday, I talked a little bit about why it was that I got into politics. I talked about how, in the 1980s, bad Liberal government policies—federal Trudeau Liberal government policies—sent interest rates up to 18%, 19% and 20%. For our family, we had to wonder: Could we make the mortgage payments?

It was very much a similar situation when we took office: another bad Liberal government putting policies in place that made it difficult for families to make ends meet, to pay their hydro bills—heat or eat. What this government has done is brought forward, and the Minister of Finance has brought forward, a very, very good plan.

While I appreciate the support and the investments that we're getting from Wall Street and Bay Street, what the

minister outlined today was really a budget about Main Street—Main Street Aurora; Main Street Stouffville—the people who live in towns and communities across this province.

I will suggest to the minister that the projections for GDP growth that he made in the budget were conservative, because it's important that we actually meet the targets that we set. We've set aside a sizable reserve fund, as well, in this budget, because, as I said, it's important that we meet the targets that we've set.

He talks about returning not only to balance, but starting to pay down the debt. For the first time in over 15 years, we have a government that is putting money back in the pockets of people. Imagine that. And of course, the opposition aren't going to support it. They want to talk about climate change, but they're going to vote against putting new subways in the ground, taking hundreds of thousands of cars off the streets. They're going to vote against it. So while they talk about policies, we actually get things done.

This minister has shown that you can balance a budget, you can cut taxes, you can make investments in health, education, community safety, and you can do that without putting it on the backs of the taxpayers.

I can't wait to vote in favour of this budget, and I can't wait for more of protecting what matters most to people.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls):** Further questions and comments?

**Ms. Sara Singh:** It's a pleasure to rise and contribute to the debate. I'd like to thank the member from Niagara Centre, as well as our Minister of Finance for his very lively discussion on the budget.

The member from Markham—Stouffville mentioned the Main Street people and that this is what this budget should really be about: the everyday folk. Well, on Main Street in Brampton, we don't think this budget is reflecting our priorities. And many of our mayors, from a regional perspective, have come forward and said that this budget is going to hurt people in our communities. In fact, this budget is going to download costs to municipalities. While this government wants to claim that they're cutting and making things easier for people in communities, actually, in Peel region they estimate that this budget is going to cost them \$45.1 million. That's going to equate to a \$68 increase per average household in our municipality. So while this government wants to claim that they've helped the everyday Ontarian in communities like mine, people are worried that services are going to be cut—services like our paramedics, services like access to child care. These are real concerns that communities have. This budget hasn't put the needs of our communities ahead of the needs of businesses.

Also, the minister references access to justice and modernizing our justice system. Well, as the critic for the Attorney General, I would disagree. I think that the cuts to legal aid are actually going to limit access to justice. It's going to make it harder for people in this province to get the justice that they deserve, rather than easier. The \$133 million taken away from legal aid means that legal clinics

in this province aren't going to keep their doors open. That means that women fleeing domestic violence aren't going to get the supports they need or access to justice.

So I'd like to ask the minister again: Please tell us how this budget is actually serving the needs of the people in this province.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls):** Further questions and comments?

**Mr. Stephen Lecce:** I want to thank the members from Brampton Centre and Niagara Centre for their comments. I do want to respond to both members, particularly the member from Niagara Centre, who questioned who this budget is focused on, the main audience. I would argue, contrary to what he suggested, that this budget's main focus is on helping and lifting low- and middle-income families and giving them a hand up. I'll tell you how, Mr. Speaker.

For families with children, we've introduced a child care tax credit that is going to put literally thousands of dollars back in the hands of low- and middle-income families in the province of Ontario.

For the lowest-income seniors, for 300,000 seniors from Niagara to Brampton to Vaughan and every community in between, they will now be eligible for support and for free dental care provided by the province—for those with the greatest level of vulnerability within our society.

For those who make the minimum wage, they now, for the first time in our history, will not pay a singular dollar in income because of the LIFT tax credit unveiled under this budget.

For those who rely on social housing: \$1 billion allocated to help our most vulnerable to get the dignity of owning, of having a home and being able to raise their family within one.

For students and young people in the province who face disproportionately high and escalating costs, be it in education or housing, we're giving the first tuition cut in my lifetime—at least, certainly, in the last 15 years, which had successive hikes in tuition. For the first time in our history we're actually cutting tuition, notwithstanding that under the former Liberal government we had the most expensive tuition in the country by 10%, which, for a student at York University or Ryerson or U of T, could average, in the liberal arts program, about a thousand bucks a year.

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Mr. Speaker, the budget is focused on returning money back to the people of this province: young and old, women and men, urban and rural, everyone. Everyone deserves a fair shot at a good job, and that is why this budget creates the conditions for over 170,000 full-time, overwhelmingly private sector jobs, to unleash the province and unleash the potential of our people.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls):** Now I return to the Minister of Finance for his final comments.

**Hon. Victor Fedeli:** Once again, I want to thank the members from Niagara Centre, Markham–Stouffville, Brampton Centre and King–Vaughan for their contributions to this discussion.

To the member for Brampton Centre, I have to say that it's funny. The go-to, the quick answer back, as soon as the municipalities saw what we were doing, their first reaction was, "We've got to raise taxes. We've got to raise taxes." We've shown them that our goal was to find four cents on every dollar, and we've shown them that we have saved almost eight cents on every dollar. We're saying to those municipalities, "Your first go-to is not, 'Let's raise taxes to solve that.' It should be: 'Let's find those efficiencies of four cents on every dollar.'" We'll show them the way; we'll help them; we'll guide them.

We're asking that same thing from all of the agencies, boards and commissions: Look for those efficiencies too, just like we did. This is the taxpayers' dollars. There's only one taxpayer. If you can't find four cents on every dollar, four pennies of fat on a dollar within your organization, we'll help you find it. Just ask us.

Speaker, we are making smart, long-term decisions. We're reinventing the way that government delivers services, and we're focusing our resources on individuals and families in the greatest need. By doing that, the province is restoring trust, transparency and accountability.

We're balancing the budget in a responsible manner. We're bringing relief to families and support to businesses, and we're restoring trust, transparency and accountability. We're protecting what matters most—health care, education and core public services—by ensuring we have the funding in place for future generations.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls):** Further debate? I recognize the member for Hamilton West–Ancaster–Dundas.

**Ms. Sandy Shaw:** Thank you very much, Speaker.

**Mr. Michael Mantha:** A breath of fresh air.

**Ms. Sandy Shaw:** There you go.

Mr. Speaker, I've got an hour to talk about this budget. I will attempt to be parliamentary and kind, but it is not easy to characterize this budget and stay within those parliamentary boundaries.

Let's start with this: It's called an omnibus bill, and yes, 100%, it's an omnibus bill. It has 60 schedules, 200 pages. It is absolutely an omnibus bill.

It has been called a callous budget. We've heard it called a slash-and-burn budget, an austerity budget. We like to call it the booze-and-branding budget because, as we've said, it seems to focus more on booze than on anything else. Our MPP from Niagara Falls categorized it as a bag of tricks. So, there are many ways to characterize this budget.

But I would say it's certainly not a budget bill, because hardly anything in it is actually about the budget. There's a list from A to Z—it's actually A to V—that deals with a whole bunch of unrelated schedules. It talks about bees. It talks about liquor licences, of course. It talks about gambling, competitive sports. It repeals an act intended to protect consumers from high-priced scalpers. That's just an overview of some of the things that are in there.

But more than anything, the title of the bill, Protecting What Matters Most, just begs for ridicule. It's really hard not to ridicule it, because, in fact, it's such an ironic title

for the bill. So many of their bills are so ironic. I'd like to think that this government is being tongue-in-cheek, but they don't seem like they're that funny, that they have that much of a sense of humour, so I think that they really think this is what matters most to the people of Ontario.

Again, it seems to me that booze and vanity-branding stickers are what this government seems to think that they need to protect, because that's what is in the bill. But certainly what's not in the bill, and what I think other people would think is important, would be protection for workers. We see rollbacks of protections for workers.

Make no mistake, there is no meaningful relief for child care in this budget. There's no clear plan. There isn't really a plan at all for our health care system. The spending is an inflationary cut, make no mistake.

We also know that this is a budget that certainly does not value education, especially for our young folk. We've seen cuts to OSAP funding. We no longer hear talk about grants; we only hear of increasing loans. There's clearly a huge reduction to the funding for colleges and universities. But in this bill there's a special schedule, schedule 39, which is kind of like a graduation gift from this government to people who graduate from university, because what they get, on the very day they graduate, is accumulation of interest on their debt. Students who have worked hard and have done well in school can expect, on the very day they graduate, to accrue interest on their debt. We know that on the day students graduate, they don't often land a job, that they are still taking time to find a job in the field that they studied. But right away, this government is going to impose debt on them. There used to be a six-month grace period, but that's gone. That's something students can look forward to, a little graduation present from this government.

They certainly don't value our front-line workers. In schedule 53 is a bill that really does change the way in which people have always assumed that they have constitutional rights to collective bargaining. Schedule 53, which is the Public Sector Labour Relations Transition Act, talks a lot about ways in which this government would like to move work but not take the workers with them. We heard from ONA, the Ontario Nurses' Association, who are very concerned about this, among other people, about their 65,000 nurses, who do not see in this bill anything that protects them. They don't see anything in here that assures them. Their front-line workers, the people that look after our sick and our elderly, are not reassured by this bill at all. In fact, they're quite concerned that this schedule 53 is an attack on their rights, will diminish their ability to work in quality health care and will replace them with other workers who are not covered by these collective bargaining rights.

Just in case the government thinks that they are offering a few things, I just would like to disabuse any of us of the notion that what the government is doing is in any way overly generous. The only two things that they seem to be able to come up with when they talk about how this helps the people of Ontario, when we ask for concrete examples of how it is that you're protecting what matters most—

there are two things that they talk about, and one is the child care rebate. Like anything, you need to read the fine print. If you look at the fine print of this child care rebate, you will see that it does very little to improve access to child care for anyone. In fact, the government talks about up to \$6,000 as a rebate. Even if that were true, that they get \$6,000, we're talking about child care that can be up to \$20,000 a year.

But when you crunch the numbers, in fact, based on the fine print in this rebate, it comes up that only 41 families will actually be able to qualify for the full \$6,000.

**Ms. Marit Stiles:** Forty-one?

**Ms. Sandy Shaw:** Forty-one. What did I say?

**Ms. Marit Stiles:** Forty-one.

**Ms. Sandy Shaw:** Forty-one. That's what I meant to say.

It does nothing. It's not a child care plan. It does nothing to cap or control escalating fees, which are really the core part of the problem. It does nothing to increase safe, affordable, quality spaces—nothing. In fact, the Ontario Coalition for Better Child Care has said that this is an unaccountable, risky and ineffective use of public money. They say that it threatens to make things actually worse for people in the province of Ontario as young families try to access quality child care.

The other thing that I'd like to comment on: The government seems to think that their seniors' dental plan is the only thing that they need to offer up as evidence that they care about the people of Ontario. Again, let's lift the lid on this and have a look at what this dental plan is.

I do agree with the minister that access to dental care is very important. I think that we all know that it's a huge burden on our health care system. We, as the New Democrats, campaigned on dental care for all. We understood that not only is it the right thing to do; it makes clear business sense. But that's not what happened here. We had the senior dental plan that in fact will only offer some support to low-income seniors, and when I say "low-income seniors," I mean seniors who earn less than \$19,300 a year. That's not a lot. That is very low income.

**1700**

In fact, if they're able to qualify for this dental plan, if that's what you want to call it, where do they have to access this? Community health centres. Guess what's happening to community health centres? Funding is being cut. Or they have to go through public health. We know now that this government is taking 35 public health units and slashing them down to 10. So these low-income seniors who are seeking relief for pain in their mouths from this dental care plan will really have very limited places to go. This is really not a serious senior dental plan. It's just sort of a—what do I call it?

**Mr. Michael Mantha:** Window dressing.

**Ms. Sandy Shaw:** Window dressing. Thank you very much. It's simply window dressing. It does speak to a serious problem, but this government has not come up with a serious response to this issue.

The minister spoke this morning on Bill 100, and he said he was disappointed that we weren't supporting this

bill, but I have to say to the Minister of Finance, it's the bill that is disappointing. I can also say that, fundamentally, we completely disagree on what you think matters most to the people of Ontario. And no, we will not be supporting this bill in any shape or form.

I have to say, Mr. Speaker, it's not just us who are disappointed with this bill. I'd have to say that disappointment is a pretty big understatement. It goes much deeper. People in the province of Ontario seem to be surprised by this government's reckless cuts. They're actually quite angry at the Premier, who seems to say one thing and does another. But let's face facts. This is a Conservative government, and Conservative governments do what? They cut, they privatize and they download services. It's kind of what they do. It's in their DNA.

When I was trying to explain this to my family, my partner said, "It's like that book you read to the kids all the time." So, indulge me while I talk a little about an Aesop's fable that will help explain the Conservative government. It's the scorpion and the frog. I don't know if anybody has heard it. Essentially, the story goes like this: There is a scorpion that wants to travel the country and see what's up. He gets to a river and knows that, as a scorpion, he cannot cross the river. He can't swim and will drown. There happens to be a frog. The scorpion says to the frog, "Listen, I can't swim, but would you mind if I got on your back? You can swim; you're a frog. You can take me across to the other side of the river." The frog looks at the scorpion and goes, "You know, I'm afraid of you because you're a scorpion. You're going to sting." The scorpion says, "Well, that would not make any sense. If I sting you, we'll both drown, so I'm not going to do that." The frog goes, "Well, seems reasonable. I believe you. I'm buying it, so get on my back."

Just halfway across the river, as they're swimming across, the frog feels a sting in his back and he realizes the scorpion has in fact stung him, and they're both starting to drown. The frog said, "I don't understand. Why have you done this? We're both going to die now. We're both going to drown." The scorpion said, "I can't help it. It's my nature." That's the story that helps me understand this government. When I read this to my grandson, he said, "That's a sad sorry, Nan," and I had to say yes. In fact, this is a sad story.

So, like the frog, some of us took the Premier at his word that no one would lose jobs in the province of Ontario. We know that's not true. We see layoffs in hospitals, teacher layoffs—I mean, hundreds and hundreds of layoffs—and that is not what was promised. He promised to avoid deep cuts to the services we all rely on: health care, public health, libraries, child care. But that's not true; we see cuts to all of those things. Scorpions can't help their nature. This is what they do. But of all the things that are in the Conservative playbook—I've heard the Premier say, "We're going to use every tool in our toolbox"—there are not very many: cuts, downloading and privatization. I think I want to focus on the downloading tool in the toolbox because that's the thing that seems to be getting most people across Ontario really concerned and upset.

The mayors of large municipalities have categorized this as downloading by stealth. We certainly have seen this movie before. We saw this under former Premier Harris, downloading to the municipalities to the point where municipalities have, really, hardly recovered from the burden that was placed on them.

We toured the province on the pre-budget consultation. We heard from municipalities all across Ontario that said, "We are barely surviving here. We have an infrastructure deficit. We can't afford our long-term care. We look after seniors. We are really struggling here, and we cannot afford any more downloading or any more cuts." But apparently, the government didn't listen to what was presented to us in the pre-budget consultation, because what we have is this downloading regime—a download dump, if you will.

So what is this impacting? We've heard it time and time again, but we need to mention it again. This is vaccinations, infection prevention and control, well-baby programs. This is all happening at the same time that the province, as I said, is slashing the number of public health units.

Municipalities keep saying, "We're not able to respond to these cuts, because guess what? We have no idea what the plan is." I don't even imagine that there is a plan. They have no idea about the new boundaries for these public health units or who will run them. I don't know; is this what the government means, especially the Minister of Health, when she says "modernization" over and over and over again? I mean, we hear "modernization." How often do we hear that word? But what does that mean? Is it code for cuts? Is it code for chaos? It makes no sense because there's no plan.

Make no mistake, the municipalities across Ontario are saying that this is chaos and this is disruption they don't need. Really, it's a potentially dangerous situation. The Minister of Health has been warned, as we all understand, that an event like SARS or Walkerton is just around the corner. History tells us that the next crisis isn't far in coming. At a time when the minister should be listening to the experts and the front-line workers, during a time when there is evidence of a measles outbreak, this is a minister who doesn't listen, seems to consult only behind closed doors, and is really creating the kind of chaos that we don't think is appropriate for the large municipalities in Ontario.

The city of Hamilton alone—we are looking, just at the beginning, at a \$10-million hole in the municipality's budget. Just like all municipalities across the province, the budgets have already been set. The fact that this government would do this retroactively is something that speaks to their lack of respect for the role of elected officials across the province. The general manager of the city of Hamilton said, "We have no magic tricks to plug a \$10-million hole." But apparently, to hear the minister speak this morning, this is a magic budget, because they're just magically going to balance the budget.

It needs to also be said that 50% of the programs that municipalities are required to deliver are mandated by the province—at least 50%. And as we know, revenue tools



are very limited, if at all, for municipalities. They really have only one source of revenue that they can address, and that's taxation. This is a Premier who promised no tax hikes at all. He's unveiled a plan that's going to do just that: hike taxes. The municipalities do only have two choices: They can cut services or they can raise taxes. The minister just said here that there will be no new taxes, but news flash to the Minister of Finance: Property taxes are what? They're taxes. These are property owners and taxpayers that will be impacted by these cuts.

I've heard tell the municipalities that are up in arms about this think that if they have to impose a tax on ratepayers, they should probably rightfully call it the "Ford tax." But after this morning, I think that maybe we could call it the "Ford-Fedeli tax."

In fact, it's real. The municipalities are so ired by this that they would, in fact, like to brand this—

**Mr. Jeff Burch:** The effing tax.

**Ms. Sandy Shaw:** Exactly. The F-tax—we'll just call it that. I'm looking at you, Mr. Speaker, yes.

But jokes aside, this is really not a budget bill. In fact, what this bill is about, if you look at the substance of this bill, is nothing less than an assault on the civil rights of the people of Ontario and their access to justice.

1710

This is a government that has, from day one, clearly shown that what they want to do is insulate themselves from any outside, independent thought. They do not want to listen to us, Her Majesty's loyal opposition. I kind of like saying "Her Majesty's loyal opposition" a lot, because I think maybe I'll be able to meet the Queen one day. I don't know; maybe that's possible. But this is a government that doesn't listen to the loyal opposition, which has a legitimate role in parliamentary democracy. You've time-allocated 99% of all your bills, which means in fact that there's not proper, robust debate on the serious issues that face the province of Ontario.

You've put limits on debates at committee. As I said before, time and time again we hear that there's no consultation on these important bills. The Ontario Nurses' Association also said that they weren't consulted on Bill 74. You fired independent officers of the crown. You fired the Environmental Commissioner during a climate emergency. You fired the child and youth advocate, the advocate for the most vulnerable children amongst us. And you fired the French-language commissioner. In fact, during hearings on this bill, the Association des conseils scolaires des écoles publiques de l'Ontario, which is responsible for all of the French-language Franco-Ontarian kids in public school, pointed out how this was a double hit for the Franco-Ontarian kids in Ontario because they lost not only the French-language commissioner but they also lost their child and youth advocate.

So, really, make no mistake: This is not a budget bill. It is not. It may be masquerading as a budget bill, but it is an assault on the fundamental principles of our democracy. There's no clearer evidence of that than schedule 11, which is on the Compensation for Victims of Crime Act. This schedule repeals the compensation for victims of

crime. Just so that we're aware, you can apply to the Criminal Injuries Compensation Board in Ontario if you've suffered physical or psychological injuries as a result of a violent crime. That includes being injured when you're trying to prevent a crime or trying to help the police make an arrest. Violent crimes could include arson, firearm offences, poisoning assault, sexual assault, domestic assault and criminal harassment.

Mr. Speaker, on the two days that we heard public hearings over this, we heard many people who set off alarm bells regarding this. I can just touch on a few of the submissions we heard from groups and individuals who expressed grave concerns over changes to this act.

Let me just start with Paul Harte, who is with the Ontario Trial Lawyers Association. He made some very pointed remarks: "Schedule 11 will see the Criminal Injuries Compensation Board disbanded and, in the interim, compensation for pain and suffering will be reduced by 80% to \$5,000. The board has operated ... for almost 50 years...." The system which provides compensation to victims of violent crime in Ontario has existed—and there was no consultation on changes to this Criminal Injuries Compensation Board.

In fact, in 2007 the Ombudsman conducted an extensive review of the board and reported that, while there were some concerns, there was no need to completely dismantle this board. At a time when not only is it disbanded, there are no details for the replacement, which is kind of a theme, right? "We just get rid of something, but we have absolutely no plan in place to replace it." I want to make perfectly clear—and that was Paul Harte speaking for the Ontario Trial Lawyers Association—that this is something that is of grave concern to people in Ontario.

We also heard from the Black Legal Action Centre, BLAC, which is basically the best acronym of any organization in the history of the province. They're a not-for-profit corporation that provides legal representation on matters related to housing, human rights and education. Ms. Fareeda Adam had this to say:

"It's BLAC's respectful submission that the province's proposed changes in schedule 11 of Bill 100 are deeply troubling. Specifically, the legislation proposes to repeal the Compensation for Victims of Crime Act, dissolve the Criminal Injuries Compensation Board, and reduce compensation in respect to pain and suffering for victims of violent crime. Pain and suffering is a category of compensation where the board has the most discretion to consider the impact of crime, where intangible costs are considered and where survivors of long-standing, horrific violence can be compensated fairly and with dignity. It is our respectful submission that these proposed changes will disproportionately affect women, who file almost two thirds of the applications to the board. In addition, this is during the time when the reduction in previously committed funding to sexual assault centres, combined with the growing wait-list for counselling services and supports, will have a devastating effect on survivors of sexual violence and their families."

Mr. Speaker, the Ontario injuries compensation board has been awarding financial assistance since 1971. It

provides much-needed money for victims of violent crimes. There is absolutely no evidence that this government consulted with anyone when they made this decision that is certainly raising red flags all across our province.

A second schedule, which really continues to describe what people are saying, that this is not a budget bill but in fact is an assault on our democratic norms, is schedule 17. That's the Crown Liability and Proceedings Act. This is hidden in a budget bill. We find really massive changes which kneecap the ability of Ontarians to hold this government accountable in the courts. That's really not surprising, because this government has shown themselves unwilling to be held accountable for almost anything that they have done since they have been elected. This raises serious red flags. Schedule 17 does nothing less than assail the rule of law in Ontario. This is the most important reason why the New Democrats will not support Bill 100. In fact, it's a provision, a schedule, that is so profane that it alone is reason enough to vote against this bill. The schedule repeals the Proceedings Against the Crown Act, and it contains broad and sweeping restrictions to how and when the government can be sued—and this, again, tucked away in a budget bill.

I'm not sure why, if the government wanted to make these kinds of substantial changes to what we consider a democratic rule-of-law province, they wouldn't do that independently of a budget bill; that they wouldn't have consulted with experts in the field and that they would have not, in fact, travelled this bill to the people of the province of Ontario. But, instead, they seem to have—I don't know what the word is, but they seem to have been afraid to face the consequences and, in some kind of spurious, sneaky way, have buried this in a budget bill. It's completely, completely egregious.

We don't live in a kingdom; we live in a democracy. The government is not above the law. It is the rule of law that governs us here—not kings, not queens. That is the essential definition of us as a democracy. So the government—yes, even the Premier—any government has to act within the law. It's kind of a simple concept. It doesn't need to be explained that much. I would think it doesn't.

So in this act, they have changed the way in which people can get justice when the political system fails them, when policy decisions are made that, intentionally or otherwise, injure Ontarians. This bill weakens—really undermines—this fundamental accountability. Really, it's nothing short of trying to let themselves off the hook for any harm that's caused through bad-faith policies or bad-faith decisions. Essentially, it means that this government is not prepared to live up to its duty of care.

Again, there was absolutely no consultation, as I said, but we have to wonder: Where did this come from? This did not just come out of thin air, because I personally have not had anyone say that this is something that's a huge priority or that this is what should be in a budget bill. Of course, as I said, nobody asked for this. Clearly, the Conservative Party didn't mention anything about this during the election. They didn't campaign on this. It wasn't in their platform.

**Ms. Marit Stiles:** You should say it like it's quotation marks.

**Ms. Sandy Shaw:** Yes, how do I get quotation marks in Hansard? "Platform."

Of course, there was no public consultation.

Again, the Ontario Civil Liberties Association and the Canadian Civil Liberties Association spoke about this specifically. They said that they can only be left to speculate as to the real motivations for schedule 17. We also wonder where the motivation was for this, and I suppose that we can only guess that Premier Ford's comments may speak to why this is in here.

**1720**

The Premier did say, "You even look sideways, and some special interest groups are out there trying to sue you..." He said this during a morning radio show appearance. "It's ridiculous. I've never seen anything like it. It's tying up the courts. I want to clear up the courts until real lawsuits can go through, for real people, for things that really matter. There's a lot of frivolous nonsense going on right now in the courts."

**Mr. Taras Natyshak:** Wow. Judge, jury and executioner.

**Ms. Sandy Shaw:** Exactly.

Frivolous nonsense in the courts? Well, we'll talk about that later, about how frivolous lawsuits suing the federal government are wasting taxpayers' dollars. That's what I would call frivolous.

I just have to say that these are serious matters. These are serious matters to the people of Ontario. Walkerton is an example of Ontarians' ability to seek compensation for injuries that happen to them. Not only did people die; people are suffering to this very day because of the injuries and the illnesses that they suffered from that, and this is a government that's looking to take away that power. This is such an over-broad overreach that it's just unbelievably egregious.

In subsection 11(5), it says that a policy decision, which is what they're trying to insulate themselves from, can include everything. It's kind of like a kitchen-sink provision. It can include decisions relating to designing government programs, how Ontarians are included or excluded from programs or projects, decisions to end programs at any time, changing terms of funding, and the government's decisions on how the programs are carried out.

Doesn't that actually seem to describe what this government is doing right now? Cutting programs, changing the way they're delivered—the very fact that there's a lawsuit from the people who were part of the basic income pilot, who suffered substantial harm, not just emotional difficulties. This cost people money. They were promised. This was a promise, and they made financial decisions on this, and they have the right to seek damages—but not according to this government.

They say, Mr. Speaker, that with great power comes great responsibility, but clearly this is a government that seems to not want to take any responsibility at all for its actions. Really, this is something that I never expected I would see in the province of Ontario. It's just outrageous.

This is not what good government's public accountability is. These are not the hallmarks of our democracy—a democracy which, in fact, is the thing that the people of Ontario think that you should value. That's what they think that you should protect. That's what they think we value the most, but unfortunately, this government continues to seem completely tone-deaf to what the people of Ontario actually want.

Another piece of this that really is unbelievable—you have to read this to actually see how unbelievable this is—is that they're going to make courts previously approve cases to proceed before they are allowed to bring the motions in court. This is an expensive option for people. People now have to spend money to be able to see whether their lawsuit even merits going forward. Really, that's certainly something that will exclude ordinary Ontarians from seeking justice. And do you know what? My guess is that this government knows that, Mr. Speaker.

It also says that the government doesn't have to provide evidence and that they don't have to be cross-examined. Section 17.3 says that the government would not have to produce any evidence. Further, if it chooses to do so, Bill 100 notes that the government cannot be cross-examined on its evidence. Does this sound like Ontario? Does this sound like a democratic—

**Ms. Jill Andrew:** It sounds like Lord of the Flies.

**Ms. Sandy Shaw:** Exactly.

There's a famous Supreme Court of Canada case that every lawyer in the province of Ontario will have studied. There are many, many lawyers on the government side, so they will know this precedent. That is the Roncarelli v. Duplessis case. It essentially states that the rule of law means that no public official is above the law and so can neither suspend or dispense it. With these changes, this government is trying to do precisely that. They're trying to make themselves above the law, and it's unbelievable that I'm standing in this House in 2019, in this assembly that is built on democratic norms and principles and respect for the rule of law, and I have to be talking about this. Yet here we are with this bill that was supposed to be a budget bill but in fact is an assault on the very foundation of our democratic society. I mean, they're just not part of what anybody would consider basic principles of democracy.

Finally—you know, there's more. Imagine.

**Mr. Taras Natyshak:** “But wait.”

**Ms. Sandy Shaw:** Yes, “But wait.” But other than that, it's all okay.

But the other part of all of this is that this government seeks to make this action retroactive. Isn't that lovely? Yes. So this is a government that not only wants to seek immunity from its actions in the future; they want to seek immunity in retroaction. This would mean, for example, that certain class action suits that are before the House right now—most egregiously, the wards of the crown have a class action suit to seek damages for what they experienced when they were in child protection. This is essentially going to be dead in the water, this case. Those vulnerable children of Ontario who have lost their child

and youth advocate will not have their ability to seek justice and compensation in the court, because this government has made this retroactive.

I also would like to say that First Nations communities and First Nations governments are very concerned about this. NAN specifically flagged that this will be detrimental for First Nations who currently are or more than likely will be party to class action suits. A very clear example is Motherisk. In fact, long-standing actions on behalf of survivors of residential schools now have the potential to be completely dead in the water. We will not allow First Nations people who have suffered in residential schools—they're going to take away retroactively their ability to seek justice in the court.

We know how this government feels about our approach and our responsibilities to Indigenous people in Ontario. We also know that this is a government that doesn't really seem—not “doesn't seem”; it isn't in any meaningful, tangible way committed to truth and reconciliation. Now they're just codifying it in this bill that makes sure that there's no legal recourse to those kinds of entitlements that First Nations people most clearly deserve.

There are so many stakeholders that are reacting. The legal community is, to say the very least, concerned. They say that, at a minimum, it will likely make more expensive and complex cases and that the ability to bring negligence cases against the government is really very limited. It just creates so many numerous burdens and hurdles that the people of Ontario will essentially be denied their right to have their day in court, denied access to justice.

The CCLA says that “the provincial government seeks to all but immunize itself from contractual or tortious liability facing people and corporations,” such that the government is essentially saying they can do no wrong. This is nothing short of an abuse of power. It confirms peoples' worst fears about a government in Ontario, that we now have potentially a first minister who seems to think that they are the lone, unchecked source of all power here at Queen's Park and in the province of Ontario.

But I have to say that it's not just what's in the bill that is so deeply disturbing. In fact, it's the role of the Attorney General in the province of Ontario. With due respect, I have to talk about the failings of the role of the Attorney General in this province.

We know how Doug Ford feels about judges. He made it perfectly clear—

**Mr. David Piccini:** Premier Ford.

**Ms. Sandy Shaw:** Oh, pardon me.

**Ms. Marit Stiles:** They woke up for a second there.

**Ms. Sandy Shaw:** Oh, you heard that. You got off your phones to talk about that.

But we know how Premier Ford feels about judges. He was quite clear that he said that they are unelected judges, so his power quite clearly overrules that of judges. That doesn't stand in any democratic society, but he made that quite perfectly clear. So we know that we can't count on Premier Ford to uphold the rule of law, but you would at least think that we could rely on the role of the Attorney General.

1730

Let me talk about the roles and responsibilities of the Attorney General. This comes from their own website:

“As chief law officer, the Attorney General has a special responsibility to be the guardian of that most elusive concept—the rule of law.... It is the rule of law that protects individuals, and society as a whole, from arbitrary measures and safeguards personal liberties.”

And, “The importance of the independence of the role is fundamental to the position and well established in common law, statutes and tradition.”

What have we seen in the province of Ontario as far as the Attorney General’s office is concerned? We saw an Attorney General who was prepared to invoke the notwithstanding clause, what has been described as the nuclear option of the—

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls):** Please sit down for a moment.

**Ms. Sandy Shaw:** Yes.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls):** I’ve been listening very carefully to your dissertation. I have some concerns, because I believe that you’re wavering away from what the intent of the debate is this afternoon and the bill that we are debating. Please make your comments and references to the bill, and the bill only. Thank you very much.

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

I would say that the reason I’m in this area is that this is a bill that changes fundamentally people’s access to justice. It fundamentally changes the Proceedings Against the Crown Act. It fundamentally undermines people’s ability to seek justice.

In the province of Ontario, the Attorney General has that very special responsibility as I just described. So, in fact, what we have is an instance where we do not have, or we have not seen, the Attorney General fulfilling the duty which we expect, as described in the mandate, and which is actually now under attack in this bill.

If you were pleased with me, now it’s possible that you will no longer be pleased with me. But I want to say that the idea of the Attorney General’s role is in ensuring that the government does not, for example, move into areas where they are not intended. We have seen that this is an Attorney General who presided over an interference scandal regarding the OPP in this province.

We’ve seen that before. This was at the heart of a three-year investigation. It was the Ipperwash Inquiry—

**Mr. Lorne Coe:** Point of order.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls):** I beat you to the punch.

Again, I’m going to just remind the member of the bill that we are addressing right now, and other things which I deem to be irrelevant to the message of the bill and what we’re debating. I would again remind the member to stay with the facts. If it continues like this, then I will move into questions and comments immediately.

**Ms. Sandy Shaw:** Thank you.

What the people of Ontario would hope is, given the protections that are being eroded in this bill, that the

backstop to this would be an effective Attorney General. Quite clearly, given what we’ve seen, we do not have that in the province of Ontario.

Mr. Speaker, I’m going to move on from that very important discussion about the role of the Attorney General.

I’m going to move on to schedule 23. It’s actually called the Federal Carbon Tax Transparency Act—another one of those ironic names—but we like to call it Sticker-gate, or a “sticktatorship,” because it’s about the requirement for businesses in Ontario to put stickers on the gas tanks of small businesses. We do like to call it, in fact, the Great Sticktatorship, and that’s my homage to Charlie Chaplin.

The reason why this is relevant is because, just like this bill, Charlie Chaplin’s art was founded in tragicomedy. He used elements of both tragedy and comedy. If you watch a Charlie Chaplin film, you might laugh, you might cry. I would say that this budget bill is very much in the vein of Charlie Chaplin.

But this is actually a very serious issue when it comes to the heavy hand of any government. You know—

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls):** Excuse me. I’ve given further consideration to a comment you made just a few moments ago, and I will ask the member to withdraw.

**Ms. Sandy Shaw:** Which one was it, Mr. Speaker?  
*Interjection.*

**Ms. Sandy Shaw:** I withdraw.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls):** Thank you.

**Ms. Sandy Shaw:** During the committee hearings on Bill 100, there was quite a bit of discussion regarding the partisan government advertising, as it has been described. And that’s what we heard; many of the people that deputed said that they considered this to be partisan, compelled speech. It’s a very serious issue, Mr. Speaker. We, in fact, wanted to help the government help themselves, to make sure that they weren’t going into a direction that they didn’t intend to. It would be my sense that they didn’t intend to compel speech on behalf of small businesses in Ontario, so we presented two amendments. I think they were very good amendments. We put that in the spirit of trying to improve legislation around here.

We moved an amendment regarding the use of public resources. Our amendment said, “No public servants shall assist with, nor shall any public funds be spent on, the design, production or distribution of the notice referred to” in this clause. A good amendment; the government voted it down.

The second amendment, only to improve legislation, to make sure that it was not your intention to penalize the people of Ontario, the businesses of Ontario who didn’t comply with what has been described as compelled speech, and that if they didn’t comply—I mean, it’s in the bill that they can actually be penalized up to \$10,000 a day for non-compliance.

**Mr. Taras Natyshak:** Whoa.

**Ms. Sandy Shaw:** Yes, that’s a lot of money for small business operators who are being compelled to put these stickers on their gas tanks.

**Ms. Marit Stiles:** It's a culture of fear.

**Ms. Sandy Shaw:** Yes.

Our second amendment, again in the spirit of making sure that they knew what they were doing—a sober second thought, trying to make the legislation better—we proposed this amendment: “No penalty for non-compliance.” We moved that, “For greater certainty, non-compliance with any provision of this act does not constitute an offence, nor can any penalty be imposed in respect of the non-compliance.” It seems to me a very reasonable, very good amendment. Guess what? The government voted it down.

So what we're really talking about here is partisan government advertising. In fact, during committee one of the deputants described it as propaganda, and there was exception to that. I want to say that it's a perfectly proper and apt English word. Just to be clear, I'm going to read the definition that comes from the Oxford English Dictionary. Propaganda is the “systematic dissemination of information, especially in a biased or misleading way, in order to promote a political cause or point of view.” Seems like an apt description, and it comes from the Oxford English Dictionary.

If that's too high-brow, the OED, I have Wikipedia, which says that this is a “form of communication to distribute information. It is always biased. The information is designed to make people feel a certain way or to believe a certain thing. The information is often political.

“It is hard to tell whether the information is true or false. Very often, the information is confusing and unfair.”

**Ms. Marit Stiles:** Seems like an apt description.

**Ms. Sandy Shaw:** Seems to me that this is an apt description of the stickers that this government is compelling businesses to put on their equipment—the equipment they in fact own.

During the committee hearing on Bill 100, the MPP for Danforth had this to say, and I'd like to quote it now because it's always appropriate to quote the MPP from Danforth—a very wise MPP. He said, “It's amazing to me that this is even in a bill. I've never seen a situation where a government required people, businesses, to carry propaganda as part of their operations. It's completely out of keeping with democratic norms, certainly democratic norms here in Ontario.”

Honestly, Mr. Speaker, I couldn't agree more. It's really something that we didn't expect to see, and I certainly cannot begin to understand why it's in a budget bill. How is this in a budget bill? While we were stunned and surprised by this, we did intend to try to improve it with our amendments, but again, this is a government that's shown themselves unwilling to listen to anyone: the loyal opposition, experts, people from committee. It is a government that has shown time and time again that they think that they have all the answers. Really, in fact, that's the height of hubris. What is that expression? Pride goeth before a fall?

1740

Again, in the spirit of trying to help this government, I think that you need to slow down and really think about

what you're doing, because my guess is, when you campaigned, when you decided to run to be an MPP in the province of Ontario, you didn't think that you'd be sitting here defending a bill that compels small businesses to put stickers on their equipment with a political message that they may or may not support, and that in fact costs millions of dollars for the taxpayers of Ontario. My guess is, that's really not what you heard at the door when you were campaigning to be an MPP.

As I said, it's quite clear that this is compelled speech. The Canadian centre for civil liberties says that it violates people's constitutional rights, and they certainly expect that this will be challenged in court.

There seems to be a lot of activity in the court with this government. The lawyers are doing quite well in the province since we've had this government.

**Ms. Marit Stiles:** Yes.

**Ms. Sandy Shaw:** Yes.

This brings us to talk about how the people of Ontario actually feel. We hear time and time again from the government side of the House their campaign-style statements attacking the carbon tax. We get it: They don't like the carbon tax. We hear it. We get it. We don't need to hear it anymore. We understand that. But what you might want to understand is that 60% of Ontarians—a recent survey said that they are opposed to the government spending taxpayer dollars to fight against the federal carbon tax. That's a lot of people. Some 64% of the people said that they don't think that you should be spending taxpayer dollars on what seems to be a very partisan political fight. In fact, we have something like \$30 million being allocated to fight this action in court—not what the people of Ontario want, not what they talked about when they said—

**Ms. Marit Stiles:** Wow, \$30 million.

**Ms. Sandy Shaw:** Yes.

And now we have a government that has launched their television ads.

I would just say that a bill that aims to protect what matters most—what is it called?—to the people of Ontario is not really in any way what the people of Ontario are saying. They don't want you to waste their money. The minister says that he's going to be putting money back in the taxpayers' pockets, but in fact we've shown time and time again that the decision this government has made is actually going to cost people money. Residential taxpayers, commercial taxpayers, industrial taxpayers are going to see their taxes go up. And how, in any reasonable understanding of what taxes is, does this not seem right—does the Minister of Finance not understand that a tax is a tax, and that one taxpayer's pocket is just one taxpayer's pocket? They're not different. They may be thinking that they're putting money in one taxpayer's pocket, but it's coming right out the other side when it comes to the kinds of changes you're making and the impact that this is going to have on our residential tax rate.

It's probably important that we talk about a bill that this Legislature passed unanimously, and that was the bill put forward by the MPP from Essex, and that was about re-

storing the Auditor General's oversight of partisan advertising. The minister himself referenced the accountability and the authority of the Auditor General. Clearly, we agree with this bill. We voted in favour of it. We put it forward a second time. And clearly, the government side thinks it's important, in fact, that we make sure that the Auditor General does have oversight over what is considered partisan advertising.

The Auditor General, recently, is not really thrilled with the ad campaigns that are running now, and she said that they would have not passed the review under the rules. In fact, she said it doesn't include any of the relevant facts—which actually goes back to the definition of “propaganda” that I read earlier.

So the Auditor General has a role to play in this, and I think that we should support and bolster her role as we move forward in the kind of reckless spending that we see in terms of this government's attempt to characterize what this new carbon tax is.

Let's be perfectly clear: I don't think the federal carbon tax is very good. It's weak, but in fact no weaker than this lack of an environmental plan that we have here before us.

So, Mr. Speaker, I have to say that this is intended to be a budget bill, but really the most consequential pieces of this are not about the budget; they're about individuals who trust the government. They trust the government will do right by them and ensure they have fair and equal access to justice before the courts. These schedules—schedule 11, schedule 17, schedule 23—all of these schedules undermine peoples' fundamental constitutional rights.

Really, now that we are in a situation where we are seeing partisan ads on TV, I want to say to the government, it truly seems to me that you've lost your way. You cannot possibly have thought, when you put your name on a ballot, that this is the kind of thing that you would be defending, that you would be defending an attack on democracy, an erosion of constitutional rights. Because that is what this bill does. Make no mistake: That is what this bill does.

It seems to me that, in fact, this government seems to actually have absolutely no idea what really matters to ordinary Ontarians. We've said it time and time again: You don't listen to the people. You limit people's access in the House. We have bills where thousands of people asked to come and depute to important bills, like Bill 100, and we end up with 30, 40, 50 people that come out of the thousands of people across Ontario who want to have a say and input on this very critical bill. You don't want to hear from these people. You don't consult.

We've heard it time and time again with regard to hearings on Bill 100. We heard from the Ontario Nurses' Association: no consultation on these significant changes. We heard from the Ontario Bar Association. We heard from Legal Aid Ontario. We've heard time and time again from experts, from people who are dedicated in their field to what they do. Nurses who are dedicated to providing essential services to patients in Ontario—they weren't even consulted. In fact, they weren't consulted on Bill 74,

never mind on the changes that are here in this bill, Bill 100.

We've said it before: You have a majority in the House. You're going get your bills passed. So what is the rush? Why are you ramming things through the House? And in the rush to ram things through the House, you're trampling on the norms of this House. You are defying the kinds of traditions, the kinds of things that we respect in the province of Ontario. You really are, in many ways, demeaning the authority of this province and this Legislature, and I am sorry to say that I'm a witness to this. We are all sorry to say, the people of Ontario are sorry to say, that this has been a dark day, a dark year in the province of Ontario for democracy.

You need to listen to the people of Ontario. You say all the time that you are about the people of Ontario, but oh my goodness. I mean, you lock your doors, you lock constituency offices and you don't allow people to come in. How is that that you're for the people? For heaven's sake, you called the police on retired librarians who wanted to read. How in any way is that something that you could feel proud of? It's just beyond ridiculous.

I can't believe that I would see that a government would be so obtuse, would be so arrogant that they would vote against a climate emergency bill in a world where, as Bill Nye said, the world is on fire. It is exactly what the evidence is showing. So during a climate crisis, you vote against a climate emergency bill, and you put forward—what?—that you have a climate plan with absolutely no way to collect data, no measures, nothing? It is not what will control climate change.

This bill, which is intended to protect what matters, doesn't talk about the environment at all. In fact, that's what matters most to the people of Ontario. You know, you voted down this motion in the middle of unprecedented flooding. People's homes in communities are literally floating away. Time and time again, we've heard that this is a climate crisis. This is caused by climate. These kinds of weather events are not new. They're going to continue. So if you wanted to protect what mattered most, maybe you might want to protect people's homes from flooding. Maybe that would be something you might want to consider in a bill.

I would just have to say that what really matters to the people of Ontario is that you protect the most vulnerable among us. This bill does nothing to do that. In fact, your actions have done exactly the opposite.

#### 1750

You have cut funding—\$1 billion—from the children, community and social services fund. This promised money for the autism file is not in the estimates. If you look at the estimates that the minister was talking about, this \$600 million that the minister of children and community services promised for the autism file is not there. It's not in the estimates. You promised that, but it's not there. It's the scorpion; it's their nature.

I think the other thing I'm trying to say is that what people care about in the province of Ontario is democracy. They care about a province that respects the vulnerable

people of Ontario. They care about a province that values access to justice, that values people being treated fair and equitably, and this bill does precisely the opposite. It's an attack on people's democratic rights, and it is a way in which this government wants to shield itself from its actions.

But I have this to say to you: This is not going to stand. You may have buried this in a budget bill in the most scurrilous of ways, but people are going to know what you've done here, and it will start to tell when people finally realize that this is not a government that's accountable. It's not a government that stands for the people. In fact, they've buried in here provisions that will ensure that the people of Ontario are maltreated by this government.

I would say, more than anything, that what the people of Ontario want is a government that offers some hope. But what do we hear? We hear about cuts. We hear about how everyone has to tighten their belts, everybody has to have austerity—austerity for all of us: middle-class people, vulnerable people. But what we see is a parade of tickets on Premier Ford's gravy train. People are not stupid. They will see how in fact this is quite a contrast, what this budget says and what they do. Words are one thing, but people's actions will finally tell.

But you know, you don't have to hear all of this from me, because my time is almost up here—most happily for me, and I imagine for you as well.

**Interjection:** It just flew by, though.

**Ms. Sandy Shaw:** It just flew by. This stuff just writes itself, really, I have to say.

I just have to say that the writing is on the wall. A recent poll showed that almost 70% of Ontarians disapprove of the job that Premier Ford is doing. We heard that he was booed last night, and if that isn't a wake-up call that what is in your budget bill is not what people value and what they want to protect, I don't know what is.

I would ask the government to abandon this regressive budget. It's only going to hurt the people of Ontario, and they will slowly start to understand that. As they do not have access to health care, as they do not have access to quality education, they're going to know. The proof will be in the actions, the results of this regressive budget.

Abandon this bill, show some leadership and be a government that offers hope.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls):** Questions and comments?

**Mrs. Belinda Karahalios:** That was a long hour—my word—and it was full of a lot of unparliamentary language. You know what? I have too much respect for this place to match that level of unparliamentary language.

Let's talk about children's books. Chicken Little—are you familiar with Chicken Little, Mr. Speaker?—is about a hysterical chicken that runs around saying, “The sky is falling,” after an acorn falls on her head. That reminds me very, very much of the NDP.

So I ask: We have a \$15-billion deficit. What do you do when you enter into a business that not only has a gigantic deficit but is spending more than \$40 million a day? What do you do? Do you start making promises? “We're going

to give you universal dental care. We're going to give you everything.” The NDP is fantastic at spending your money, my money, the taxpayers' money, but they don't look at the big picture.

To be honest, Mr. Speaker, when this budget was released, I was surprised. I was surprised because we promised that we were going to, by 2023-24, not only balance the budget but have a surplus. On top of that, we're investing up to \$1 billion over the next five years to create up to 30,000 child care spaces in Ontario. Hospitals will see an increase of \$384 million. We have an increase in home and community care spending of \$267 million; long-term care, an increased investment of \$1.75 billion; the Ministry of Transportation investing \$1.3 billion to rebuild and restore highways across the province. Do you know what? We're doing it without increasing taxes, without adding new taxes. That's how we're going to get it done.

Mr. Speaker, thank you for your time.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls):** Further questions and comments?

**Ms. Marit Stiles:** It's truly an honour to stand here again on behalf of the riding of Davenport and my constituents, in response to the comments from the member for Hamilton West—Ancaster—Dundas—her excellent, very comprehensive and very thoughtful comments on this bill. I want to congratulate her.

She mentioned a little while ago that she felt the government had really lost their way. I really do hope that the government members that were here were listening to what the member had to say, because I suspect, Mr. Speaker, that they get a version of how this bill will work. I'm going to give them the benefit of the doubt that they get a certain version from the Premier's office or the staff who work for them, perhaps, who are trying to sell them on the idea that this is actually going to accomplish some of the things that it says it's going to set out to.

*Interjection.*

**Ms. Marit Stiles:** Yes, the Kool-Aid.

But if they look deeply enough—she gave some really, really good examples—they will find that if they want to create affordable, safe, supportive child care, this is not the way to do it; that this is going to destroy safe, affordable, non-profit child care in this province; that it is irresponsible. If you want to keep people safe and healthy, it is irresponsible to cut public health units the way that this budget proposes to do. People will get sick. They will get sick. You can guarantee it. Then we'll be back again at an inquiry and we'll be looking again at how we invest in public health, because that's inevitable.

I think she mentioned a little bit about why this budget and this budget bill are so irresponsible. I want to point out how: It is irresponsible of a government to limit women's participation in the economy by doing away with safe and affordable child care opportunities for women. It is irresponsible to cut opportunities for students.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls):** Further questions and comments?

**Mrs. Amy Fee:** I have to agree with my seatmate and the member from Cambridge about the unparliamentary

language that we heard during that hour. It was incredibly disappointing.

I want to clarify something on the autism estimates part that you mentioned earlier. Our Minister of Children, Community and Social Services did clarify that in the House earlier on this week. Those estimates were getting worked on before our Premier stepped forward and said that he wanted us to double the spending in the Ontario Autism Program. That is how, and one of the reasons why, we are working towards a needs-based system in the Ontario Autism Program.

Something I want to talk about, though, Mr. Speaker, about our budget bill is the debt load piece. Looking at the future that is before us in this province because of the 15 years that the Liberal government racked up the debt is unimaginable for what our children and our future grandchildren are facing in this province. Every second we are paying down the interest, \$400 every second in this province. So in the two minutes that I get to speak here about this bill, that's \$48,000 that is just going out the window to interest.

Imagine, Mr. Speaker, having that extra money to put into education. In this budget, we're increasing spending in education: \$700 million is going into education, and \$90 million more into special ed. That money would be so much more if we weren't sitting here paying the interest on the debt that was racked up by the Liberals.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls):** Further questions and comments?

**Ms. Jill Andrew:** It is an absolute honour to follow the master class that we received from the member from Hamilton West–Ancaster–Dundas and from our member from Davenport. I would just like to say that our Minister of Finance speaks about modernizing the government and speaks about protecting what matters most and putting people first. This bill does absolutely none of that.

This bill does not address adequately the issues of affordable housing or supportive housing. I've heard members across the aisle speak about education and health. The funding you have given to education and health is below inflation. That means cuts. That does not mean taking care of people—taking care of vulnerable people.

**1800**

Climate emergency, for goodness' sakes: Our official opposition motion to have the climate declared an emergency was turned down, because this government would rather use the taxpayers' dollars—\$30 million-plus—to fight a carbon tax as opposed to investing in green energy.

We cannot, we should not be in a space where every bill is time-allocated. I really want Ontarians who are watching to understand that by time-allocating a bill, what's happening is the government is removing your voice, people. They're removing the voice of Toronto–St. Paul's, removing the voice of every single person in this room. That is not the role of government. The role of government is to invite Ontarians into their House, to uphold the tenets of democracy, and we do that through healthy debate, not by squelching the requests of thousands of Ontarians to

depute on bills such as our health bill, which was also rammed in and time-allocated. Thirty people got to depute.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls):** Now, I will return to the member from Hamilton West–Ancaster–Dundas for final comments.

**Ms. Sandy Shaw:** I have to start by addressing the member from Kitchener South–Hespeler, who talked about unparliamentary language. I just have to be perfectly clear: What you may think is unparliamentary—do you know what we call that here? We call it the truth and we call it facts.

In fact, what is really unparliamentary is the attack that the government is making on the most vulnerable people in the province of Ontario with this bill. Again, this promised money for autism is not in the estimates, so that is something that this province should be ashamed of. You shouldn't be proud of this budget. In fact, you should feel ashamed for promising one thing to the people of Ontario and delivering something entirely different in this budget. Make no mistake: The facts are here. People understand. You're not pulling the wool over their eyes. A recent survey identified that 70% of Ontarians disapprove of the job that the Premier of Ontario is doing.

Mr. Speaker, are you trying to make me laugh? Because it's easy enough to do, but this is a very serious issue. Yes, you're doing your best Robert De Niro imitation over in the chair. I see that.

But I would like to say that we on this side are proud of our role as Her Majesty's loyal opposition, and we will defend the rights of people in the province of Ontario to have democratic access to their civil rights and to the access before the courts, that they have access to justice. This is a bill that attacks access to justice. It's nothing to stand up and be proud of. In fact, as I said, it's already starting to tell. The people of Ontario understand that you're saying that you're protecting what matters most, but they clearly think you have absolutely no idea what matters most to ordinary Ontarians in this province.

*Interjections.*

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls):** Please be seated.

*Third reading debate deemed adjourned.*

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls):** Pursuant to standing order 38, the question that this House do now adjourn is deemed to have been made.

## ADJOURNMENT DEBATE

### MEMBER'S CONDUCT

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls):** The member for Essex has given notice of dissatisfaction with an answer to a question given the Premier. The member for Essex has up to five minutes to debate the matter. In this particular case, in an agreed-upon UC earlier today, the parliamentary assistant for the Minister of Health and Long-Term Care may respond in place of the parliamentary assistant to the Premier.



I now turn it over to the member for Essex for his comments for up to five minutes.

**Mr. Taras Natyshak:** Speaker, I have been a member of this House for just under eight years. I believe—I might have to check with the table—that this is the only second time that I've ever called for a late show.

I've asked lots of questions in this House and I've been a part of a lot of debates in this House, but this particular question, a relatively simple question that I posed to the Premier last week, was one that was met with such nothingness. There was no substance in his answer. If you check the Hansard and the record on the answer, he completely ignored the substance of the question, one that was relatively easy and important to answer on behalf of the Premier, because it strikes at the fundamental aspects of this House: access to elected members, access to their offices and access to democracy.

Speaker, the context of the question was that members from an area in Niagara had gathered at the constituency office of the MPP for Niagara West. There were about 15 book club members. These are seniors. They're retired librarians and members of a book club, who were there at that time to protest peacefully, democratically—quietly, even. They are librarians, so you wouldn't imagine that they would be there to raise such a fuss. They were there to emphasize and put the point on the fact that the cuts to library services in the province are going to be detrimental to those who require access to knowledge and rely on it. We all believe in reading. It's a fundamental thing. But it seems as though the member from Niagara West and his office decided that they were such a threat that they had to call the police on them.

Speaker, you have a constituency office. I know that you've seen many a protest outside of your office, as have I. One of the things that I hold near and dear as a member of this House and the honour to serve our communities, is to ensure that members, no matter whether I agree with their personal position or not, feel not only welcome, but feel as though it is their right to access my office. It's actually not even my office; it is their office. They pay for it. They should have access to it. We welcome them—open doors. Actually, if they need to use the washroom, if they need to be in the office, come on in—as long as they're not disruptive and not destroying anything.

We knew the intention of these librarians. They had explicitly said, "We're here to do a peaceful read-in." That means they were going to sit in the office and read—not disturb any of the constituents; not disturb any of the business that was happening on that day in that constituency office.

So my question to the Premier was simply whether the Premier believed that that group of retired librarians posed a threat that required police intervention.

The member from Niagara Centre took it upon himself to reach out to these librarians just this week and invited them into his constituency office.

Did you find them aggressive? Were they volatile? Were they violent?

**Mr. Jeff Burch:** They weren't dangerous.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls):** Please address the Chair.

**Mr. Taras Natyshak:** No, they weren't dangerous at all. They were peaceful. They wanted to have their message heard. They wanted to voice their opinion and their dissatisfaction with the actions on the part of this government.

The answer that I received to my question from the Premier shows that this Premier really isn't in the business of listening to anybody at any time. He went on to talk about his initiatives on buck-a-beer, his marquee policy plank of his tenure here, and it couldn't have been more distasteful and disrespectful—not only to those librarians and those book club members, but to anyone who values peaceful protest and democracy in this province.

So I hope that the parliamentary secretary to the Minister of Health, who is here to answer the question on behalf of the Premier, is able to elaborate a little bit more as to whether or not our offices and those who seek to deliver their message and dissent are accessible and whether or not they're going to have the OPP called on them at every occasion.

Speaker, I'll tell you, police have better things to do than to answer calls of a frivolous nature at an MPP's office. And constituents deserve to be heard. There's no question about that. No one should be calling the police on retired librarians who are politely raising concerns.

I hope that we can see some clarity in the answer by the parliamentary secretary—but even more, what would be reasonable is an apology on behalf of the Premier, on behalf of the member from Niagara West. It's something that's reasonable, and I think it certainly is not beyond the Premier to be able to do that for us.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls):** The parliamentary assistant to the Minister of Health and Long-Term Care may respond for up to five minutes.

**Mrs. Robin Martin:** Our constituency offices are open, friendly. They're customer service centres. But they do have to balance the needs of the security of the staff who work there and the members with the fact that they are there for people who are coming to see the constituency office, to talk to the member and to talk to the people who are in the office.

Constituency offices are inherently inviting facilities that, in addition to everyday issues, must deal with persons sometimes with emotional or volatile concerns, and increasingly they are being used for gathering places as points for demonstrations.

Constituency staff who dedicate their time to our communities deserve a safe place to work in which they can go about doing their business and responding to the legitimate inquiries from members of the public. Not only is there a moral obligation but there is a legal obligation to keep staff safe in our constituency offices. The member from Essex, who raised the question, knows that. He has been a member, as he pointed out, for eight years.

In Ontario, we have a program which is designed to educate members and their staff about how to deal with security issues. They have protocols on how to handle

difficult situations or events. Constituency staff provide services within an increasingly complex social environment with diverse constituents, so I think it's important that they have a safety plan—most of our constituency offices do—and protocols in case there are any concerns. They also have to learn de-escalation techniques and risk assessment. They're trying to make sure, and we're trying to make sure, that our staff have a safe working environment.

The prevention of violence, obviously, and harassment in the workplace should be a top priority for any employer. I would think the member from Essex would agree with that.

Our members, as I said before, sometimes have to deal with subject matter which is challenging, in the constituency offices. People deserve privacy who are there to talk to the member or their staff about their particular issues.

In this case, it's my understanding that the staff were very respectful and politely asked the individuals to vacate the premises. After the individuals refused to leave the member's office, following their protest, the police were called in, in order to protect constituents who were coming in for private meetings.

As mentioned, our government firmly believes that constituents in any of our ridings should have access to the offices, and should have privacy when they are there dealing with their legitimate concerns.

I know that the member opposite said you would not imagine that this group was going to be problematic, and you would not imagine that sitting in and reading would disturb the office. But I would just have to say that we all are talking about something we're imagining. We weren't there dealing with the issue. The constituency staff, I believe, did the best that they could, in the circumstances, to de-escalate the situation and to be safe.

I think the member has probably had some situations in his office where he has had to close the door. It happens occasionally, and rarely. For the most part, I think—and I'm sure the member from Niagara West sets the best standards in that office, and deals with people coming in in the best possible way.

That's really all I have to say, Speaker. I'm sure it was dealt with legitimately. I don't think we should be guessing about what the constituency staff was dealing with. I think the constituency staff did the best that they could in the circumstances, and that's all that we can require of them.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls):** I'd like to thank both members for respectful dialogue in the late show this evening.

There being no further matter to debate, I deem the motion to adjourn to have been carried. This House now stands adjourned until 9 a.m. tomorrow morning.

*The House adjourned at 1814.*





**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
<b>Arnott, Hon. / L'hon. Ted (PC)</b>	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	
<b>Bethlenfalvy, Hon. / L'hon. Peter (PC)</b>	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	
<b>Cho, Hon. / L'hon. Raymond Sung Joon (PC)</b>	Scarborough North / Scarborough-Nord	Minister for Seniors and Accessibility / Ministre des Services aux aînés et de l'Accessibilité
Cho, Stan (PC)	Willowdale	
<b>Clark, Hon. / L'hon. Steve (PC)</b>	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	
<b>Elliott, Hon. / L'hon. Christine (PC)</b>	Newmarket—Aurora	Deputy Premier / Vice-première ministre Minister of Health and Long-Term Care / Ministre de la Santé et des Soins de longue durée
<b>Fedeli, Hon. / L'hon. Victor (PC)</b>	Nipissing	Chair of Cabinet / Président du Conseil des ministres Minister of Finance / Ministre des Finances
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Fife, Catherine (NDP)	Waterloo	
<b>Ford, Hon. / L'hon. Doug (PC)</b>	Etobicoke North / Etobicoke-Nord	Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs / Ministre des Affaires intergouvernementales Premier / Premier ministre
Fraser, John (LIB)	Ottawa South / Ottawa-Sud	
<b>French, Jennifer K. (NDP)</b>	Oshawa	Third Deputy Chair of the Committee of the Whole House / Troisième vice-présidente du comité plénier de l'Assemblée législative

<b>Member and Party / Député(e) et parti</b>	<b>Constituency / Circonscription</b>	<b>Other responsibilities / Autres responsabilités</b>
<b>Fullerton, Hon. / L'hon. Merrilee (PC)</b>	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	
<b>Gretzky, Lisa (NDP)</b>	Windsor West / Windsor-Ouest	First Deputy Chair of the Committee of the Whole House / Première vice-présidente du comité plénier de l'Assemblée
<b>Hardeman, Hon. / L'hon. Ernie (PC)</b>	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	
<b>Hatfield, Percy (NDP)</b>	Windsor—Tecumseh	Second Deputy Chair of the Committee of the Whole House / Deuxième vice-président du comité plénier de l'Assemblée législative
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	
<b>Jones, Hon. / L'hon. Sylvia (PC)</b>	Dufferin—Caledon	Solicitor General / Solliciteure 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	
<b>MacLeod, Hon. / L'hon. Lisa (PC)</b>	Nepean	Minister of Children, Community and Social Services / Ministre des Services à l'enfance et des Services sociaux et communautaires Minister Responsible for Women's Issues / Ministre déléguée à la Condition féminine
Mamakwa, Sol (NDP)	Kiiwetinoong	
Mantha, Michael (NDP)	Algoma—Manitoulin	
Martin, Robin (PC)	Eglinton—Lawrence	
Martow, Gila (PC)	Thornhill	
McDonell, Jim (PC)	Stormont—Dundas—South Glengarry	
McKenna, Jane (PC)	Burlington	
<b>McNaughton, Hon. / L'hon. Monte (PC)</b>	Lambton—Kent—Middlesex	Minister of Infrastructure / Ministre de l'Infrastructure
Miller, Norman (PC)	Parry Sound—Muskoka	
Miller, Paul (NDP)	Hamilton East—Stoney Creek / Hamilton-Est—Stoney Creek	
Mitas, Christina Maria (PC)	Scarborough Centre / Scarborough- Centre	
Monteith-Farrell, Judith (NDP)	Thunder Bay—Atikokan	
Morrison, Suze (NDP)	Toronto Centre / Toronto-Centre	
<b>Mulroney, Hon. / L'hon. Caroline (PC)</b>	York—Simcoe	Attorney General / Procureure générale Minister of Francophone Affairs / Ministre des Affaires francophones
Natyshak, Taras (NDP)	Essex	
<b>Nicholls, Rick (PC)</b>	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	
<b>Phillips, Hon. / L'hon. Rod (PC)</b>	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	
<b>Rickford, Hon. / L'hon. Greg (PC)</b>	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	
<b>Scott, Hon. / L'hon. Laurie (PC)</b>	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	
<b>Smith, Hon. / L'hon. Todd (PC)</b>	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	
<b>Thompson, Hon. / L'hon. Lisa M. (PC)</b>	Huron—Bruce	Minister of Education / Ministre de l'Éducation
<b>Tibollo, Hon. / L'hon. Michael A. (PC)</b>	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	
<b>Walker, Hon. / L'hon. Bill (PC)</b>	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	
<b>Yakubuski, Hon. / L'hon. John (PC)</b>	Renfrew—Nipissing—Pembroke	Minister of Natural Resources and Forestry / Ministre des Richesses naturelles et des Forêts
Yarde, Kevin (NDP)	Brampton North / Brampton-Nord	
<b>Yurek, Hon. / L'hon. Jeff (PC)</b>	Elgin—Middlesex—London	Minister of Transportation / Ministre des Transports

**STANDING COMMITTEES OF THE LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY  
COMITÉS PERMANENTS DE L'ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE**

**Standing Committee on Estimates / Comité permanent des budgets des dépenses**

Chair / Président: Peter Tabuns  
Vice-Chair / Vice-président: Wayne Gates  
Stan Cho, Jill Dunlop  
Wayne Gates, Randy Hillier  
Stephen Lecce, Gila Martow  
Jane McKenna, Judith Monteith-Farrell  
Lindsey Park, Randy Pettapiece  
Peter Tabuns  
Committee Clerk / Greffier: Timothy Bryan

**Standing Committee on Finance and Economic Affairs / Comité permanent des finances et des affaires économiques**

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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**

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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**

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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

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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

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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

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Toby Barrett, Catherine Fife  
Goldie Ghamari, Michael Gravelle  
Jim McDonell, Norman Miller  
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Michael Parsa, Peggy Sattler  
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**Standing Committee on Regulations and Private Bills / Comité permanent des règlements et des projets de loi d'intérêt privé**

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John Fraser, Joel Harden  
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