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Mardi  
28 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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## LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF ONTARIO

Tuesday 28 May 2019

## ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE DE L'ONTARIO

Mardi 28 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.*

### NOTICES OF REASONED AMENDMENTS

**The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott):** I would ask for the House's attention. I beg to inform the House that, pursuant to standing order 71(b), the member for Lanark–Frontenac–Kingston has notified the Clerk of his intention to file notice of a reasoned amendment to the motion for second reading of Bill 115, An Act to amend the Liquor Control Act with respect to the termination of a specified agreement. The order for second reading of Bill 115 may therefore not be called today.

I also need to inform the House that, pursuant to standing order 71(b), again the member for Lanark–Frontenac–Kingston has notified the Clerk of his intention to file notice of a reasoned amendment to the motion for second reading of Bill 117, An Act to amend the Ontario Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals Act. The order for second reading of Bill 117 may therefore not be called today.

### ORDERS OF THE DAY

#### PROTECTING WHAT MATTERS MOST ACT (BUDGET MEASURES), 2019

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

Resuming the debate adjourned on May 16, 2019, on the motion for 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):** Further debate?

**M<sup>me</sup> Nathalie Des Rosiers:** I will be sharing my time with the member from Ottawa South.

Il me fait plaisir aujourd'hui de parler de l'annexe 17 du projet de loi 100.

Schedule 17 introduces the Crown Liability and Proceedings Act, which provides fundamental changes to the Proceedings Against the Crown Act. This may appear to

be quite a technical approach to this bill, but I really want to ensure that everybody knows what the dangers are in the changes that are included in schedule 17. I urge the government not to proceed with schedule 17 of Bill 100, and to do more consultation. As drafted, schedules 11 and 17 will lessen our ability, the ability of all Ontarians, to hold the government accountable and to be compensated if something goes wrong.

People who are injured through governmental action have the ability to be compensated, and this ability is being eliminated in certain circumstances or diminished substantially.

I'll do three things: Number one, I will talk a little bit about what the state of the law is now and what the impact of this bill is on the state of the law.

Let me go back a little bit in history. In the Middle Ages, there was this legal maxim: "The king can do no wrong." You could not sue the government. You could not sue the king because the king was presumed to have the power emanating from God, so he could do no wrong, or the queen could do no wrong.

Eventually, when we evolved and started developing a rule-of-law principle, we accepted that there was no reason why anyone should be above the law. So if the government—which acted as the king—was doing something wrong, individuals could sue the government to be compensated, the same way they should be able to sue a corporation that did something wrong or another individual who did something wrong and that injured them. So governments all across the common law accepted that they should have the ability to be sued.

The courts have recognized that governments are not like every other corporation and sometimes they are faced with difficult policy decisions. So the court developed a test to determine what's a policy choice and what's an operational choice. For example, it would say: "You can decide never to inspect the roads as a policy matter, but once you say to the citizens, 'We will inspect the roads' or 'We will do inspections,' you cannot do them negligently," because people rely on the fact that the government has said, "I will inspect the roads," and you should rely on the fact that the roads have been inspected and therefore are safe, and therefore, "That's why I'm driving on them: because I'm thinking that the roads are safe."

There's a particular case exactly on that case, which is the road between Vancouver and Whistler, where there was a boulder that came on a car. The court accepted that because the government had a program of inspection of the road, they should not do it negligently, and someone who was seriously injured—a little girl died—was entitled to compensation.

What's in the bill is to prevent us from exercising that right. It changes and defines what a policy decision is as being much larger than what is currently in the law. There's no reason to do this. The courts are doing a good job of balancing policy and operational concerns, and we should let that be. No other provinces have taken the route that Ontario has now taken. No other province has decided to restrict the rights of individuals to sue the government for negligence in the actions that they're taking. That's dangerous.

Let me just continue a little bit about why I continue to think that this is a dangerous route. When I asked the question in this House to the Attorney General as to the reason why she was introducing this, particularly in a budget bill, she responded, "I'm seeking to clarify and codify the common law." Well, I spent a little bit of time looking at the common law, and this bill goes further than the common law. And I'm not alone in saying that; many other lawyers who looked at this reached the same conclusion.

I asked for a briefing with the members of the minister's staff, with the Attorney General's staff, to try to express some of my concerns. Number one, I was concerned that the bill has retroactive aspects. It deems dismissed actions that would have been instituted against the crown that are currently here. I've tabled an order paper question asking for the number, the list of cases that will be presumed dismissed. What is the process to assess? What will the impact be on the individuals concerned? And the cost that they've already incurred: Who's going to compensate them for that?

The second thing: There is a new process that if you're going to sue the government and allege bad faith, you can continue to do that, but you will have to ask the permission of the court first. That adds probably \$20,000 to \$30,000 to a lawsuit before you can even proceed.

Further, in this process, you will not have access to government documents. The government will have access to your documents, but you won't have access to the government's documents. This is dangerous. Nobody will be able to do that. So I was concerned about the way in which the scope of this bill—there is no urgency for it. I think it's important that we proceed cautiously when we change the common law.

We have to remember we're no longer in the period of a king. The king does not exist anymore. You're not a king when—even if you have a majority, you're not a benevolent king. You can make mistakes, and people are entitled to compensation and should have the ability and right.

**0910**

We live in a democracy where there are three branches of government that hold each other to account. You should not interfere with this balancing act between the courts, the Legislature and the executive. This act does just that, so I'm concerned about it. I hope that I can influence the members on the opposite side to push the pause button on this and not go forward.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Percy Hatfield):** The member did say she was sharing her time. I recognize the member for Ottawa South.

**Mr. John Fraser:** It's a pleasure to speak to Bill 100 and the budget. I want to thank my colleague for her very clear and concise remarks with regard to section 17, which I'll get to in my remarks as well.

All budgets are kind of like an iceberg. The top of the iceberg is about a tenth of the iceberg. So when we look at the top of this iceberg budget, and when we look at the budget as an iceberg, here's what we see: First off, and I've mentioned this a number of times, and we were talking about it yesterday, there's an obsession with alcohol. Fifty times in the budget, alcohol, beer or wine is mentioned. I think the word "women" is mentioned four times. So there's a question as to why it has such a significant part in the budget, when the budget is really the government's plan for the people, and the things that are important to people are their schools, their hospitals, their public transit and their roads. I don't think the government focuses enough on that in this document.

The other thing we see when we look at the budget is that there is a seniors dental plan, which is a good thing. The government is overstating the scope of that plan and how much that will impact the dental health of seniors and the general population. I encourage the government to do more and not to overstate the value of that program that they've put forward. It will help a small number of seniors who have access to community health centres on a very low income. I'm not saying it's a bad thing. I think that we have to think about people who are just above that threshold, and look at a wider program. I would encourage the government to do that and not speak about it as if it's a job that is completed.

In terms of child care, the government has made some steps forward—again, overstating the real value of that. I think a challenge with this budget is, when we get to the bottom of the iceberg—they're saying they are protecting what matters most, and they've put a few shiny things in the window. But then when you actually get to the bottom of the iceberg and you start to look at what's there—my colleague was just talking about section 17, which is trying to change the balance of the common law in favour of the government, inside a piece of financial legislation, a plan for the people of Ontario.

I think the people of Ontario want a balance. They want to make sure that they can hold their government to account, not only at the ballot box but also in the courts. That's why we have a court system. That's why we have a political system. To try to tip the balance in this document, because they have a majority, is the wrong thing to do.

We didn't hear anything about the municipal changes in the budget, but we saw the government do it, and then the Premier did a backflip yesterday, and I congratulate him. I'm not sure he landed on his feet, but he attempted the backflip and he should be congratulated for that. We'll see what happens next year.

So here's the bottom line. This is kind of what we've heard in the last three or four weeks here in Ontario. We've got this budget that's nice and shiny, and nice, shiny things in the window, and then the estimates come out. The estimates don't lie. I'm not sure I can say the same thing

about the budget. Every day we hear of a cut. There's a billion dollars coming out of the ministry of children and community services. We hear every day of cuts. People are speaking out, and that's why the government has retreated on the municipal cuts.

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

**Mr. Paul Calandra:** I congratulate both members on their comments. At the outset, though, the member opposite, and in particular, the member from Ottawa South, must recognize that part of the reason why there are reductions in spending that are occurring over the next five years is because we were left in such a difficult situation.

It cannot be understated, the devastating impact that a \$15-billion deficit has on the province's ability to fund what we talk about, what matters most, whether it is education, whether it is health care, whether it is transit and transportation. The fiscal mess that the Liberals left us in is one that we had to take action on right away. Does that mean it's easy? No government likes to make reductions; of course we don't like to do that. It's much easier to do what the Liberals did: spend, spend, spend, sprinkle money all over the place, try to make everybody happy. But at some point in time, you can't borrow anymore. At some point in time, you have to bring things back into balance. At some point in time, you have to have a priority, and for us, the priorities obviously are health, education and getting people moving.

We'll balance the budget, yes, but we're doing it on a timetable, which—as I've said in this House, I would have preferred it to be quicker. But I understand why we've done it on a five-year time frame.

Make no mistake about it: The situation we find ourselves in today is 100% the fault of the members opposite, who for 15 years refused to do anything about it—never. What they did was try to hide and obfuscate—those are not my words; those are the words that the Auditor General and FAO talked about. We're putting things back on track—

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Percy Hatfield):** Thank you. And I would ask the member to withdraw.

*Interjection.*

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Percy Hatfield):** “Obfuscate” is not one of the words we tend to use on a regular basis. It's unparliamentary. Thank you very much. Questions and comments?

**M<sup>me</sup> France Gélinas:** It is rather interesting that this is one of my first and only opportunities to put two minutes on the record about the budget, because everything in here moves really quickly.

Water in northern Ontario also moves very quickly. We can see that in the budget there is a significant cut, a decrease in funding, for flood and water management. I can tell you that the Sudbury conservation area has seen significant cuts to their budget at the same time as northern Ontario is flush with water. Lake Wanapitei, a humongous lake in my riding, is higher than we have ever seen. All of the dams are open from the Wanapitei river to French River. Wanapitei has three series of dams. Everything is

open. What does that mean? That means that Gisèle Pageau, the mayor of French River, had to declare an emergency. That means that for many of my constituents, either their home is about to be flooded or their roads are already flooded.

I was in Alban on Friday and person after person came and talked to me, with pictures where you can see that the water is inches away from coming into their houses, where you can see that the roads to their houses or back into the community are flooded under that thick of water. How long before they're not able to go back and forth and have to abandon their houses? At the same time, the government, in their budget, decides to cut water management and flood management. That makes no sense. We now have a municipality that has declared an emergency. The Alban part of this municipality is in my riding. People's homes and cottages are about to flood, and they need this government's help, not a government cut.

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

**Mr. Stephen Lecce:** I want to thank the various members for their remarks.

The members from Ottawa South and Ottawa–Vanier spoke about the defence of the rule of law. Just very briefly, before we speak about the budget: I find it curious to hear that commentary because I have not heard anything—an element of silence from all members of the Liberal Party when it came to the defence of the rule of law when the federal Liberal Party and the federal Prime Minister intervened in a prosecution, an active criminal investigation, with SNC-Lavalin. I did not hear the provincial Liberal Party express an iota of concern about the institutions of our democracy and the independence from the politics of the prosecution of this country. Where were you? Why weren't you expressing concern to the federal Prime Minister?

With that said, Mr. Speaker, just a few data points of interest:

—\$347 billion in debt is the legacy of the former Liberal power;

—\$36 million more spending per day today, \$40 million when we came into office, than we actually had—\$40 million more per day than we take in. That is a defensible policy “defending the next generation”?

—1,000 people in hallways, having the indignity of having to seek health care in hallways;

—twice the youth unemployment rate in this province and in this country;

—over 50% of students in grade 6 failing their EQAO math tests.

**0920**

Mr. Speaker, with great respect to the members opposite, all of whom serve their constituents no doubt well, the people of this province are not better off after 15 years of their legacy.

The impetus for our budget is to create the conditions for affordability, to create the conditions for better private sector jobs, to lift people up, to give them an education, a curriculum, that actually helps them get jobs in the workforce.

Mr. Speaker, the record of the Liberal Party is rather clear. It is one that has left many people behind. It is one that has undermined the pocketbooks and the prosperity of this province. We will take no lessons from the members of the Liberal Party.

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

**Mr. Kevin Yarde:** As always, it's a pleasure to rise in this chamber and to speak to the issues affecting my residents in Brampton as well as in Brampton North.

When I was knocking on the doors during the campaign, one thing that always came true, one thing everybody mentioned, is that our city is a fast-growing city. We're one of the fastest-growing cities in the country. As a matter of fact, we have our population which is getting close to 700,000 people. And with regard to traffic, we are experiencing gridlock on a daily basis. We have residents who are commuting from Brampton having to come down the 410 and going back up the 410, and in most cases it's three or more hours of commuting every day just to get to work and to school.

People of Brampton continue to do this every day, and it's not uncommon for them to complain to me and call my office and say, "What is the government doing about transportation? Are they helping in terms of more transit?" The answer to that is no, we haven't seen anything come towards Brampton. We've seen other areas across Ontario, but Brampton, as I mentioned, one of the fastest-growing cities in the country and in the province, is not getting their due course.

The problem with that is that Brampton has been neglected by this government, and necessary investments have not been made. We've called for that. The mayor of Brampton, Patrick Brown, has also called for that, but everything is just falling on deaf ears with this government. People have no choice, Mr. Speaker, but to buy a car since we don't have proper transportation in the form of transit. It's not because of the transit system; they're just underfunded because of this government. So when they buy a car, they're also paying the highest insurance in the entire country because we are being, I guess you could say, prejudiced because of where we live. They're basing it on our postal codes. We pay the highest insurance in the entire country.

So a couple of things at play here: We pay the highest auto insurance, we have gridlock in Brampton and this government is doing nothing—

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Percy Hatfield):** Thank you. We'll return to—I guess we won't.

What's happening?

*Interjection.*

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Percy Hatfield):** We'll go to Scarborough–Guildwood.

**Ms. Mitzie Hunter:** In the minutes that I have remaining, let me remind this government and the people of Ontario that the \$15-billion deficit number that the government talks about is a number that they manufactured, that they created. They did that, Mr. Speaker, so that they can continue to justify deep cuts to programs and

to services that the people of Ontario depend on. Some of the most vulnerable individuals in this province are feeling those hurts that these cuts are inflicting upon them. Mr. Speaker, this is irresponsible. It is so irresponsible.

I hear that this government is putting the province at litigation risk of up to a billion dollars to cancel contracts by legislation. That, Mr. Speaker, is going to cost the people of this province at a time when the government claims that it is in a crisis and that it needs to cut. It's justifying those cuts of its own making by lowering revenues, Mr. Speaker, by creating a deficit situation in this province so that you can continue to cut programs and services.

You inherited one of the strongest economies in the G7, the lowest unemployment rate in the G7. And what are you doing? You're wasting that opportunity. Rather than investing in education, in health, in public services, you instead are putting this province at litigation risk of up to a billion dollars. You're literally flushing away a billion dollars, and it is absolutely irresponsible at a time when you're cutting transition programs and services for vulnerable people who need to buy food, clothing—

*Interjections.*

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Percy Hatfield):** Thank you.

Government members, I'm having a bit of difficulty this morning listening to the independent member from Scarborough–Guildwood because of the catcalls and heckling from the government benches. I would caution you to retain your decorum as we continue the debate with the member from Carleton.

**Ms. Goldie Ghamari:** Merci, monsieur le Président. Bonne journée.

Mr. Speaker, before I begin, I'd just like to let you know that I'm going to be sharing my time with the member from Markham–Stouffville.

Having said that, I'm pleased to stand and rise today to speak here on the budget bill. It's interesting, listening to the debate that's going on, especially when I'm hearing from the independent party about how we're adding to the deficit. I think part of the problem is that Liberal math just doesn't add up and it has never, ever added up. Even when we're reducing the deficit, for whatever reason they can't seem to understand that, and they like to make these grandiose claims despite the facts. Because, at the end of the day, numbers don't lie, and when you look at our budget, it all adds up. It's something that we campaigned upon and it's the responsible thing to do.

Le gouvernement pour la population de l'Ontario s'est engagé à équilibrer le budget de façon responsable et à rétablir la confiance, la transparence et la responsabilité à l'égard des finances de la province. L'équilibre budgétaire contribuera à protéger l'essentiel, soit les services de santé, d'éducation et d'autres services publics cruciaux et fera en sorte que la population ait le financement dont elle a besoin pour les générations à venir.

To reiterate, Mr. Speaker, our government for the people is committed to balancing the budget in a responsible manner, restoring trust, transparency and accountability in the province's finances. Balancing the budget is

not just something that we do for the sake of doing it, but balancing the budget will help protect what matters most: health care, education and other critical services.

Balancing the budget will ensure that the people of Ontario, people like Hina, who has been working in my office and who has helping me out with my campaign for a very long time—Hina and her family; she has three kids, she has a husband, she babysits my dog sometimes. People like Hina are all across Ontario and this budget is for them. This budget is to ensure that Hina's children have a future, that Hina's children can rely upon our public education system, and that Hina's children and children across the province have access to the health care that they need. So, Mr. Speaker, when we're balancing the budget, we're helping Ontarians like Hina and her family, to ensure that they have the funding that they need for generations to come.

Mr. Speaker, when we talk about protecting what matters most, there are three areas, three core areas, in our budget. Those areas are health care, education and relief for families. When we're talking about health care, our government is investing an additional \$384 million in hospitals and an additional \$267 million in home and community care. This is essential to end hallway health care and to direct more health care spending to where it's needed the most. As well, to improve transitions in care and to reduce wait times, our government is creating Ontario health teams to move towards an integrated health care delivery model.

Not only that, we are also making an historic investment of \$3.8 billion in mental health. This is also going to go to addictions and housing supports in the next 10 years, beginning with the creation of a mental health and addictions system. Not only that, we're going to be creating 15,000 new long-term-care beds across the province. We've already made that announcement and the beds are already starting to be made.

#### 0930

The second point when we're talking about protecting what matters most is education. Our government is improving the condition of schools to support better learning and to keep children, like Hina's children, and students safe by investing \$1.4 billion in school renewal just in the 2019-20 academic year. We can already see the advantages of this investment. In my riding alone, Mr. Speaker, the Ministry of Education and the Honourable Minister of Education have already approved funding for two brand new schools: a public high school in Stittsville and a French Catholic elementary school in Manotick.

So, Mr. Speaker, when I'm hearing from the opposition or when I'm hearing from unions that we're cutting funds to health care or education, it doesn't make sense to me. People can talk and they can say whatever they want to say, but what really matters are actions, and when I look at the steps taken by our government and when I'm taking a look at the steps taken by our Minister of Education, all of the steps have led to more schools, which, in turn, creates more teacher jobs. It creates more educational opportunities for students. The proof is in the pudding, Mr.

Speaker. I think our actions as a government speak louder than words, and this is just the first year that we've been here in power.

Our third point when we're talking about protecting what matters most is relief for families. Again, Mr. Speaker, I'm reminded of families like Hina and her husband and their children. Hina and her husband are a two-income family, a two-income household, and the past 15 years have been hard on them. They have been hard on all Ontarians. It has been so difficult because, at the end of the day, when the previous Liberal government made those policies, it wasn't them being affected; it was people like Hina, and the taxpayers of Ontario, that were being affected by these Liberal policies. The Liberals aren't the ones who are footing the bill; it's taxpayers.

What we have to remember, Mr. Speaker, is that the taxpayer's pocket is not bottomless. We as a government have to ensure that we're respecting taxpayers, that we're respecting their hard work and that we're respecting their money. We can't tax people for the sake of taxing them, because when you tax someone, you're taking away their other opportunities, whether it's a family vacation, whether it's an upgrade to the house, whether it's getting that new car or whether it's making a repair to an existing vehicle.

And so, protecting what matters most also includes relief for families. That's why our government is proposing the new Ontario Childcare Access and Relief from Expenses Tax Credit, or the CARE Tax Credit. This is going to be one of the most flexible child care initiatives ever introduced in Ontario. What it does is, it puts the responsibility on parents, not the government, because parents are at the centre of the decision-making process when it comes to child care. Our CARE Tax Credit is giving about 300,000 families in Ontario up to 75% of their eligible child care expenses. It's going to allow families to access a broad range of child care options, including child care centres, homes and summer camps. What this means is that families like Hina's and others, who maybe haven't been able to afford to put their child in a summer camp because of the rising bills and the increasing expenses due to the previous policies of the previous government, are finally going to have an opportunity to put their child in summer camp, something that I think every child should experience.

Who are we, as a government, to tell parents how to raise their children? It's not our role. We're not a nanny state. I think that's what makes us very different, as Progressive Conservatives, compared to the other parties: We're not here to tell parents what to do. Our government is here to create the opportunities to allow parents and to allow families to make whatever choice they deem best for their families and for their children. And so, Mr. Speaker, I'm happy with this new CARE Tax Credit because now parents can finally decide how they want to spend that money and what benefits they actually want to claim.

Not only that, we're also looking at providing tax relief for families when they need it most. This is a little bit of a difficult topic for me, Mr. Speaker, because this is something that I actually experienced first-hand when I was out

campaigning in my riding. There was a gentleman—and I don't want to give his name—who lives out in Kenmore. I think he knows exactly who he is when he sees us. But this gentleman in Kenmore came to me with an estate administration issue because his wife had passed away. When families are grieving, it's difficult to look at these things, and it's difficult to make those financial decisions right away because you're going through such a tremendous loss. It took him some time to get to a point where he could finally look at his financials and his estate and his administration, but because he had waited so long, Mr. Speaker, due to the grieving process, he was dinged, and he was dinged big-time by policies that were put in by the previous Liberal government—completely unfair. He's a single-income, pensioned senior citizen.

Mr. Speaker, before I wrap up, I just wanted to say that part of what we're doing is that on January 1, 2020, the estate administration tax is going to be eliminated for taxable estates with assets of \$50,000 or less.

With that, I'd like to conclude by saying that I am happy to stand here today in support of this bill. I think it's a fantastic culmination of everything that we campaigned upon. I'm proud to support it, and I'm proud to be part of this Progressive Conservative government to help protect what matters most, which is the people of Ontario.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Percy Hatfield):** The member from Carleton did say she was going to share her time with the member from Markham–Stouffville. We turn now to the member from Markham–Stouffville.

**Mr. Paul Calandra:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I appreciate the opportunity especially to follow up on the member from Carleton and the remarks she made. She highlighted many of the important measures that are in this budget. As I said just recently in a question to the Liberal Party, obviously we're put in a situation where we've had to make some challenging and some difficult decisions. No government likes to come into office and face—I can't imagine any government would like to come into office and face the types of challenges that we have faced: a \$15-billion deficit, the largest sub-sovereign debt in the world.

Let's take a moment to think about that. We're the most indebted sub-sovereign jurisdiction in the world, and despite the fact that we are so indebted, we also face some very challenging choices ahead. We face the need to renew our health care system. We face the need to improve our education system, and we face the very real need to get people moving in terms of building transit and transportation across this province.

I'm going to focus my remarks on some of those, because I think the member for Carleton really highlighted the very important measures in the budget in terms of taxation and making life more affordable for families and why this legislation was so important. But I want to focus on some of the other aspects that are in the budget.

Many of us, when we were campaigning, heard from residents in our communities—and when it comes to education, I want to set aside the results. We've had a lot of debate on that, and the minister has made a lot of progress on turning things around in terms of results for

our students so they can achieve better. But we also heard from a lot of parents—I know that in my riding, I did—of the need to improve, renovate and repair some of the schools that we have in our communities, that there was a building backlog that had not been touched for many, many years.

Now, clearly, in this budget, we knew as a government going forward that we were going to have to make some decisions on this. What we've done is, of course, we've made some adjustments to secondary school class sizes. At the same time, we've used those adjustments to help us fund an enormous investment in repairing, renovating and updating some of the schools that had needed repair for many, many years. We've done that at the same time while protecting new teachers who are wanting to come into the system. There are a lot of good new teachers who want to come into the system, and when you're a government faced with a \$15-billion deficit, a massive debt, you want to encourage younger people so that they know they have a strong future ahead of them. So what we've done in part of these adjustments is—we recognized the fact that there are some teachers who are approaching the end of their careers. We wanted to protect the younger teachers coming in, and this budget does that while making sure that we have money to invest in repairing and renovating schools.

I want to go a little bit further in the time I have left and talk about health care. The budget makes important investments in health care, yes, but more importantly than that, it builds on what the Minister of Health talked about: a new health care system, these Ontario health teams. Now, that is a very, very important change for the province of Ontario, and this budget here helps us implement that over the next number of years.

#### 0940

What is an Ontario health team? It's a transformation of how we will deliver health care in the province of Ontario. It means that people no longer will feel left out of the health care system, that communities will have better access to care. We've heard a lot over the last couple of days about public health. Well, obviously, Mr. Speaker, as the Ontario health teams come into integration, some of these public health services currently handled by public health will be handled by the Ontario health teams, for sure, but a revamped public health system will also still be there and is still going to be supported in this budget.

But we have to recognize the fact that we have a budget to bring into balance. While we're trying to improve systems, we also have to focus on not only the things that matter most, but we have to focus our resources on doing what is most important. When it comes to public health, we've heard a lot over the last couple of days about the city of Toronto. They've been very upset. Well, people in my community have said to me, "We need more help." Some of the communities in rural Ontario have a challenge bringing in professionals, bringing in doctors, bringing in nurses, bringing in the types of programs that they see the city of Toronto has, and they wonder why.

When you look at a residential taxpayer in the city of Markham, for example—we appreciate the fact that the

city of Toronto might want to have more services than other areas, but that's why they've been given additional powers of taxation that no other municipality in the province of Ontario has. People in the city of Markham—when you look at the two, when you compare the city of Markham and the city of Toronto, a residential taxpayer in the city of Toronto—same assessed home, exact same value—pays close to \$800 less than somebody in the city of Markham. That's a choice we've made, but it's also a choice that the city of Toronto is going to have to make going forward when it looks at how it's going to fund its programs and services.

I know the minister and the Premier made an announcement yesterday so that we can help ease this transition, but make no mistake about it: We have a deficit that we have to hit, a target that we have to hit, and we will hit those targets.

I wanted to briefly, in the few minutes I have left, also talk about transit and transportation, because this is a vital component of how we get our province moving again, how we get our cities and communities moving again, and this budget helps to get us on that way. The Minister of Transportation has brought forward a tremendous plan to get the greater Toronto area moving, but he hasn't forgotten all of the other areas. He hasn't forgotten the fact that we need to invest in transit and transportation in the city of Ottawa—and we've done that. We've done that and we're doing that. He hasn't forgotten that part of getting people around is roads and bridges and infrastructure in rural parts of the province of Ontario, and we're doing that. But in the GTA, it also means that we have to get people moving, and that means that we can't sit and wait for transit decisions to be made for years and years.

What we heard yesterday in committee was actually very disappointing, from somebody who comes from outside of the city of Toronto. We heard the NDP talk about the fact that the Toronto Transit Commission is owned only by the people of Toronto, and that the rest of us can't talk about it because it's only the city of Toronto that owns that transit system. Well, I of course disagree, because billions of dollars have been spent by people outside of the city of Toronto to build subways in the city of Toronto through infrastructure programs—and not just in the province of Ontario, but across Canada. Billions of dollars are being sent to the city of Ottawa by people in my riding to support light rail in Ottawa—to support light rail in Hamilton. We all own these assets. To suggest that only the city of Toronto has anything to do with transit is to suggest that the rest of us need not apply. To hear members opposite in certain communities fight for that and to suggest—to hear the member for St. Catharines or the member from Kitchener or the member from Oshawa suggest that, no, it's only the city of Toronto, when our taxpayers have spent billions of dollars to support those transit systems, is completely unacceptable.

When you put it in context, Mr. Speaker, when you put it in the context of the property rate taxpayer who, in the city of Markham, in the town of Stouffville, pays significantly more for property taxes than they do in the city of

Toronto, despite the fact that they have additional taxing tools than others do, we say this: If you want programs and services, be they gold-plated more than others, then you're going to have to pay for that. That's why you have the tools. Those are decisions you will have to make.

Our decision right now, as a government, is to balance the budget, to pay down debt and to do it in a responsible fashion over the next five years, so that we can actually continue to invest in what matters most to people. For me right now, that's health, that's education and that's transit and transportation. We're getting the job done for the people of Ontario despite all of the—

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

**Ms. Laura Mae Lindo:** I'm honoured to take two minutes to chat about some of the details that have come across the floor. Some of it confuses me. One thing that I can agree on is that budgets don't lie. Budgets don't lie, and they tell you what your priorities are.

What I find fascinating is that the member from Carleton also said that actions speak louder than words. But what we're seeing is a real tension between the actions from the government and the budget line items and what they're actually saying. There's lots of tension, is what I'm saying to you right now.

I know that Ontario residents are concerned about what this government believes the priorities should be. I know that this budget speaks about making sure that the money is aligned with their own priorities. The question becomes: Are the government's priorities the same as the residents of Ontario's?

If we think about health care, it's quite fascinating. Right now, we keep hearing that mental health is going to be infused with \$3.8 billion. I just want to read something from the Waterloo Region Crime Prevention Council. They released a report entitled *Conversations of Substance: Youth in Waterloo Region on Issues of Substance Abuse*. There's a young person who, in their own words, described their experiences with mental health concerns and accessing the health care system. They say, "I am being treated like a criminal because there is something wrong with my brain, something that I didn't choose to happen to me."

I think about how this is the life of a young person in my area, in Waterloo region, how this is them trying to access this health care system—which I've been told the government really has a priority for—and yet they are being criminalized. That's actually what is happening when we fight the safe injection sites—people are being criminalized. And so I really want us to sit back and try to align the priorities of Ontario and the priorities in this budget.

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

**Mr. Sam Oosterhoff:** It's a privilege and an honour to be able to stand and represent the people of Niagara West this morning, and also to respond to the excellent contributions to debate that were brought forward by the member for Markham–Stouffville and the member for Carleton. Thank you both very much for your passion for this

province and also for ensuring that we get the province back on track.

Speaker, I have to say, I'm very interested to hear also the comments coming across from members of the opposition. I have some friends in Alberta. They just recently elected a United Conservative Party there. One of the fascinating things I noticed was that Premier Kenney there has actually brought on board a former New Democrat finance minister from Saskatchewan. She, Janice MacKinnon, has been brought on in order to help see where they can get back to balance, to ensure that they're spending efficiently and to ensure that they are in fact balancing the budget.

Former Minister MacKinnon says, "I actually faced the prospect of [Saskatchewan] going into bankruptcy because for years governments ignored the warning signs of mounting debt and deficits, and they failed to act." This is a New Democrat finance minister who understood the need to make significant and substantial change in a province that was facing bankruptcy. Frankly, Speaker, that's the situation that Ontario has been put in by 15 years of Liberal waste and mismanagement and spending that far exceeded our income.

We are taking the steps that are necessary to get this province on track. That's really what Bill 100 is all about. Yes, we can get talking about particular components. I'm very proud of the CARE Tax Credit and very proud of the different portions of this that invest in infrastructure and health care and education. But really, what this bill brings forward is a blueprint to sustainability, to ensuring that the core services that Ontarians expect and depend on are here not just today, but for the future as well.

0950

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

**Mr. Joel Harden:** It's a rise—it's a pleasure; I get a rise out of rising to speak to the government's budget bill today.

When I ask my friends in government what matters most to them, I'm wondering how much the revenues of this province matter to the government, because last week we heard an announcement that \$1.3 million was going to be invested in an accessibility strategy for people with disabilities, but that amount of money is going to be spent on one employee of this government, Gavin Tighe, the Ford family lawyer who the Premier hired to his office at a cost of \$680,000 a year. We've also heard that Ken Hughes is going to be hired as a consultant for their Beer Store experiment at a cost of \$1,000 a day. That came on the news of a cancellation of a contract months earlier—Alykhan Velshi, former adviser to Patrick Brown, who worked one day at Ontario Power Generation. That cancelled contract will cost the people of this province \$500,000.

So I ask you: When the government cuts \$1 billion in income tax for some of the largest employers in this province, when they cut taxes for the wealthiest people in this province at a cost of \$275 million—it might be more entertaining, if I could be cynical for a second, because I

am an optimistic person, to just have an over-ground swimming pool in the front yard at Queen's Park and put in all that money you're lavishing on all these insiders and light it on fire, because that's about as much use as the people of Ontario get from hiring these insiders and these consultants.

Take the hard-earned tax money that people in this province give to us to preside over public services and make investments in our future and put it to work. Have some faith in the high-ranking policy people who work for this government. Don't hire your buddies to give you the advice which is getting you into trouble, quite frankly. Stop thinking about this province as something that needs to be sold. Think about this province as something we need to invest in to make sure we get ahead.

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

**Ms. Donna Skelly:** Mr. Speaker, I am so proud to rise this morning to speak in support of this bill, Bill 100. We often hear in this House—whether it was this morning, addressing this bill, or when we're sitting in the Legislature—about the need for this government to protect what matters most. That's not just a line. It's a fundamental shift in how we govern. And the reason we are saying this, the reason we are introducing this shift and these different policies, is because this government was handed a fiscal nightmare following 15 years of reckless spending by the previous Liberal government.

There isn't a day that goes by that I don't hear from a constituent or another resident from a community across Ontario who references their frustration with the current health care system. They're tired of seeing loved ones languishing in hallways and our hospitals. They're frustrated with the inability to find adequate long-term care for family members, for loved ones. That is why we have introduced these changes: to find efficiencies so that we can invest in the things that matter most to Ontarians, like public health care, public education. We are finding efficiencies to invest \$1.5 billion more in long-term care, \$1.8 billion in mental health services, millions and millions of dollars for dental care for our seniors.

I've heard from constituents, including local business owners, health care providers, that they are excited about the positive changes that we are introducing—changes that we can introduce that will make a difference, to allow us to protect what matters most. They're in Bill 100. I'm proud to stand in support of it.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Percy Hatfield):** We'll return now to the member from Markham-Stouffville to summarize what he has heard in the last eight minutes since he concluded his portion of the debate.

**Mr. Paul Calandra:** I thank all the members for their comments.

The member for Kitchener mentioned access to health care, and that's really one of the priorities of what the Minister of Health has been doing, because we've heard this time and time and time again: It's not just about the opioid crisis. That's hugely important. That's why we've brought forward some measures over the last day to attack

this even further. But we also heard from health care professionals in my riding and across the province of Ontario about seniors, seniors who end up back in emergency rooms because they don't know how to access long-term care. Well, that's a system that doesn't work and that's why we have to change that system, Mr. Speaker.

Now, the member for Ottawa Centre talked about contracts, and broken contracts. I too like to talk about contracts. I like to talk about those contracts for green energy that we no longer are funding, which would save us \$1 billion, colleagues. Those are the contracts I like to talk about. Why do we have contracts for \$1 billion in energy that we don't need? Because the member opposite and his friends in Environmental Defence and the Suzuki foundation sold the previous government, when they were in coalition, a bill of goods on green energy. They told them, "Let's buy into green energy and create hundreds of thousands of jobs." Did it? No. What they did was they sold them green energy high and made the people of Ontario pay the bill—billions of dollars in extra costs on energy, which drove people out.

The contracts I like to talk about are the ones that we're preserving—in the member's own community, light rail—because we've changed the fiscal framework. Because we're putting Ontario back on the right track, they're able to have light rail in his community, Mr. Speaker.

This is all about what matters most. It's all about putting people first. It's about making sure that we have the resources that the province needs to fund health care, education, social services, and transit and transportation in the future, and I do hope the members will consider voting in favour of those very important—

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Percy Hatfield):** Thank you.

#### NOTICE OF REASONED AMENDMENT

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Percy Hatfield):** I beg to inform the House that, pursuant to standing order 71(b), the member for Timmins and the member for Ottawa-Vanier have notified the Clerk of their intention to file notice of a reasoned amendment to the motion for second reading of Bill 115, An Act to amend the Liquor Control Act with respect to the termination of a specified agreement. The order for second reading of Bill 115 may therefore not be called today.

#### PROTECTING WHAT MATTERS MOST ACT (BUDGET MEASURES), 2019

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

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Percy Hatfield):** Further debate? The member for Niagara Falls.

**Mr. Wayne Gates:** Thank you, Speaker. Yes, I find it great that I'm rising to speak on the booze budget that has been presented by the PC Party. Thank you for allowing

me to rise today and speak to this government's first budget—an important budget, a budget that will let all Ontario see who they truly are, see who they truly represent. It's not me. It's not most people in this province. It's their friends, rich insiders in Ontario, who were banking on the PCs to win the election so they could strip regulations, lower the minimum wage, ignore the environment, and attack unionized workers like they did yesterday. They got what they wanted, and now, unfortunately, the people of Ontario are paying for it. This budget clearly lays out the beginning of their pathway forward to bring Ontario backwards and hurt the most vulnerable among us.

Mr. Speaker, I'd like to start by talking about one of the most important aspects of our entire province: our universal public health care system, a system that is the pride of Canadians, not just Ontarians. My riding in Niagara is right across the border, as you would know, Madam—almost Madam Speaker—Speaker. You just have to cross that border to see the damage a private health system has had on their system.

It's the moustache.

This PC government may not have turned our health system into the United States yet, but this budget starts to chip away at the system that we all rely on. And I'm not going to let the Liberals off the hook. For years, the Liberals froze the budgets. And when you talk about efficiencies and all that stuff, you know what? There's no more juice in the can. They have gotten all the efficiencies they've had to do because they weren't being funded properly. That's why we ended up with hallway medicine.

I know the members across from me want to say the numbers are going up, that health care spending has increased, but what's important to note is that those increases in physical dollars are so small that they don't even keep up to the rate of inflation or take in the fact that we're an aging society.

Mr. Speaker, the PC government estimates a 1.6% annual increase over the period from 2018 to 2022. General inflation is going to run at 1.9%, which means we're going to continue to get behind in the health care budget. It should be somewhere around 5%. Make no mistake about it: They're cutting health care. They can stand up and say they're not. They are. Hospitals were already operating on inadequate funding. We all know that hallway medicine started under the past Liberal government. Health care costs increased—inflation, population, our growth—and the Liberals let it go that way. We now have people who aren't going to be staying in the hospital hallways; they're going to be in the parking lots.

**1000**

I want to say, in Niagara—it's too bad the member from Niagara West—sorry, I'll backtrack on that.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Percy Hatfield):** The member from Niagara Falls knows well what he is allowed to do and not to do.

**Mr. Wayne Gates:** Let's pretend he's here, then.

The Niagara West member—I've talked to him about mental health in Niagara; I've talked to the health minister

until I'm blue in the face. We have a crisis in Niagara. People are dying in Niagara. It's young people, middle-aged people, all walks of life. I'm begging this government to help us in Niagara, to support my motion and give \$2.5 million year over year so we can get more mental health services in Niagara.

We just had a story, a front-page story, in the Niagara Falls paper, the St. Catharines paper and the Welland paper about a gentleman who went to the hospital begging for help. They kept him for four hours, because they don't have the beds, they don't have the services, they don't have the resources. Do you know what that person did? He left that hospital after he begged for help, and he jumped into the falls. He committed suicide. It happened in December; they still haven't found his body. So I'm begging that if you want to say you care about mental health, help us in Niagara. Too many people in Niagara are dying because of mental health issues, and they can't get the help they rightly deserve.

Down in Niagara Falls we have been waiting for construction of a new hospital for six years. They have one of the prettiest signs in Niagara Falls: "Home of the new hospital." Six years it has been going on. I learned after speaking with the head of the Niagara Health System that the current project is again at stage 2. All they're doing is stalling.

But here's what happened in Niagara. I'd like the PCs to listen to this because it has happened in a number of communities. The hospital closures weren't done by the PCs; they've done enough mess in eight or nine months. It was done by the Liberals. Do you know what they did in Niagara? They closed the hospital in Niagara-on-the-Lake. They closed the hospital in Fort Erie. They closed the hospital in St. Catharines. And my favourite is that in Niagara Falls, they took the mental health services out of our hospitals and transferred them from Niagara Falls to St. Catharines. If people are suffering with mental health issues, how do they get to St. Catharines? How do they get there? They closed up the facility.

Here's the best one—I've said this in the House before. How many people go to Niagara Falls on their honeymoon? They go enjoy a weekend away with their partner. How many go there and they end up, "We can go there and make babies"? You know what they did in Niagara Falls? They took the maternity out of Niagara Falls. So you can make them in Niagara Falls; you can't deliver them in Niagara Falls. It makes absolutely no sense. Why would that happen in the province of Ontario? So I'm saying, let's get our new hospital in Niagara Falls built, get it under construction and stop the stalling of it. It's so important down in Niagara.

There is definitely some concern when I look at the budget and see the approach this government is taking with health care in the province of Ontario.

Before I move on—it's not in the budget. I'm going to ask all of you, when you get your two-minute hit and you want to say whatever you want to say on my 20 minutes, you go ahead, but how do you not have something in your budget that talks about the auto sector? How is there

nothing in the budget when, before the budget came out, Oshawa was faced with a closure?

I know the Premier said the ship had left: "It's closing. It's gone." Good thing those workers were represented by a good, strong union and they said, "No, we're not going to stand for that," and they fought back. Did they win the whole battle? Did they get the whole loaf of bread? No. But they kept a footprint open and saved some of those jobs. That particular community was losing 20,000 jobs, and they're good-paying jobs, good union jobs, so they can raise their family and raise their kids and put them through education.

Then you go down a little further into your community, Mr. Speaker, into Windsor. They're losing an entire shift; 1,500 people are going to lose their jobs in Windsor as it stands today. And again, the president of 444, my good friend Dave Cassidy, called the Premier over and over again: "I want to talk to you. What can we do to save these jobs?" The Premier never called him back until your colleague from Windsor West sent a letter and went over and talked to the Premier personally. Then he called him once but never got back to him about it.

How can you not have an auto strategy for the province of Ontario when they're good-paying jobs, when they say, "We're open for business"? This is a mistake. It's a mistake. It's one of the most important industries. There's a lot of important industries in the province of Ontario, but I believe none are more important for good-paying jobs than the auto sector, and you missed an opportunity to protect the auto sector in this budget.

The cuts outlined in this budget seem to be a pattern for this government. Since the introduction of this budget, we have witnessed this government continue to attempt to cut important services in the province, like public health departments. We saw from this absolute disaster of a policy decision that this government does not consult with people, organizations or municipalities.

And yesterday—yesterday was good. They backtracked—sort of, because they're still going to go ahead with the cuts in a year. But wouldn't it have made more sense—and, again, I don't know; I'm just an MPP from Niagara Falls. But wouldn't it make more sense that, before you put a policy out and do what you did, you actually consult with the municipalities and the mayors before you come and put a policy in place that you have to find out nobody agrees with—even though they thought they had control of Toronto council? Because of what they did in cutting the council, they thought they had control of it and they could do what they wanted and get support from the PC friends on that council. Even the PC friends—except, I believe, a relative of the Premier—voted against the cuts, and they had to backtrack. I'm saying to the government that before do you that, consult. Go around the province. Find out what the municipalities want. That's what you have to do.

It's not a win for the government. Quite frankly, it's a win for the municipalities that stood up and talked to him. They want to walk back these public health care cuts now, and they were hammered by the municipalities in the

province. Really, I think it's because of the ratings in the polls they were seeing.

Let me talk for a bit about the idea of cutting public health in our province.

Down in Niagara, I've met with our current head of public health twice now, and let me tell you, they are very concerned. This government loves to talk about the fiscal crisis they walked into once they were elected. We know that doesn't mean that the previous Liberal government was throwing money around to every organization. We know that because they were not increasing the funding for public health. They had three years of frozen funding by the Liberal government. We know that every year, our public health department had a frozen budget and they had to find ways to do more with less. They have found all the efficiencies they can. Mr. Speaker, they have worked with less for a while now, and they still provide these vital services. They don't need further downloading from this province.

Let's see what happens when we attack public services. We can look at a tragedy like Walkerton or the outbreak of SARS to see how important public health organizations are to the communities across Ontario. SARS: 42 people in Toronto died from that—42. It killed tourism for years. People didn't come to Niagara Falls for years. They blamed it on the high Canadian dollar, and some of that might have been accurate, but they didn't come because of SARS. Do you know what that does to tourism and the economic growth of the province? And what do you do? You cut public health. People end up dying. They're not getting sick; they're dying. You know what? We're only allowed to live once. It shouldn't be cut short because of cuts to public health.

This government is absolutely no different. I understand the government has had a change of heart on public health, and I'm telling you, I'm glad of that. But I want to say to the municipalities that said to this government, "We're going to make sure you change your mind"—and they did. But don't get too excited about this change of heart from this government. The mission for them is still to cut, cut and cut with no regard for how it affects people in our province.

We all saw the polling numbers. We know that this PC government is struggling to stay afloat because of what they're doing to people. When I say the polling numbers—you know, sometimes the only poll that matters is on election day, but when you're tied with the Marijuana Party in the province of Ontario, you start to get concerned. People are starting to feel the pain. Maybe when these polling numbers bounce back up and Mr. Scheer is done campaigning this fall, I wouldn't be surprised to see these cuts come right back. It's what the PCs do.

**1010**

I want to talk a little bit—I've got some time left—about what happened yesterday with the Beer Stores. We're talking about convenience. Again, it's really what the budget was about: booze. We're going to potentially lose 8,000 good-paying union jobs that have good wages, good benefits; I'm not sure if they have pensions or not.

It's nothing more than an attack against unions. They're saying, "We're going to increase jobs in convenience stores." The reality is that convenience stores don't pay the same types of wages and benefits that are paid in unionized jobs—another mistake.

I think it's important that we don't just talk about health care or public health without talking about mental health in the province. Mental health care is one of the most important issues that we face in this country, and I know it's a difficult challenge. I'll do a little bit about Niagara, but I won't get into making a mistake on mentioning anything else. In Niagara, we have unfortunately seen how devastating the outcomes can be when people can't access services that they desperately need. Too many people have taken their lives in Niagara recently for me to simply sit by and not stand up when this government ignores mental health issues that exist throughout our province. That's a tough one, the crisis in Niagara.

This government has cut \$330 million a year from mental health funding. It's one of the first things they did. I want everyone to stop and think about what happens when vital services that you depend on are cut right out from below your feet. It causes stress. It causes stress for the individuals, for the family and, quite frankly, for the community. We are witnessing the anxiety with families right now that have children with autism. It creates an incredible amount of undue stress that can ultimately affect someone's mental health.

Mr. Speaker, another area of the budget that is extremely important to me is the area of education. In the fashion of this government, they have once again sought to reduce, cut and dismantle our education system. They can't seem to help themselves when it comes to rolling back essential services for the people in this province. They had no problem forking out \$1 billion to a corporation so they can buy a beer from a corner store, but if you want them to invest in your children's education—well, we have a fiscal crisis that needs to be addressed.

So what are we seeing from this budget on education? The same thing we saw in health care: Spending does not keep up with inflation. School boards are already notifying the public that class sizes are increasing, teachers are being laid off and the quality of children's education will be significantly reduced.

The one thing I always said—I've said this a number of times in this House. Remember Tim Hudak? I know some of the people who are here were part of his government. He was honest. He said that he was going to cut 100,000 jobs. They're doing the same thing in the province of Ontario today, but what they're saying is that nobody will voluntarily lose their job. But here's how I think, and they can correct me if I'm wrong: On June 30, when school ends and there are 30,000 teachers—whatever the number is in the province of Ontario—if, when they go back in September, there's 24,000 people having teachers' jobs, you've lost 6,000 jobs.

We have kids, maybe your kids, maybe your grandkids, who today are in university who want to be teachers. They want to graduate into a job to be a teacher and teach our

young people who are in front of us, the pages. They won't have that opportunity. They spent thousands of dollars getting a good education, thousands of dollars trying to get the opportunity to be a teacher. So when they say there's going to be nobody losing their job, there's job loss. There's job loss. There's layoffs any way you cut it. I don't think that's acceptable in this province. In such a rich and vibrant part of the world, our children should be getting a quality education.

I wish I could say that things get better as you go through the budget, but they don't. The budget talks about the expanding alcohol sales, and I already mentioned that. That seems to be a big priority in this government, how much you can buy. Climate change, labour protection, quality education and health care don't seem to be very high on the priority list.

I have a particular concern when it comes to the expansion of alcohol sales into convenience stores. This is important for you guys to listen to, including the rural people who are in your party. My riding is home to a large number of wineries in Niagara, and they make some of the best wines in the entire world. But my concern—which was raised to me, by the way, by the Grape Growers of Ontario—is the possibility of the large wineries, with few Ontario-grown grapes, or international wines filling up the shelves in convenience stores.

The wine industry creates good jobs. It helps preserve our greenbelt. It helps preserve our greenbelt, which I hope this government is going to make sure they do. I think it's important that we work to ensure our local VQA and 100%-Ontario-grape wines are properly supported and promoted in this province.

Mr. Speaker, the last issue I want to talk about is obviously something that's very important to me: the protection of workers in this province. This budget falls miserably short and does more to roll back the protection of workers than it does to advance them. It's clear once again that workers are left behind while the employer gets handouts courtesy of this government.

Here's one that I talked about yesterday in a question, Mr. Speaker: They cut the employer contribution by \$1.45 billion—that's with a B—to WSIB. That's \$1.45 billion. Yet, what are we hearing about the new review of the WSIB? We apparently need to find cost-saving efficiencies from the private sector for its long-term financial stability. We know what that really means. How can the WSIB cut back on workers' claims even more? But if this government is so concerned about the WSIB's financial stability, why are they giving their millionaire big-business friends a \$1.45-billion gift? That's with a B. When I was growing up, I had never even heard of a billion dollars. We know exactly what this review is and what it will mean for workers. The WSIB will further cut back and not provide injured workers with the compensation they are owed.

I'd like to talk a little longer, but my time is up. Thank you.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Percy Hatfield):** Yes, your time was done a couple of minutes ago, but we let you go

on anyway. That way, we wouldn't do questions and comments today, and we'll pick up with questions and comments the next time this comes before us.

*Third reading debate deemed adjourned.*

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Percy Hatfield):** I know Norm Sterling will get a fulsome introduction at the beginning of question period, but welcome back to the Legislature, Norm.

This House will now stand in recess until 10:30 and question period.

*The House recessed from 1017 to 1030.*

## INTRODUCTION OF VISITORS

**The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott):** Before I invite the members to introduce their guests, I would like to introduce a special guest who is here today. A former member of the Ontario Legislature, representing the riding of Carleton–Grenville in the 31st to 33rd Parliaments, the Carleton riding in the 34th to 36th Parliaments, Lanark–Carleton in the 37th and 38th Parliaments, and Carleton–Mississippi Mills in the 39th Parliament, Mr. Norm Sterling, and his wife, Joan Sterling, are here with us today. Welcome back.

**Mr. Chris Glover:** It's my pleasure to welcome two friends of mine, Mara Boedo and Pixie George-Benjamin, to Queen's Park. Both are dedicated education workers with CUPE 4400 at the TDSB.

I'd also like to take a moment to wish all CUPE workers in Ontario who are attending their 56th annual convention this week best wishes for a very fruitful discussion in Toronto.

I'd also like to welcome Michau van Speyk.

**The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott):** Introduction of visitors? Minister of Natural Resources and Forestry.

**Hon. John Yakubuski:** Thank you very much, Speaker. I, too, would like to introduce Norm Sterling. Norm was instrumental in getting me to run for this office, so you can blame him. I also want to introduce his wife, Joan, which you did. Joan worked for me for several years and was a tremendous asset in my office. One of the reasons that they're here this morning is because they are the grandparents of Jackson Stearns, who is here for Kingston and the Islands as a page in the Parliament for the next couple of weeks.

**Ms. Jill Andrew:** Joining us in the House today after my press conference this morning on saving Ontario library services, we have Megan Houston, executive director at Ontario Ancestors; Phil Gold, president of CUPE 905 library workers at Vaughan Public Libraries; Emma Lee, a Toronto Public Library worker at Fairview library; Viveca Gretton, a Toronto Public Library worker at North York Central Library; Gobi Sooriyakumar, a Toronto Public Library worker at Agincourt library; Teresa Gowman, CUPE 960 president and an Oshawa Public Libraries worker; Carmela Corrado, a Toronto Public Library worker at Albion library; and Wendy Rhead, a municipal appointee at Brock township library board. Welcome to the Legislative Assembly. Thank you for all your hard work.

**The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott):** Before we continue, I'm going to remind all members that it is not appropriate to be making political statements in the context of our introduction of guests.

Introduction of visitors? Member for Mississauga—Erin Mills.

**Mr. Sheref Sabawy:** I would like to welcome Ms. Mariam Ishak, the federal candidate coming all the way from Pierrefonds—Dollard, Quebec, to get some oversight of our Parliament in Queen's Park. Welcome to Queen's Park, and best of luck.

**The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott):** I will say once again that it's not appropriate to be making political statements in the context of the introduction of visitors.

The Minister of Transportation. Please do not make a political statement as you introduce your visitors.

**Hon. Jeff Yurek:** Mr. Speaker, I have a number of guests here today: Kelly Franklin, who is the founder and CEO of the Courage for Freedom division of Farmtown Canada and project lead for Project ONroute; Ashley Boyes, a lawyer for Global Shapers Toronto hub and Project ONroute/Global Shapers project lead; Lorry Dawdy, the Courage for Freedom division of Farmtown Canada director; Candice Van Diepen, who has taken pictures with them and who is also an Elgin county resident; Heather Ellis, BPW Ontario/Project ONroute project lead; and Linda Davis, BPW Canada president.

Mr. Speaker, this isn't partisan: July 30, Project ONroute. I hope all MPPs are part of this, to end human sex trafficking for our minors in the system. Be part of this on July 30.

**Ms. Rima Berns-McGown:** I'd like to welcome Lark Barker from my riding and also welcome back Faith and Michau.

**Hon. Sylvia Jones:** Please join me in welcoming, from the beautiful riding of Dufferin—Caledon, specifically Bolton, Vanessa Abruscato to Queen's Park. Welcome.

**Mr. Terence Kernaghan:** I'd like to welcome Dave Stimac, Toby Stolee, Sue Wastell and Lois Langdon from the London Home Builders' Association. Welcome to Queen's Park.

**Hon. Bill Walker:** This is not a political statement, but it is a bit of a sports statement. We want to congratulate Constable Greg Rogers, part of our legislative security team, who has become a grandpa for the second time. This time, it is Easton Tony Nicholas McGillivray, who came into this world at five pounds, six ounces and 19 inches on May 5 to mother Nikole McGillivray and father Grant McGillivray. Last night, Easton, Kowen and Greg all cheered on the Bruins' victory.

**Mr. Aris Babikian:** I would like to welcome back to the House Aris Movsessian, better known as Junior, my youngest volunteer.

**Ms. Jill Dunlop:** I have a few guests this morning. I would like to welcome Dennis Rizzo, who is the father of Ariana Rizzo, who is our page from Simcoe North.

I would also like to welcome Marcus Smith and his mother, Alicia, and sister, Simone. Marcus and his mom are huge advocates for dyslexia, and Marcus was meeting

with myself this morning and with Minister Thompson. Thank you for being here and thank you for sharing and being so brave, Marcus.

**Mrs. Amy Fee:** I'd like to welcome, from the riding of Kitchener South—Hespeler, Louis and Sharon Zister. They are the grandparents of one of our pages, Sadee Zister.

**The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott):** The Minister of Transportation once again.

**Hon. Jeff Yurek:** Sorry, Speaker, I missed one person up here: Delia Reiche, from our area—economic powerhouse down in southwestern Ontario.

**Ms. Bhutla Karpoche:** I'd like to welcome, from Parkdale—High Park, my good friend Crystal.

**The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott):** With us in the Speaker's gallery this morning are interns from l'Assemblée nationale du Québec avec la Fondation Jean-Charles-Bonenfant: Benoit Bérubé, Karim Chahine, Catherine Gagnon, Christian Jaouich et Astrid Martin. Bienvenue à Queen's Park.

Also in the Speaker's gallery this morning are guests from Manila, the Philippines: Doy, Rafaela and Isabella Roque, Floro and Rosette Oquias, and Chloe and Soleil Oquias-Natividad. Here today with them are Howard Brown and Kim Cohen. Welcome to Queen's Park.

#### LEGISLATIVE PAGES

**The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott):** I would now ask our pages to assemble for their introductions.

This is most likely the final group of pages for this spring sitting of the 42nd Parliament, and I'd like to introduce them at this time. From the riding of Renfrew—Nipissing—Pembroke, Aaryan Harshith; from the riding of Kanata—Carleton, Alexis Kam; from Etobicoke—Lakeshore, Amelia Markson; from Simcoe North, Ariana Rizzo; from Scarborough—Guildwood, Catherine Walke; from the riding of Mississauga—Streetsville, Christopher Xiang; from Toronto—St. Paul's, Declan Fowler; from York South—Weston, Felipe Gaertner; from Brampton South, Gia Chahal; from the riding of Pickering—Uxbridge, Hillary Brown; from Markham—Stouffville, Jack Lynch; from the riding of Kingston and the Islands, Jackson Stearns; from the riding of University—Rosedale, Julien Levit; from Eglinton—Lawrence, Kian Ahari; from Davenport, Liam Ung; from Bruce—Grey—Owen Sound, Maisie Cottrill; from Barrie—Springwater—Oro-Medonte, Matthew Crank; from the riding of Oakville, Monica Nicole Crawford; from Orléans, Patrick Osezua; from Brampton North, Richelle Furtado; from Kitchener—Conestoga, Sadee Zister; from Mississauga—Erin Mills, Samantha Carson; and from Ottawa West—Nepean, Sophia Stocki.

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I would ask the members to join with me in warmly welcoming this fine group of legislative pages.

*Applause.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott):** It is now time for oral questions.

## ORAL QUESTIONS

### GOVERNMENT FISCAL POLICIES

**Ms. Andrea Horwath:** My first question is to the Premier. Yesterday, the Premier finally admitted what Ontario families, mayors, municipal councillors, medical professionals and most of his caucus already knew: that his plan for retroactive cuts to everything from public health to child care to emergency services was reckless, irresponsible and put families at risk—yet the Premier still claims that he plans to make the same cuts, just next year.

Why does the Premier think that the cuts that failed so disastrously this year are going to work better next year?

**Hon. Doug Ford:** Through you, Mr. Speaker: Our government was elected to clean up 15 years of mess that the opposition created, the Liberal government created—\$347 billion. And just think: Over the last 10 years, they’ve doubled the debt. The NDP doubled the debt, along with their partners, the Liberals. We were elected to clean up the mess.

I’m glad to see the municipal partners that we spoke to yesterday, many mayors right across this province, acknowledge there’s actually waste to be found. There is tons of waste in federal, provincial and municipal governments. I know the NDP and the Liberals haven’t come to realize how much waste there is of taxpayers’ money down here. We were elected to clean it up.

We look forward to working with our municipal partners. They have acknowledged that there’s waste, and we’re going to give them a little more runway. It’s a good-news story. The news story yesterday was a good-news story—

*Interjections.*

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

Start the clock. Supplementary question.

**Ms. Andrea Horwath:** For months, the Premier has stood in his place and denied the damage his budget was causing. Anyone who raised legitimate concerns was “fearmongering.” Anyone who pointed to a serious problem was “spreading false information.” Now, even when he has been forced to admit he was wrong, it’s unbelievable that the Premier is still planning to impose the same municipal cuts next year that failed this year. If that’s not the case, what other services to people is he planning to cut as part of his fiscal fantasy?

**Hon. Doug Ford:** Mr. Speaker, we listened to the municipalities. We are a government that listens. We heard that they can save money. They know there is a tremendous amount of waste in this government. Not only that, we’re going to provide them with \$7.35 million to support them in finding efficiencies. Actually, a lot of the mayors I spoke to are looking forward to taking advantage of the \$7.35 million. We’re also providing \$200 million we’ve committed to small, rural municipalities to modernize services.

I don’t know what the opposition doesn’t get. This can’t go on. It just can’t go on, spending and spending and wasting taxpayers’ money.

We have to start respecting the taxpayers. Every single dollar from the day we got elected until the day of the next election—we’re going to watch every single penny that this government spends.

*Interjections.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott):** The opposition has to come to order. The member for Waterloo must come to order.

Final supplementary?

**Ms. Andrea Horwath:** I guess the Premier found out the hard way that emergency services, public health and child care are not a waste of people’s tax dollars, Speaker. They are necessary services that people and families rely on.

But the reality is that even as the Ford government scrambles to do damage control, very little has changed. They’re still moving ahead with cuts to municipal transit funding. They’re still ramming through Bill 108, the biggest gift to developers that this province has ever seen, despite serious concerns from municipal leaders. And they’re still planning to make the same cuts next year that were a disaster this year.

If the Premier actually listens to municipal leaders, what does he plan to do when they tell him they can’t afford these cuts this year or next year, Speaker?

*Interjections.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott):** Stop the clock. The member for King–Vaughan must come to order. The Minister of Natural Resources and Forestry must come to order. The member for Kitchener–Conestoga must come to order.

*Interjection.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott):** Yes, you are.

Start the clock. Premier?

**Hon. Doug Ford:** Through you, Mr. Speaker: The Leader of the Opposition got it bang on. She said we’re in damage control. We’ve been in damage control since June 7 when we looked at the books. The damage that they created—the Liberals created—there has been so much damage in this province. I’ve never seen anything like it.

Mr. Speaker, when you talk to the small business owners and business owners right around this province, they’re as happy as punch. When you talk to the average person—you go out there, you speak to them—they’re as happy as punch that someone finally has the backbone to stand up to other governments to say we need to find efficiencies.

Mr. Speaker, as sure as I’m standing here, they’re going to find efficiencies, because there is no one on this planet who doesn’t believe there is one, two, three or four cents’ waste in any level of government. The only people who believe there is no waste are the NDP and the Liberals, because they created the waste.

*Interjections.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott):** Stop the clock. I know there is a lot of excitement and enthusiasm in the House today, but I would ask the members to allow the person who has the floor, whether they’re asking a question or making a response, to make it without shouting at them.

Start the clock.

## GOVERNMENT CONTRACT

**Ms. Andrea Horwath:** My next question is to the Premier, but I'll remind him that this June 7 is the anniversary of all of the damage this government has done for a year that people are already sick and tired of, Speaker—very clearly.

Yesterday, the Ford government revealed to Ontarians that their plans to rip up Ontario's contract with the Beer Store are going forward, and they're going to enter into yet another legal battle that is set to cost Ontario families hundreds and millions of dollars.

Can the Premier provide an estimate of exactly how much Ontarians anticipate paying to get out of this contract?

**Hon. Doug Ford:** Mr. Speaker, we campaigned on making sure we kept a promise to bring more choice and convenience to the people.

I don't know what the NDP—if they don't want to give the people choice, or do they want to keep it with one of the conglomerates, as I say, one of the multinational—international global beer companies, three of the largest in the world, control the market. It was a terrible deal. It was an absolute, terrible deal that the Liberals put forward, a 10-year deal—I don't know who signs 10-year deals—to have a monopoly.

What beer company, Mr. Speaker, would not want more distribution? What is the reason? Anywhere in the world—this only happens in Ontario, that three beer companies control the market. It's absolutely unheard of. What is the reason the Beer Store—

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

*Interjection.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott):** I'm going to ask the member for Niagara Falls to come to order, and the member for Orléans to come to order.

Supplementary question?

**Ms. Andrea Horwath:** Speaker, beer is fine, but it's certainly not my priority, and certainly not for hundreds of millions of public dollars.

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But with only two weeks left in the Legislature, the government is suddenly introducing legislation to force through a contract cancellation that could literally cost hundreds of millions of dollars and thousands of jobs. The government points to this bad deal, this particular bad deal signed by the Liberal government, but the Ford government happily maintains other bad Liberal deals, like private hydro schemes and private hospitals.

Somehow, a group of well-connected lobbyists has the Premier ready to spend hundreds of millions of dollars in public money to rip up this particular contract. So my question is: Why is the issue of dissolving contracts with the Beer Store so urgent for this government?

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

**Hon. Victor Fedeli:** Thank you, Premier. This is not just about beer and wine. This is not just about choice and convenience. This is about creating fairness for the people of Ontario.

To be clear, the government does not own the Beer Store, as many people believe. It is owned by three global beer multinational corporations. Ken Hughes, our special adviser, stated that the Liberals' sweetheart deal with these multinationals is the obstacle to us delivering on our commitment. Mr. Hughes states that it is a "bad deal for" all "Ontarians," that it "stifles competition, keeps prices artificially high, and prevents new craft beer entrepreneurs from getting a strong foothold in the market."

The previous government put multinational profits ahead of our families.

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

**Ms. Andrea Horwath:** What this is about is the Premier's priorities. Families in Ontario want excellent schools for their kids. They want health care that they can count on. But when they look to this Premier for leadership, Speaker—

*Interjections.*

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

**Ms. Andrea Horwath:** —the only thing he is offering is beer.

*Interjections.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott):** Stop the clock. I apologize to the Leader of the Opposition. The government side must come to order. The volume is growing progressively louder. I can barely hear the Leader of the Opposition.

Start the clock. Leader of the Opposition.

**Ms. Andrea Horwath:** When they look to this Premier and his priorities, all they see is somebody who is offering more beer. Really? That's the priority for Ontario families? The Premier is ready to lose 7,000 jobs and hundreds of millions of dollars in a fight with the Beer Store, but he can't find funding for children with autism. What kind of priority is that, Speaker? How did the Premier lose any sense of Ontario's priorities?

*Interjections.*

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

**Hon. Victor Fedeli:** Well, it's obvious that the NDP do not understand that our parliamentary system gives us the tools to get out of these bad deals signed by previous governments. Our legislation ensures we can get the best possible deal and consumers and taxpayers won't be held hostage by multinational companies. This sweetheart deal is "a terrible deal for Ontario consumers and small businesses." Left alone, it will continue the unfairness of this system for the next six years.

You have to wonder why these multinationals supported by the NDP would be so opposed to selling their products in more convenience stores, more grocery stores and big box stores. It's because the sweetheart deal with the Liberals is so lucrative that they are choosing to ignore the economic opportunities before us, the 9,000 new jobs that can be created, the \$3.5 billion that will be added to our—

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

*Interjections.*

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

#### HEALTH CARE FUNDING

**Ms. Andrea Horwath:** My final question in this round is to the Premier again. But I've got to say, the Premier and his caucus and his cabinet like to call everybody "fear-mongers." Well, they're nothing but beer-mongers.

Yesterday, the Financial Accountability Office tabled their report looking into spending at the Ministry of Health. The Premier insists that spending is on the increase, but when the FAO dove into the numbers, they found something quite different.

Perhaps the backbenchers would like to hear exactly what the FAO said in this report, Speaker, and I'll tell you what they note: "The 2019 budget projects a net spending reduction of \$2.7 billion over the next two years." This is in the Ministry of Health. They also note: "The FAO cannot disclose the \$2.7 billion reduction ... by program area, as the province has deemed this information to be a cabinet record."

Can the Premier tell us what health services he plans to cut in order to find \$2.7 billion and why the Ford government would try to keep that information secret?

*Interjections.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott):** Stop the clock. The member for Whitby must come to order. The member for King-Vaughan must come to order. The entire government side needs to come to order.

*Interjections.*

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

Start the clock. The Premier to reply.

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

**Hon. Victor Fedeli:** Certainly, we thank the FAO for his report and his confirmation that our government's measured, thoughtful and responsible path to balance is credible, and the plan laid out in budget 2019 will put the province on a sustainable footing.

Speaker, the title, Protecting What Matters Most, says everything. We're taking a balanced approach to managing the province's finances. We're already seeing the success of our plan. The business community has hired 170,000 people in the province of Ontario. That tells you our plan is working.

We know the opposition does not share our vision. Their priorities are to continue to tax more, to spend more and to get less. But we will continue our responsible path to balance while providing true and real relief, and protecting what matters most: the people of Ontario.

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

**Ms. Andrea Horwath:** For months, the Premier has insisted that his cuts don't have any consequences. I think the finance minister is trying to tell that same story. The fact is, after yesterday, no one believes them anymore.

The Premier can accuse the Financial Accountability Officer of fearmongering—in fact, they can call him a lefty if they want—but the numbers are in black and white, at least the numbers that the Premier will let us see.

Is the Premier willing to do the right thing and reverse the health care cuts—the \$2.7 billion in health care cuts that were identified yesterday by the FAO—or is he once again going to deny reality, ignore public outcry and pretend the cuts just aren't happening?

**Hon. Victor Fedeli:** Thank you for the question. Let's be perfectly clear: The budget is fully costed and all efficiencies and all value-for-money initiatives are accounted for.

Let's talk about what's in black and white. What's in black and white in the health budget is: a \$1.3-billion increase in the budget; a \$384-million increase in hospitals; a \$267-million increase in home care; \$1.75 billion for 15,000 new long-term-care beds, many of which are under construction this very minute; and \$90 million for low-income seniors' health care. I can't wait for the NDP to stand up tomorrow and vote in favour of giving \$90 million to 100,000 seniors in need of dental care. I can't wait for that tomorrow.

*Interjections.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott):** Stop the clock. The member for Essex has to come to order—yes, you. The member for Waterloo has to come to order.

Start the clock. Next question.

#### GOVERNMENT FISCAL POLICIES

**Ms. Donna Skelly:** My question is to the Premier. Our government was elected to clean up the fiscal mess left behind by the previous Liberal government. For 15 years, there was reckless spending and promises made on the backs of taxpayers in an attempt to simply stay in power.

Last June, the people of Ontario voted for change. They voted to end the wasteful spending of the previous government and to get our fiscal house in order. Speaker, that means we need to make tough decisions, which is what responsible governments do. Can the Premier please explain to this House the actions our government is taking to return to balance while protecting what matters most?

**1100**

**Hon. Doug Ford:** I want to thank the fabulous, incredible member from Flamborough-Glanbrook. Finally, they have a voice up in Hamilton, rather than a bunch of people who want to spend money up there.

Mr. Speaker, we were elected, again, on June 7 to clean up the financial mess in this province that the NDP and the Liberals created, the \$347-billion long-term debt left to the children and grandchildren. Mr. Speaker, you hear them always talking about children and grandchildren. What are we going to leave them? A debt of \$347 billion and \$13.3 billion in interest every single year? As a matter of fact, Mr. Speaker, we've been here an hour; it will cost us \$1.5 million in interest that the NDP left us. You can't continue on with the socialist mentality that—

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

**Ms. Donna Skelly:** Back to the Premier: Speaker, when we committed to balancing the books of the government, we also made it clear that we expect our partners to do the same, and we are helping them to achieve this. The Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing previously announced \$200 million to small and rural municipalities, and our government has announced over \$7 million in funding through the Audit and Accountability Fund to help municipalities find four cents on the dollar in savings.

Speaker, can the Premier please speak further to the announcements he made with the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing yesterday to further our work with municipalities to find savings and bring Ontario back to balance?

**Hon. Doug Ford:** Through you, Mr. Speaker, I thank the MPP from Flamborough–Glanbrook again.

I talked to numerous mayors over the last week. Every single one of them—every one of them—said, “Yes, we can find savings.” They admitted they can find savings, so they admitted that there’s waste. They asked for a little bit more time. We sat down. We said, “Okay, we’re going to extend the runway a little longer. We’re going to support you. We’ll give you \$7.35 million,” to any of the large urban mayors. We said to the small municipalities that they’ve taken advantage of, “We’ll support you with \$200 million,” because when you find savings, it goes right back into the pockets of the taxpayers. For 15 years, the taxpayers haven’t been respected around here, Mr. Speaker. They’ve been insulted.

All they do, constantly, is want to tax and spend. Our government doesn’t believe in tax and spend. We believe in creating jobs, prosperity, growth, wealth for every single Ontario resident—

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

#### CHILDREN’S MENTAL HEALTH SERVICES

**Ms. Bhutla Karpoche:** My question is to the Premier. One in five children and youth in Ontario will experience a mental health challenge. Yesterday, the Financial Accountability Office published a report that revealed that the Conservative government cut \$69 million from children and youth mental health programs compared to the year before. This is a 15% cut to children’s mental health, when children and youth are already waiting months too long for mental health resources.

Does the Premier believe that these children and their families should fend for themselves because they are not what matters most to his government?

**Hon. Doug Ford:** Through you, Mr. Speaker: We take mental health and addictions seriously. We ended up committing \$1.9 billion to mental health.

But do you know something, Mr. Speaker? When the federal government supports us, I give them credit. I give the federal government credit, to match the \$1.9 billion.

We put \$3.8 billion back into mental health and addictions. We’re making sure we go after core services to support people with addictions and mental health. There’s no government in this country that has put \$3.8 billion into supporting mental health.

I have all the confidence in the world in our Minister of Health. She’s making sure we are not leaving anyone out—no one at all. We’re going to be making sure we support the people with mental health and addictions.

*Interjections.*

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

**Ms. Bhutla Karpoche:** Back to the Premier: The Premier and his government talk a lot about mental health and addictions but, so far, what we see are direct cuts to front-line care and services. In fact, the Conservative government failed to match the \$174-million federal investment in mental health and addictions funding in Ontario this year, and now they’re cutting \$69 million from children and youth mental health services. Once again, the government is choosing to balance the budget on the backs of vulnerable children.

Will the Premier do the right thing, listen to families seeking help for their children and reverse the deep cuts made to children and youth mental health programs?

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

**Hon. Laurie Scott:** Mr. Speaker, we have made historic investments in mental health. To say the opposite is just not accurate. Yesterday alone, legislation was introduced—

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

**Hon. Laurie Scott:** —the Foundations for Promoting and Protecting Mental Health and Addictions Services Act. We are actually following the select committee on mental health and addictions that I know a member of the opposition was on in 2010. One of the key recommendations was to establish a Mental Health and Addictions Centre of Excellence with Ontario Health. Investments by the ministries coordinating with community services—that is what the Minister of Health and Long-Term Care is doing. We speak about mental health and addictions and health every day in this Legislature.

Mr. Speaker, there are a lot of pieces to the puzzle in getting health right and mental health and addictions right, but we are well on our way to solving—

*Interjections.*

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

I have to ask the member for Parkdale–High Park to come to order, the member for Essex once again to come to order and the Solicitor General to come to order.

**Ms. Catherine Fife:** Follow the money.

**The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott):** The member for Waterloo, once again, please come to order.

Next question? Start the clock.

#### CLEAN TECHNOLOGY

**Mr. Mike Schreiner:** My question is for the Premier. Last week, a report came out showing that the clean-tech

sector generated \$35 billion of investment in 2017, representing 3% of Canada's GDP. Ontario is home to 39% of this GDP growth, generating 138,460 jobs, yet your government seems determined to shut the door to these jobs. To date, the government has ripped up contracts for clean energy, cancelled retrofit programs helping people save money by saving energy, and now you are cutting programs that support job creation in innovation and clean tech.

Mr. Speaker, will the Premier stop attacking innovators and clean-tech job creators by reversing cuts to Communtech, MaRS and other innovation programs that are creating Ontario jobs and helping grow clean-tech businesses?

**The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott):** I'd again remind members to make their comments through the Chair.

The question is to the Premier.

**Hon. Doug Ford:** Minister of Economic Development.

**Hon. Todd Smith:** We, as the new government here in Ontario, have had to make a number of very difficult decisions over the last number of months since we've been here, but the one thing I can tell you is that we're continuing to work with our partners in the clean-tech sector. We're certainly working with our partners in the innovation sector, and when it comes to groups like Communtech or MaRS, we've worked with them every step of the way.

The one thing that I will say is, they understand the challenges that our government is facing when it comes to the \$15-billion deficit here in Ontario, and that everyone is going to have to work together to make sure we're getting the end result that we all want, and that is, that Ontario is on a fiscal financial footing. Because if we are fiscally responsible here in Ontario, if we're working with our partners in the innovation and tech sector to ensure that we're getting the outcomes that we want, we will continue to see the type of job growth that we have experienced over the last several months; 170,000 jobs have been created here in Ontario across all sectors and that's because we're working with our partners.

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

**Mr. Mike Schreiner:** Given the Premier's response that he received at a recent international tech conference, I would suggest that the minister work a little more closely with the tech sector.

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Any good economic strategist will tell you that you need to skate to where the puck is going, not to where it has been. Ontario is well positioned to be a global leader in the fast-growing clean-tech sector, if we support the sector.

Supporting young people in the tech sector is key to our success and it will also help tackle the high youth unemployment rate of 12%. If the Premier is not going to restore cuts to Communtech and MaRS and other innovation hubs, will the government at least restore the Youth Job Link and the Employing Young Talent Incentive that

were helping tech businesses hire young people to give them the help and the hands-on job experience to succeed?

**Hon. Todd Smith:** I can tell you that we've been meeting with people who are working in the tech sector right now. Ontario is exploding, bursting at the seams, when it comes to our tech sector jobs, whether it's at Kanata North—and I had the opportunity there, where they're serious about tech, with our Minister of Training, Colleges and Universities. This morning I was at a digital media creator where they're making video games that are being spread all around the world—65 jobs right now at the company that I was at this morning, heading for 250 jobs in the next couple of years.

You know why they are expanding, Mr. Speaker? They are expanding because the government has tax incentives in certain areas, but we're also creating an environment where they can be successful, by reducing red tape, working with my colleague here, the Minister of Government and Consumer Services, to make sure that we're changing procurement in Ontario so that we can be extremely successful and continue to see the type of job growth in the tech sector that—

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

*Interjections.*

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

## INVASIVE SPECIES

**Mr. Ross Romano:** My question is for the Minister of Natural Resources and Forestry. In budget 2019, our government committed to protecting what matters most, and that includes protecting our environment and our natural resources. Invasive species cost Ontario taxpayers billions of dollars every year. In fact, recent studies estimated the impact of invasive species in Ontario at \$3.6 billion—with a B—every year. Our Made-in-Ontario Environment Plan recognizes these impacts and is committed to working with partners to combat, prevent, detect and respond to invasive species.

Could the minister please update our House on the recent announcement where our government committed to supporting the important work done by the Invasive Species Centre in my riding of Sault Ste. Marie?

**Hon. John Yakabuski:** I want to thank the great member from Sault Ste. Marie for that question. I also want to thank him for making the funding announcement on behalf of our government for the people.

We know that we must continue to work together on all fronts to identify and respond to the threat of invasive species. The Invasive Species Centre is a leader in invasive species science, education and action, and we believe that they are in the best position to protect our ecosystems province-wide.

Our government recognizes the important work the Invasive Species Centre does through research and on-the-ground actions to prevent the introduction and spread of invasive species, and we are pleased to announce that we

will be investing \$850,000 to support their continued efforts.

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

**Mr. Ross Romano:** I want to thank the minister for that great answer. The Invasive Species Centre does vital work, and people across Ontario know that invasive species pose a real and active threat to Ontario's lands, lakes and rivers, and our economy.

Since 2011, when the Invasive Species Centre was formed as a strategic initiative of the Ontario and the federal governments, it has served as a unique example of partnership, and as a hub for collaboration. By bringing together governments, industry, Indigenous communities and academia, the Invasive Species Centre plays a leading role in coordinating our efforts to fight invasive species in Ontario.

Could the minister please elaborate on how much invasive species cost the people of Ontario and what our government has focused on as we continue to combat their spread?

**Hon. John Yakabuski:** Thanks again to the member for the question. Perhaps no one knows the cost of invasive species better than Bob Lambe, president of the Invasive Species Centre board of directors, who had this to say about our government's announcement:

"The Invasive Species Centre is committed to working together to find efficiencies in the fight against invasive species and thanks the government of Ontario for its support and commitment to protecting our natural spaces and economy. The Made-in-Ontario Environment Plan recognized that preventing invasive species is the single most effective and least costly method to manage invasive species. In fact, for every dollar spent on coordinated multi-jurisdictional prevention activities, \$3 in mitigation, regulatory and depletion costs can be avoided if only one such pest is prevented from establishing." I think Bob has got it right.

#### EDUCATION FUNDING

**Ms. Marit Stiles:** My question is for the Premier. Speaker, following a massive public backlash against the Premier's cuts to municipalities, he has decided to give them a bit more runway. "Runway," I think, was the word used before bringing down the axe on child care, ambulance services and public health.

But when it comes to our schools, the runway to adapt to this government's massive education cuts is getting shorter every day. These cuts will hit students hard this fall as they return to larger classes, fewer course options, and less time with teachers and other education workers.

Speaker, school boards are finalizing their budgets right now. It is not too late for the Premier to do the right thing. Will he reverse his cuts to our schools?

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

**Hon. Lisa M. Thompson:** I'd like to start off by saying that perhaps the member opposite missed the memo. We're actually increasing spending in education by \$700

million. Again, we are getting education back on track because we inherited a system that was absolutely broken and failing our students. So we need to take steps in terms of getting it back on track. Let me tell you, we're working with our school boards. I'm pleased to say that when I was in northern Ontario last week, the school board, the Keewatin Patricia school board, actually indicated to me that they will be able to find 4%.

Other school boards across this province are keeping their heads down and working with us and identifying ways to achieve efficiencies. You know, the fact of the matter is that we are working on introducing an opportunity for school boards to work with us. We have invited them to come forward and say, "Yes, we would like to participate in the audit and accountability exercise that you're working through," because surely school boards across this province can find 4%—

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

**Ms. Marit Stiles:** Back to the Premier: I've got to ask, what does this government have against kids—cutting \$69 million from children's mental health; slashing our classrooms? I'm happy to brief the minister, Mr. Speaker, on how her budget is shortchanging our kids. Every single day, more teachers and education workers are being handed pink slips. This government knows it. We know it. Families know it. Students know it.

I heard first-hand last week from parents and teachers in North Bay, in the Minister of Finance's own riding, where half of all secondary teachers in a single board stand to be lost, along with 62 in elementary schools—62. Speaker, as we sit here—

*Interjections.*

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

**Ms. Marit Stiles:** —students are being forced to re-select their courses. It's causing enormous anxiety, Mr. Speaker. And the programs that help our most vulnerable students are at risk.

Will the Premier take a second look and change course before it is too late?

**Hon. Lisa M. Thompson:** You know what, Speaker? I have to tell you, I absolutely reject all the dramatic, preposterous nonsense that's coming from that member opposite. All the drama that she's trying to create—sincerely I say to her: It has no merit whatsoever. When we go across the province—the member from Niagara West actually shared with me that no teachers are losing their jobs. As we go school board to school board, we are going to get it right, and we're working with our partners.

And you know, let's talk about our budget. Our plan, Education That Works for You, is absolutely gearing up to make sure that after 15 years of failing our students by the Liberal government under Kathleen Wynne and Dalton McGuinty, we're getting things back on track.

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I met with the Ontario Student Trustees' Association last Friday and they are absolutely on board with making sure that we are engaging and we're preparing students—

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

*Interjections.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott):** There is considerable noise on both sides of the House, and it's rising. I'm going to ask the members to come to order. Order.

The next question: the member for Orléans.

## GOVERNMENT POLICIES

### POLITIQUES DU GOUVERNEMENT

**Mrs. Marie-France Lalonde:** My question is to the Premier. Earlier this week, this government added the Transition Child Benefit to their seemingly endless list of short-sighted cuts. It is a program of last resort that gives families money for food and basic needs.

Mr. Speaker, I believe that in this House we can all agree that children should have food and clothing. They should not be cold and hungry. Meanwhile, the Premier and his government are spending millions on peddling beer in corner stores.

Speaker, is the Premier okay with having cold and hungry children in Ontario, as long as it's easier to buy a beer?

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

**Hon. Jeff Yurek:** Our government is moving forward with social assistance reforms that will restore dignity, encourage employment and empower the province's most vulnerable to get back to a path of self-reliance. The previous government, which the member opposite was a member of, had a patchwork of benefits and support programs that forced families to spend precious time searching for relevant resources through multiple offices. Our government is committed to helping families by simplifying the complicated and unequal supports.

The Ontario Child Benefit provides families equal access to government support for those who file their taxes. That's why we're increasing our investment in the Ontario Child Benefit by \$31 million, for a total of roughly \$1.2 billion this year. There will be a slow and gradual wind-down of the Transition Child Benefit, and recipients will be notified directly, well in advance of the implementation date.

Mr. Speaker, we're dealing with the record deficit and debt that that member opposite was a part of, that devastated our services in Ontario. We're protecting what matters—

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

**Mrs. Marie-France Lalonde:** I certainly would have appreciated the Premier answering the question about the importance for children or beer in Ontario, and I think so far, what I have heard time and time again from this government is the importance of beer all across Ontario. I'll remind this government also of last year's decision to slap our Franco-Ontarian community in the face by cutting the French Language Services Commissioner and abandoning the francophone university.

Les francophones, les Franco-Ontariens et les francophiles de l'Ontario, nous sommes une communauté importante et dynamique. On a aussi une dualité linguistique importante.

So, Speaker, the Premier has made a choice to spend up to a billion dollars—a billion dollars—to sell beer in corner stores. Why is selling beer more important to him than francophone Ontarians?

*Interjections.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott):** Okay. I'm going to ask the member for Kitchener–Conestoga once again to come to order. The member for Markham–Stouffville must come to order.

The Minister of Transportation can reply.

**Hon. Jeff Yurek:** Thank you again, Mr. Speaker, for that question. I can tell the member opposite that on this side of the House, we're determined to sit four years straight and to serve the people of Ontario who elected us last June 7, not run off and try to join another party which is down and desperate in the polls and highly doubtful that they're actually going to retain power, Mr. Speaker.

But, Mr. Speaker, let us be straight. That member opposite, part of that government—a \$15-billion deficit and over \$300-billion debt, and some \$1 billion a month in servicing that debt. Over \$13 billion a year goes to service the interest on that debt. Could you imagine what we could do for services across this province if we weren't servicing that debt with \$13 billion, Mr. Speaker? It's unheard of, what that government, that member, did to this province of Ontario. Hopefully, she's not going to join her comrades up in the federal government and do what they did to Ontario.

*Interjections.*

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

Start the clock. The next question.

## EMPLOYMENT SUPPORTS

**Ms. Goldie Ghamari:** My question is for the fantastic Minister of Training, Colleges and Universities. Employers and job seekers in my riding of Carleton are frustrated about the skills gap that is preventing young people from finding work and employers from finding the workers with the right skills. The previous employment services system inherited from the Liberals was complex and, Mr. Speaker, it did not produce results for job seekers, employers or taxpayers in Carleton or across the province.

I know that it is a priority of our government to address the skills gap and connect our young people with high-quality, well-paying jobs in sectors that are in high demand. Through you, Mr. Speaker, can the minister please tell us how our government is transforming our employment programs to ensure that Ontarians in Carleton and across the province are prepared for the jobs of today and tomorrow?

**Hon. Merrilee Fullerton:** Thank you to the member from Carleton for her very hard work. She's an amazing MPP.

Speaker, our government is transforming employment services so that they are innovative, responsive and create good local solutions. The previous Liberal government, supported by the NDP, did not deliver for job seekers, for employers or for Ontario's economy.

We are modernizing our employment services system by creating a new model that integrates social assistance and employment services into Employment Ontario to help the province's most vulnerable, including those with disabilities, break free of the poverty cycle. Our government has promised the people of Ontario to create good jobs and make Ontario open for business. That is exactly what we are doing.

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

**Ms. Goldie Ghamari:** Thank you to the minister for her hard work for job seekers in Ontario and getting this province back on track. It is so important that we ensure our employment programs are responsive to the needs of the job market so that job seekers in Carleton and across the province can actually find good jobs, while taxpayer dollars are respected.

There's an urgent need, Mr. Speaker, to connect Ontarians with job opportunities that will lead to a prosperous career. The previous employment services system failed to do that. That's why I'm so pleased to see that our government has a strong plan to refocus our employment programs in a way that will benefit all Ontarians and help make Ontario open for business and open for jobs.

Through you, Mr. Speaker, can the minister tell us more about how our government is supporting employment programs that are adaptive and forward-thinking?

**Hon. Merrilee Fullerton:** Thank you again to the member for her question. Not only are we improving service delivery of employment programs in Ontario; we are also investing in innovative technologies that will support job creation. I am proud that the member from Leeds–Grenville–Thousand Islands and Rideau Lakes, the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing, was able to represent the government in Brockville last week to announce that our government is providing more than \$1.4 million to help create a cutting-edge career exploration tool for jobs in the steel and aluminum industries.

The Brockville-based employment and education centre will lead a project to develop virtual reality software and work closely with regional employers to create virtual career exploration modules, allowing job seekers to learn about career opportunities in a dynamic and interactive digital environment. The VR modules can later be used by employment service providers all over the province, ensuring Ontario is open for business and open for jobs.

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#### GOVERNMENT FISCAL POLICIES

**Ms. Sandy Shaw:** My question is for the Premier. After a huge backlash, the Premier and his Conservative government were forced to back down on their deep cuts to

municipalities and the services families rely on, like public health and child care.

While this is good news, we all know that the cuts aren't going to stop. Last week, the Financial Accountability Office's analysis found that the Premier's reckless drive to balance the budget no matter the cost will require another \$6 billion in cuts to programs and services over the next three years.

My question is, having been forced to back down on cuts to public health, child care and ambulance services, where does the Premier plan to cut next?

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

**Hon. Victor Fedeli:** Thank you very much for the question. Again, we thank the Financial Accountability Officer for confirming that our government's measured, thoughtful and responsible path to balance shows that it is a credible plan that was laid out in budget 2019. It puts the government on a sustainable financial footing. We need to acknowledge in this Legislature yet again that the previous government was spending \$40 million a day more than they took in, and that is absolutely unsustainable.

We told the municipalities, the agencies, the boards and the commissions that we will look for four cents on every dollar. In fact, we have found almost eight cents on every dollar spent, and all that while returning—we will return \$26 billion of that back to every family, individual, senior and business in the province of Ontario.

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

**Ms. Sandy Shaw:** I imagine that we read a different report, because I don't know that that's what that report said at all. I would just have to say that this falls under the category of fiscal fantasy, on the part of the minister.

By cancelling cap-and-trade, offering tax cuts to the rich and now risking a multi-million-dollar lawsuit from the Beer Store, the Conservatives have created more instability and uncertainty. Moody's credit rating agency responded to the Premier's mismanagement by downgrading Ontario's credit rating. Now, not only is this government's mismanagement undermining our economy; it is hurting our families.

So far, this government has attacked children, people living with disabilities, seniors, Franco-Ontarians, Indigenous people and everyday families with its callous cuts. So I again ask: Who will this government target next?

**Hon. Victor Fedeli:** I realize that the member may have missed many items in the budget, had she actually read the 383 pages, because it talks about the fact of our low-income individual and family tax credit returning \$2 billion to the lowest-income earners in the province of Ontario. She may have missed the memo that we're giving 300,000 families an opportunity to have up to 75% of their child care paid for—a \$2-billion investment.

We are offering the business community the accelerated capital cost allowance, which allows them to write their equipment off earlier. They've done that and they've created 170,000 jobs.

I don't know what part of this the member doesn't get, but it's \$26 billion that's being returned to families in

Ontario. Again, I can't wait for you to stand up and vote in favour of giving—

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

*Interjections.*

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

The next question.

#### NORTHERN ONTARIO

**Mr. Mike Harris:** My question is for the Minister of Energy, Northern Development and Mines. We all know our government is committed to making a big difference for our communities in the north. After 15 years of neglect, we promised to step up for the people of northern Ontario.

The Northern Ontario Heritage Fund Corp. is one of the tools we are using to deliver on that promise. It was created by a former PC government, and we are continuing its legacy by making strategic investments throughout the north. Not only are we creating jobs; we are also protecting the cornerstones of northern communities by supporting the work they do.

Can the minister please expand on other initiatives we are taking to support the people of northern Ontario?

**Hon. Greg Rickford:** I want to thank Matthew McCandless, the executive director of the IISD Experimental Lakes Area; Dr. Michael Paterson; the Asper family, in particular my friend Gail Asper; and Todd Sellers, a good friend of mine and president of the Lake of the Woods Water Sustainability Foundation, for understanding the vision we had.

When I first announced a fish biological studies place at the ELA, we found a place in deterioration. It could hardly be called world-class. By investing in a partnership with IISD, we've elevated this to the world-class facility it is. We now have hundreds of students from high schools across Ontario coming there, and top-flight universities—Lakehead and my alma mater, McGill University—doing important work there. We thank them for their collective efforts.

I announced the plans for a training centre there where students from high school and university will be able to learn, once and for all and finally, the great things we do in there now.

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

**Mr. Mike Harris:** Thank you to the minister for the hard work he continues to do for the people all across northern Ontario.

The International Institute for Sustainable Development Experimental Lakes Area is a unique world-class organization recognized globally as a leader in quality science and research that helps us to protect our water systems. The scientific work being done here helps inform sound policy decisions that benefit not only Ontario, but also Canada and countries around the world. I know the minister is very proud to have such a world-class facility at home in northern Ontario.

Mr. Speaker, could the minister also update the House on the additional resources that our government for the

people is investing in the Experimental Lakes Area to support their important work being done at the facility?

**Hon. Greg Rickford:** Minister of Natural Resources.

**Hon. John Yakabuski:** I just want to thank the member for that question. I also want to thank my colleague Minister Rickford for the tremendous work he has done on this file and his commitment to the Experimental Lakes Area throughout his entire political career.

Our government is putting people first by working to ensure we can continue to enjoy and benefit from our fresh water ecosystems. We recognize how fortunate we are to be home to many lakes, rivers and streams that provide recreational and tourism opportunities and significant contributions to our economy.

That's why our government will be investing up to \$2 million in 2019-20 to ensure the continuity of ongoing multi-year research projects and important long-term monitoring of the Experimental Lakes Area. This investment will help deliver on our commitment to ensuring clean waterways and drinking water, which are integral to Ontario's economic stability and well-being.

I thank the Minister of Northern Development for continuing to make sure we understand how important this is.

#### FLOODING

**Mr. Jeff Burch:** My question is to the Premier. Ontario is experiencing stronger and more frequent floods as a result of the climate crisis. Ten communities are in a state of emergency.

When asked about these devastating floods, the Premier said, "Something is going on and we have to be conscious of it." Yet this Premier has slashed conservation authority funding for flood management by 50%.

We know this government does not take the climate crisis seriously, but they could at least provide the funding necessary to help Ontario families deal with flooding emergencies. Can the Premier explain why, amidst a time of record floods, he is gutting flood management programs?

**Hon. Doug Ford:** Minister of Natural Resources.

**Hon. John Yakabuski:** I want to thank the member opposite for the question. I don't think I need to remind him that our government inherited a \$15-billion deficit from the previous Liberal government, which your party supported 98% of the time, so you wear some of that as well.

We made it clear that things were going to change. What we have said to conservation authorities across the province of Ontario is that they need to concentrate on what—

*Interjections.*

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

I apologize to the Minister of Natural Resources and Forestry. Please conclude your response.

**Hon. John Yakabuski:** They need to concentrate on what their original mandate was, not the mandate creek

that they've created for themselves over many, many years. We have said to them, "We are cutting your funding," which amounts to, across the board, on average, about 8% of a conservation authority's funding; in some conservation authorities, less than 2%. We have said to them, "You need to concentrate on your core mandate of flood management, flood forecasting, to ensure that Ontario"—

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

1140

**Mr. Jeff Burch:** Speaker, this government continues to lurch from one short-sighted policy to another, leaving a fiscal mess behind them. The August flooding in Toronto caused \$80 million in damage. Storms and floods in February of last year caused more than \$57 million in damage across southern Ontario and Quebec. Floods that happened once every hundred years are now happening once every few years.

Municipalities and families cannot cope with these costs. The programs used to mitigate damage are cut, and the programs used to assist people and municipalities in repairing after a devastating flood are cumbersome and difficult to access.

Can the Premier explain to the people of Ontario why he is cutting flood management when the people of Ontario need it most?

**Hon. John Yakabuski:** I thank the member for that supplemental question, and I do remind him again of the fiscal mess that we inherited from the previous Liberal government. As I said, we have said to conservation authorities, "Stick to your mandate. Stick to what you were designed to do."

But I also want to point out, Speaker, that my ministry continues to monitor water levels all across this province. Our surface water monitoring centre, with headquarters in Peterborough, monitors water levels all across the province.

I also want to say, while I have the opportunity, Speaker, how our hearts have gone out to the people who have suffered by floods this year. I want to thank the Premier for instituting an internal task force that has had three regional meetings across the province now to sit down with people. We will have further public meetings, to sit down with people, to understand the effects that those floods have on people.

I can tell you that my colleague the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing—the DRAO program is there for the people of Ontario. We have their backs. That's one thing you can count on, the people of Ontario: This government has your back.

## ONTARIO PLACE

### PLACE DE L'ONTARIO

**Mr. Rudy Cuzzetto:** My question is for the amazing Minister of Tourism, Culture and Sport. Speaker, I was delighted to hear the minister launch a call to develop and

revitalize Ontario Place earlier this morning. I know many of the members in this House, along with countless other Ontarians, have fond memories of Ontario Place. I'm glad to hear the government is taking action to revitalize this important attraction. In doing so, we're sending a clear message: Ontario is open for business.

Speaker, the former Liberal government failed to prioritize Ontario Place and let it fall to disrepair. They did not value the full potential of this incredible, unique waterfront site. Can the minister please explain the call for development process which will seek to transform Ontario Place into a world-class, year-round destination?

**Hon. Michael A. Tibollo:** I'd like to thank the member from Mississauga–Lakeshore for the question and for the great work he does for the people of Mississauga–Lakeshore.

Mr. Speaker, today I was at Ontario Place with my good friend and colleague the Minister of Infrastructure to announce the next steps our government is taking to redevelop Ontario Place into the world-class destination it was originally envisioned to be. We are beginning a worldwide search to find a partner or partners with the best and most innovative ideas that will bring our vision for Ontario Place to light.

Nous avons soutenu le projet de notre gouvernement de créer une destination spectaculaire de renommée mondiale, qui attirera des visiteurs locaux et internationaux à longueur d'année.

We are beginning a worldwide search to find this partner, Mr. Speaker. The process is designed to provide as much flexibility as possible for interested—

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

**Mr. Rudy Cuzzetto:** Through you, Speaker: Thank you to the minister for your response. It is refreshing to see that so much of this untapped potential of Ontario Place will finally be utilized so that the space can be enjoyed by new generations of Ontarians, along with other tourists from outside Ontario.

Mr. Speaker, we saw a process earlier in this year inviting interested proponents to submit their ideas for the future of this site. Can the minister please inform this House of what exactly has changed with respect to this proposal?

**Hon. Michael A. Tibollo:** Through you, Mr. Speaker: The announcement today set out the formal process for organizations or consortia teams to submit formal proposals for the site. We also made it clear that proposals including a casino will not be considered, and I will confirm in the House today and to all members that there will be no casinos at Ontario Place.

I am also excited to see the best proposals that can come forward from around the world.

Nous souhaitons voir des concepts de développement répondant aux exigences les plus rigoureuses, une vision qui rend hommage à notre passé, qui célèbre notre présent et qui inspire notre futur.

In closing, I'd like to share a quote from Allan Grossman, the honourable Minister of Trade and Development

at the time Ontario Place was opened. He said that Ontario Place will be the “world’s most exciting island.” Mr. Speaker, we look forward to seeing that the new Ontario Place will be the world’s most exciting island once again.

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

#### RICHARD HEIMPEL

**The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott):** The government House leader has informed me he has a point of order.

**Hon. Todd Smith:** Just a quick point of order, Mr. Speaker: A key strategist in our legislative unit is turning 61 today. Happy birthday to Richard Heimpel.

#### ANNIVERSARY OF ARMENIAN INDEPENDENCE

**The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott):** The member for Scarborough–Agincourt on a point of order.

**Mr. Aris Babikian:** Mr. Speaker, today marks the 101st anniversary of the independence of the First Republic of Armenia. The Armenian community in Toronto, Ontario and all of Canada are celebrating this milestone, and today the Armenian community of the GTA will be here for the flag-raising.

After that, there will be a reception between 4 and 6:30 tonight in room 247. Everyone is welcome to join them.

#### DEFERRED VOTES

##### TIME ALLOCATION

**The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott):** We have a deferred vote on the amendment to government notice of motion number 62, relating to the allocation of time on Bill 108, An Act to amend various statutes with respect to housing, other development and various other matters.

Call in the members. This is a five-minute bell.

*The division bells rang from 1147 to 1152.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott):** On May 27, 2019, Mr. Bisson moved an amendment to government notice of motion number 62, relating to the allocation of time on Bill 108. All those in favour of Mr. Bisson’s motion will please rise one at a time and be recognized by the Clerk.

##### Ayes

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

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

##### Nays

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

**The Clerk of the Assembly (Mr. Todd Decker):** The ayes are 42; the nays are 66.

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

Are the members ready to vote on the main motion?

*Interjections.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott):** We will now vote on the main motion.

Mr. Walker has moved government notice of motion number 62, relating to allocation of time on Bill 108, An Act to amend various statutes with respect to housing, other development and various other matters. Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? I heard some noes.

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

All those opposed will please say “nay.”

In my opinion, the ayes have it.

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

*The division bells rang from 1157 to 1158.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott):** Mr. Walker has moved government notice of motion number 62, relating to allocation of time on Bill 108. All those in favour of the motion will please rise one at a time and be counted by the Clerk.

##### Ayes

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

Clark, Steve	McDonell, Jim	Skelly, Donna
Coe, Lorne	McKenna, Jane	Smith, Dave
Cuzzetto, Rudy	McNaughton, Monte	Smith, Todd
Downey, Doug	Miller, Norman	Surma, Kinga
Dunlop, Jill	Mitas, Christina Maria	Thanigasalam, Vijay
Fedeli, Victor	Mulroney, Caroline	Thompson, Lisa M.
Fee, Amy	Nicholls, Rick	Tibollo, Michael A.
Ford, Doug	Oosterhoff, Sam	Triantafilopoulos, Effie J.
Fullerton, Merrilee	Pang, Billy	Wai, Daisy
Ghamari, Goldie	Park, Lindsey	Walker, Bill
Gill, Parm	Parsa, Michael	Yakabuski, John
Hardeman, Ernie	Pettapiece, Randy	Yurek, Jeff

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

#### Nays

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

**The Clerk of the Assembly (Mr. Todd Decker):** The ayes are 66; the nays are 42.

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

*Motion agreed to.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott):** There being no further business this morning, this House stands in recess until 3 p.m.

*The House recessed from 1200 to 1500.*

#### PRIVATE MEMBERS' PUBLIC BUSINESS

**The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott):** I beg to inform the House that, pursuant to standing order 98(c), a change has been made to the order of precedence on the ballot list for private members' public business such that Mr. Pang assumes ballot item number 84 and Ms. McKenna assumes ballot item number 91.

#### INTRODUCTION OF VISITORS

**Hon. Raymond Sung Joon Cho:** I'm very happy to introduce and welcome the following leaders from the community: Kat Clarke, CNIB; Michelle Eaton, Ontario Chamber of Commerce; Ariel Benjamin, Ontario Chamber of Commerce; Julia Dumanian, Canadian Hearing Society; Zinnia Batliwalla, March of Dimes; Chris Yaccato, Variety Ontario; Meenu Sikand, Holland Bloorview; Wendy Porch, Centre for Independent Living

Ontario; Peter Athanasopoulos, Spinal Cord Injury Ontario; Michelle Pandith, Canadian Council on Rehabilitation and Work; Debbie Irish, Canadian Council on Rehabilitation and Work; Jeannette Campbell, Ontario Disability Employment Network; Ingrid Muschta, Ontario Disability Employment Network; Sue Dafoe, Ontario Disability Employment Network; Lesley Ellis, Ontario Disability Employment Network; Kevin Collins, Easter Seals Ontario; Matt Shaw, Abilities Centre; and Larry McCloskey, Carleton University. Welcome to Queen's Park.

**Mr. Joel Harden:** Mr. Speaker, I won't repeat the exhaustive list. Thank you to the minister for acknowledging our friends.

I just want to say, as the critic of people with disabilities, thank you to all our friends who have done the work for so many years, and thank you for being here in your House today. It's nice to see you.

#### MEMBERS' STATEMENTS

##### CLIMATE CHANGE

**Mr. Michael Mantha:** It's always a proud opportunity and a privilege to boast about the young individuals across my riding of Algoma-Manitoulin.

Just a couple of weeks ago, our leader, Andrea Horwath, stood in this House declaring a climate crisis as an urgency. Through a motion we had this discussion. It's thanks to individuals like Lauren Goddard and Jade Cress, who are grade 12 students at Manitoulin Secondary School who responded to the Save the Bees Manitoulin Wild Flower Challenge. They studied in regard to how the life and habitat of bees are having an impact on the economy and also on the farming community.

Just this week, thanks to a forestry company that I came out of at one time, EACOM, which I visited this last weekend—they donated over 1,200 trees. All the schools in Blind River, which include St. Mary's Catholic School, École Saint-Joseph, Blind River Public School, École secondaire catholique Jeunesse-Nord and W.C. Eaket Secondary School, along with the mayor and council, planted those trees just this week.

It's amazing how our kids know and understand that there is climate change, that there is a crisis going on and they will no longer ask for our assistance. They are going into action and they are making the right choices in order to protect our environment.

My hat goes off to all the students, and I look forward to joining you where you planted your trees.

##### RAMADAN

**Mr. Kaled Rasheed:** Today I stand in this House to recognize the sacred month of Ramadan. Ramadan is the ninth month in the Muslim calendar. During this month, Muslims fast from dawn to sunset for 30 days, where we refrain from eating and drinking anything during our fast.

With over half a million Muslims just in Ontario alone, this month holds a great importance to us all.

Not everyone is obligated to fast. There are exceptions for children, the elderly and infirm.

This month instills in us compassion and empathy for one another. It teaches us to be patient and caring. This month is a means to practise patience, humbleness and good virtues. It is also a means to refresh one's spirituality. It helps one focus on the purpose of life and to reflect on one's self to help eliminate bad habits. Other than spiritual benefits, fasting is a way to refresh and detoxify our soul, body and mind.

Mr. Speaker, next week Muslims around the world will be celebrating Eid-UI-Fitr, which is a celebration that marks the end of Ramadan. It is a time when Muslims gather with family and friends to rejoice and reflect on the blessings of Ramadan. After a month of fasting, Eid is a great way to end off the blessed month.

On behalf of Muslims of Ontario and Canada, I wish everyone a blessed Ramadan and an early Eid Mubarak.

#### LEGAL AID

**Mr. Paul Miller:** I rise to highlight a critical access-to-justice issue in all of our communities. I'm referring to the elimination of legal services to vulnerable low-income tenants, employees, injured workers and recipients of social assistance, all of whom come to our constituency offices every day.

The recent budget announcement cutting one third of Legal Aid Ontario's budget will have a devastating impact on front-line service delivery by the province's 72 community legal clinics. Legal clinics like Hamilton Community Legal Clinic, which serves my riding, assist our constituents to preserve the basic essentials of life. I'm talking about keeping a roof over people's heads and some income for food on the table.

Studies show that every dollar retracted from legal aid leads to a \$3 to \$5 increase in other areas of government expenditures such as homelessness, health, family breakdown and incarceration. The province must continue to see spending on legal aid as an investment in people and a healthy society.

The number of people served by Legal Aid Ontario has significantly increased since 2013, and an erroneous suggestion that services have declined has been inappropriately used as a reason to cut the funding. This must be corrected.

I can attest that Hamilton Community Legal Clinic is an essential service for the vulnerable members of my community. I call on the AG and this government to make a commitment to access to justice and not reduce front-line service delivery by community legal clinics in this province.

#### POLICE WEEK

**Ms. Goldie Ghamari:** On Thursday, May 15, I was proud to join Ontario's police officers, including the exceptional men and women of the Ottawa Police Service,

as well as friends and colleagues from the Ottawa Police Association, for the Police Association of Ontario's president's awards dinner at the Brookstreet Hotel to celebrate Ontario Police Week.

Police Week focuses on raising awareness and recognition of the work our police do to keep our communities safe. This year's theme, "Proudly Supporting Our Police," highlighted the diversity of work done by Ontario's police services.

At the gala, Ottawa's very own Constable Aaron Reichert won the Hero of the Year award for his bravery and quick response while in pursuit of a suspect during an active triple shooting incident at the ByWard Market. Congratulations to Constable Reichert on your well-deserved Hero of the Year award. It was truly an honour to meet you, and I'm so thankful to know that you are keeping us safe.

Then on Friday, May 16, I joined Ottawa's longest-serving patrol officer, Constable Dave Stewart from the Huntmar police station in Stittsville, for a six-hour ride-along in my riding of Carleton. Constable Stewart's commitment and dedication to serving the people of Carleton was very inspiring. From Kars to Stittsville to North Gower, Constable Stewart was greeted with smiles, hugs and thank yous.

Thank you, Constable Stewart, for sharing your wisdom and knowledge with me, not only on policing issues but also for introducing me to numerous constituents in the riding.

Thank you to all of the men and women of the Ottawa police for all of the hard work you do to keep us and our families safe. You're all heroes, and we're lucky to have you in Ottawa to protect our backs.

1510

#### VICTIMS AND SURVIVORS OF CRIME WEEK

**Mr. Tom Rakocevic:** This week is Victims and Survivors of Crime Week, where we raise awareness of the issues faced by victims and survivors of crime as well as the services and laws to help them put the pieces of their lives back together.

As I stand here in this prestigious chamber, I would like to recognize the important work of individuals and organizations who support these victims and survivors. One such outstanding individual is Rev. Sky Starr and her organization, Out of Bounds grief support, which has provided culturally responsive, compassionate and customized grief and trauma support and education for bereaved families in the Jane and Finch community and beyond for many years.

On May 23 of this year, Out of Bounds hosted a victims and survivors social, where I heard the tragic story of Rochelle Lewis. In July 2017, Rochelle was celebrating her 28th birthday at a large family barbecue, where she was shot in the back, leaving her paralyzed from the waist down while two others were killed. Her mother, Elma, a nursing assistant, used to work three jobs in order to make

ends meet. Now, because she is Rochelle's main caregiver, she only works one. Her mother has had to take out a second mortgage on her home due to lost wages and the cost of Rochelle's therapy.

While Rochelle's family and so many other survivors of crime struggle, this Conservative government has introduced legislation to eliminate the Criminal Injuries Compensation Board and slash support funds for pain and suffering by 80%, with no real path ahead and even less hope for future victims. In the words of Elma, "This is not about politics; this is about families."

I'm calling on this government to stop this bad legislation and give these families the support they deserve.

#### UNITED CHURCH OF CANADA

**Ms. Kathleen O. Wynne:** Later this afternoon, I will stand in the Legislature to introduce the United Church of Canada Act, 2019, which will allow the United Church to move from a four- to a three-court administrative structure. This change has been debated and developed within the body of the United Church at the central and at the congregational levels.

I've been a member of the United Church my entire life, christened and married once at Richmond Hill United, confirmed later and married again as an adult at Fairlawn United Church.

The United Church formed in 1925 as a union of Congregationalists, Methodists and Presbyterians. It has always been a place of lively debate on social justice issues, a leader in ordaining women and members of the LGBTQ community, and permitting same-sex marriage. Even the formation of the church itself was hotly debated, especially within the Presbyterian Church where a minority of Presbyterians feared for their ongoing identity and autonomy. Prime Minister Mackenzie King acknowledged at the time that, "The government itself is very much divided on this question."

At the Mutual Street Arena in Toronto, that fractious debate came to an end in 1925. My own family member, the diminutive Presbyterian Scotsman William "Willy" Watson, was in attendance. My great-great-grandfather Willy, over 90 years old, was firmly opposed to union, and he came in from Adelaide, Ontario to voice his opposition. When he came home to my grandmother's—his granddaughter's—house, Eva Wynne's home in North Toronto, to report on the meeting, he was agitated because union had passed, but his personal angst was, as he put it, "Evie, I think I stood up at the wrong time." So he had voted for union when he was opposed.

The bill I will introduce today will continue the tradition of the Ontario government playing a role in legitimizing and codifying administrative procedures and protections of an institution that has been a leading voice for social justice in Canada for almost 100 years. I, unlike my ancestor, have benefited and believed in the mission and practice of the United Church of Canada and will take part in my local congregation as we go through this transition.

#### CELTIC CULTURE

**Mr. Jim McDonell:** Last Friday, I attended the Glengarry Celtic Music Hall of Fame induction dinner, and, Mr. Speaker, it was clear that Celtic music and dance is alive and strong in Glengarry county.

First of all, I'd like to congratulate this year's inductees and their families:

—Kahlil Cappuccino, a world-renowned bass drummer at home and in Scotland;

—the Clansmen band, who was the entertainment of choice at weddings and parties in my youth;

—Bill Vipond, who, as a young farmer, formed the local Tartans band; and

—Gilbert Young, a lifelong piper and director of bands for the Glengarry Highland Games.

Speaker, this is just one of the numerous Celtic events in my riding. Earlier this month, the MacLeod Fiddlers showcased their young and old students. The cast of stars included my three-year-old granddaughter in Ashley's mini-music class, where they learned to fiddle and step-dance at the same time.

Ian and Ashley are just two of the many local instructors, joining David MacPhee's fiddling classes, Gabrielle Campbell's Music, MacCulloch Dancers, and the Kathy Coleman dance group, amongst others. And of course, the Glengarry Pipe Band teaches dozens of pipers and drummers every year.

These new students join their teachers and peers at many concerts and festivals in Glengarry county, including the Glengarry Highland Games and the Maxville and Williamstown fairs. The Celtic music group organized their fiddlers' day ceilidh just a few weeks ago, and of course their July ceilidhs attract many entertainers and fans every week.

Clearly, Mr. Speaker, the Celtic culture is alive and well in eastern Ontario.

#### INDIGENOUS GRADUATES

**Mr. Sol Mamakwa:** Today I would like to read an open letter to all Indigenous students graduating this spring and summer.

Dear graduates,

Congratulations on completing your studies, whether at elementary school, at high school, at college or university.

This is a great achievement, not just for you but for your families and communities. We see the work that you put in along your journey, and we honour you.

You may have had many things to overcome in your educational journey, such as cultural learning differences; relocation, sometimes from fly-in locations; financial burdens; and sometimes a lack of family support, and still you have made it here today.

In the past, education was a deliberate tool used systematically to extinguish who we are as people. You might have grandparents and great-grandparents who attended residential schools who would be glad that education is now a tool that we use to build our culture, not destroy it.

I am proud of you today for taking your place among the long line of those who came before you and who overcame great odds so that you could celebrate your graduation this year. We honour them. We also honour those who did not survive, like the Seven Fallen Feathers in Thunder Bay.

Kitchi-miigwetch, students, for developing your potential, for pushing through adversity and becoming who you are and who you are meant to be. I am excited to see where you go next in your journeys.

*Applause.*

#### WASTE DIVERSION

**Ms. Donna Skelly:** In recent days, there have been many stories in the news about the dispute between Canada and the Philippines over garbage, with the government in the Philippines deciding to no longer take in Canada's garbage and to send some of it back to our shores.

It's clear that something needs to be done in order to reduce the amount of items that we send to our landfills. This became quite evident to me when I was meeting with stakeholders in relation to my private member's motion that passed in the Legislature back in March. I was shocked to find out that North Americans throw out over 24 billion tonnes of clothing every year. I would like to take this opportunity to remind Ontarians that there are other ways of getting rid of old clothing, including donating them to charities. These charities are then able to sell the used clothing and other household items and use the money raised to fund their work in the community.

I'm pleased that a number of charitable organizations have supported this initiative, and I look forward to welcoming some of them to the Legislature this Thursday. There will be an opportunity to have a photo taken with them on the grand staircase after question period.

It is important that we take steps to clean up our environment so it is sustainable for our children and for future generations. I am proud to be part of a government that understands this. I would like to remind all members, "Don't dump; donate."

#### TECHNOLOGY SECTOR

**Mr. Mike Harris:** Before I get into my member's statement, I just wanted to say a quick hello to Countryside Christian School in Wellesley township. I had a privilege of taking a picture with them on the grand staircase.

I'm happy to note that I have invited some local technology companies to participate in a technology round table that's focused on scale-ups at the Accelerator Centre on May 31. This event begins a series of round tables, the next to be held at Communtech on June 14 with variable-size technology companies in Waterloo region to consult on red tape reduction, which will promote economic development, job creation and trade in our province.

I'm responsible for the technology sector in our current Ministry of Economic Development, Job Creation and Trade's task force on red tape reduction. Our objective is

to support the Ontario government's target to reduce red tape by 25% by the year 2020. Recommendations from this task force and on the technology sector specifically from these Waterloo region round tables will be forwarded to the ministry for review. Each round table will allow participants to share their company's specific experiences with the government, with government policy and processes in an informal setting.

**1520**

I look forward to hearing from a diverse range of companies and entrepreneurs, and hope to share my experiences in the technology sector myself and as a small business owner.

#### VISITORS

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

**Mr. Sol Mamakwa:** Today is a very special day for me. I've got some students from my home community of Kingfisher Lake. They're doing their grade 7 and 8 Toronto trip, so they're here today. They are Edwin Mekanak, Rynasha Yesno, Ryanna Atlookan, Roxella McKay, Javen Aganash, Braydon Baxter, Jazlyn Beaver, Hosea Mamakwa, Troy Meekis, Lance Sainnawap, Xavier Ostamus, Julian Oombash, Cole Mahoney—and the chaperones, Désirée Winter, Charlene Atlookan, Gary Sugarhead and Kimberley Brown. Meegwetch.

*Applause.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott):** On behalf of all of us in the Legislature, welcome to Queen's Park.

#### REPORTS BY COMMITTEES

##### STANDING COMMITTEE ON GOVERNMENT AGENCIES

**The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott):** I beg to inform the House that today the Clerk received the report on intended appointments dated May 28, 2019, of the Standing Committee on Government Agencies. Pursuant to standing order 108(f)(9), the report is deemed to be adopted by the House.

*Report deemed adopted.*

##### STANDING COMMITTEE ON GENERAL GOVERNMENT

**Mr. Dave Smith:** I beg leave to present a report from the Standing Committee on General Government and move its adoption.

**The Clerk-at-the-Table (Ms. Valerie Quioc Lim):** Your committee begs to report the following bill without amendment:

Bill 107, An Act to amend the Highway Traffic Act and various other statutes in respect of transportation-related matters / Project 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):** Shall the report be received and adopted? Agreed? Agreed.

*Report adopted.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott):** Pursuant to the order of the House dated May 15, 2019, the bill is now ordered for third reading.

## INTRODUCTION OF BILLS

### THE UNITED CHURCH OF CANADA ACT, 2019

Ms. Wynne moved first reading of the following bill:  
Bill Pr10, An Act respecting The United Church of Canada.

**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):** Pursuant to standing order 86, this bill stands referred to the Standing Committee on Regulations and Private Bills.

### MENSTRUAL HYGIENE DAY ACT, 2019

### LOI DE 2019 PROCLAMANT LA JOURNÉE DE L'HYGIÈNE MENSTRUELLE

Ms. Karpoche moved first reading of the following bill:  
Bill 120, An Act to Proclaim Menstrual Hygiene Day /  
Projet de loi 120, Loi proclamant la Journée de l'hygiène  
menstruelle.

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

*First reading agreed to.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott):** I would like to invite the member for Parkdale–High Park to briefly explain her bill.

**Ms. Bhutla Karpoche:** It is estimated that, in Canada, one third of people who menstruate and are under the age of 25 struggle to afford menstrual products, which can cost from \$76 to \$153 per year. The inability to afford menstrual products is a health and social equity issue that has the greatest impact on low-income, homeless, Indigenous and young people who menstruate.

By proclaiming May 28 in each year as Menstrual Hygiene Day, the province of Ontario raises awareness of the challenges people who menstruate face due to lack of access to menstrual hygiene management and highlights the importance of finding sustainable and evidence-based solutions to these challenges.

Menstrual Hygiene Day contributes to the normalization of menstruation, as menstruating is a natural bodily function, and access to menstrual products is as necessary as access to menstrual products is as necessary a step as access to soap, water and toilet paper.

## MOTIONS

### SIGN-LANGUAGE INTERPRETATION

**Hon. Ernie Hardeman:** Mr. Speaker, I seek unanimous consent to move a motion without notice regarding ASL services during statements by the ministry this afternoon.

**The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott):** Mr. Hardeman is seeking the unanimous consent of the House to move a motion without notice regarding ASL services during statements by the ministry this afternoon. Agreed? Agreed.

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

**Hon. Ernie Hardeman:** I move that sign-language interpreters may be present on the floor of the chamber today to interpret statements by the ministry and responses.

**The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott):** Mr. Hardeman has moved that sign-language interpreters may be present on the floor of the chamber today to interpret statements by the ministry and responses.

Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? Carried.

*Motion agreed to.*

### ESTIMATES

**Hon. Ernie Hardeman:** I seek unanimous consent to put forward a motion without notice regarding the date of the report of the Standing Committee on Estimates referenced in standing order 63(a).

**The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott):** Mr. Hardeman is seeking the unanimous consent of the House to put forward a motion without notice regarding the date of the report of the Standing Committee on Estimates referenced in standing order 63(a). Agreed? Agreed.

Once again, the Minister of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs.

**Hon. Ernie Hardeman:** Mr. Speaker, I move that, notwithstanding standing order 63(a), the Standing Committee on Estimates shall present one report with respect to all of the estimates and supplementary estimates considered pursuant to standing orders 60 and 62 no later than the fourth Thursday in November for 2019.

**The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott):** Mr. Hardeman has moved that, notwithstanding standing order 63(a), the Standing Committee on Estimates shall present one report with respect to all of the estimates and supplementary estimates considered pursuant to standing orders 60 and 62 no later than the fourth Thursday in November for 2019.

Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? Carried.

*Motion agreed to.*

## STATEMENTS BY THE MINISTRY AND RESPONSES

### ACCESSIBILITY FOR PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES

**Hon. Raymond Sung Joon Cho:** I'm honoured to rise today to mark National AccessAbility Week, which takes place this year from May 26 to June 1.

National AccessAbility Week is a week to promote and celebrate accessibility and inclusion across governments, communities and workplaces. This is an important week because we believe that people with disabilities and seniors deserve to remain engaged and participate fully in their communities.

When communities and businesses are not accessible, people are not able to fully participate in everyday life. Businesses fail to reach their full potential and communities are not as welcoming as they should be. In fact, our government also believes that Ontario should be built to work for everyone, whether you are pushing a stroller or making a delivery using a walker or a wheelchair. An accessible Ontario is open to all, open for jobs and open for business. It is the right thing to do.

Mr. Speaker, our government is committed to protecting what matters most to people with disabilities and their families by providing the support and resources they need to be independent and fully participate in their communities as consumers and employees.

**1530**

In fact, just last week, we announced that our government is investing \$1.3 million over two years through a new partnership with the Rick Hansen Foundation. The certification program will use trained professionals to rate businesses and public buildings on their accessibility and will help businesses determine ways to remove identified barriers.

Another way our government is taking action to help make communities and businesses more accessible is through our EnAbling Change Partnership Program. We supported the development of a resource guide by the Ontario Business Improvement Area Association that gives helpful tips for businesses on how to become more inclusive and accessible. The guide addresses barriers in the built environment, such as entrances, exits, space layout and design.

We're also working to improve employment outcomes for people with disabilities through our Employers' Partnership Table. The table is currently working on developing sector-specific business cases for hiring people with a disability to share with businesses in Ontario.

We have resumed the work with our health care and education standards development committees so that they can continue their valuable work to make improvements to accessibility in those sectors.

Starting this week, we have taken steps to begin to improve our website by creating a one-stop-shop webpage

that includes resources to help businesses and communities to be more accessible and open for all. I would encourage everyone to visit our "Accessibility in Ontario: information for businesses" page at [ontario.ca](http://ontario.ca) to learn more.

We're on the right track to creating an Ontario where communities and buildings offer opportunities instead of barriers. I would like to encourage everyone to join me in celebrating National AccessAbility Week and to continue this important work and conversation not only this week but all year round.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Percy Hatfield):** It is now time for responses.

**Mr. Joel Harden:** Thank you, Minister, for that statement.

I guess I'm rising with a different note in my heart today on National AccessAbility Week. It's because on April 10, a little over a month ago, we held a town hall. Many of our friends who are here today were there. As the critic for people with disabilities, seniors and accessibility, I wanted to understand, from the people who do the work on the front lines, people with lived experience with disabilities, what we need to do to make Ontario truly accessible by our statutory obligations. The Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act is very clear: We need to have a fully accessible Ontario by 2025.

Speaker, this is not a prop; this is a document that I'll hold up quickly. This is the transcript of the testimonies that people gave. Every single person who deputed to us was very clear that we're nowhere near meeting our obligations. While I welcomed the minister's announcement last week in partnering with the Rick Hansen Foundation—and I think it's terrific that employers in this province want to hire people with disabilities—what I'm hearing from people with lived experience is that that is nowhere near enough ambition.

In this other document, which is not a prop, by the Right Honourable David Onley, a former Lieutenant Governor of this great province, he was very clear too that if we don't have urgent and immediate action to make sure buildings are accessible, public services are accessible, forms of transportation are accessible and leisure and recreation spaces are accessible, we are going to continue to bequeath to Ontarians with disabilities, as he said word-for-word in this report, "soul-crushing barriers."

That's where I give pause, because it's hard for me, as someone who has been very fortunate in my life to grow up with some good balances in my life, supported by my family, to imagine what it's like right now for someone with a disability to move forward in an employment context, to move forward in accessing the health care and the education they need. What I have learned as a politician and what I have learned as a community organizer is that sometimes to awaken our empathy and to marshal the political will we need to deliver on goals, we have to connect not necessarily to facts and figures but to emotions. So what I want to say in the time I have left are snippets of testimonials that I heard that I hope will connect with all of us in this space.

I want to talk about Sarah Jama, one of the lead organizers in this province with the Disability Justice Network of Ontario. The slogan of the Disability Justice Network of Ontario is that people with disabilities ought to be free to be themselves, and if we really want an equal-opportunity society, it will require vastly more than a \$1.3-million investment from the government of Ontario to get there. We will need to ask wealthier folks—like me, quite frankly; thanks to the people of Ontario, I make a great salary—and people who make vastly more than me and employers in this province, to contribute more, so people with disabilities can access an equal-opportunity society. That's what Sarah has said.

I think about [name expunged], a young person we lost in 2014 to suicide because he thought he was stupid. [name expunged] thought he couldn't learn, but [name expunged] was dyslexic. He was brilliant, he was beautiful, but our education system was not set up in a way that [name expunged] could succeed. My friend Jill Dunlop has a guest here, a youth in this space today, who lives with dyslexia, who is trying to educate us about what we can do to make sure every child can succeed in this province.

I want to end from that sad note to a positive note that was mentioned by a couple of folks who deputed at their town hall, about a great Canadian from Ottawa Centre with dyslexia, who recently passed this year. That great Canadian's name is Paul Dewar. Paul Dewar struggled with dyslexia as a child. He struggled to read. He struggled to access the services that he needed. But he had a wonderful thing in his corner: He had parents, one of whom happened to be mayor of Ottawa, who allowed Paul to access the services that he needed.

What I want is a province that does that for everyone. I want a province that will ask the wealthiest among us to give more, so we can actually have an equal opportunity society—not benevolence, waiting for employers to hire folks, not hoping that people can pull off an Oprah or Michael Jordan trajectory in their life, but hoping that everybody gets the equal opportunity they need. For organizations like Kevin and Peter up here who do campaigns like the #peeforfree campaigns for health and safety for folks in wheelchairs, or the camps that Easter Seals Ontario offers, that is hope in a difficult time for people with disabilities, and I salute them. I salute the people on the front lines, but Speaker, we must do better.

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

**Mrs. Marie-France Lalonde:** I rise today on behalf of the Ontario Liberal caucus to recognize National Accessibility Week. This is an important week which celebrates the millions of Ontarians, parents and children, neighbours and friends, who live with a disability. They deserve the same opportunities as everyone to be able to work, play, and participate equally in our society.

I am proud that over the past 15 years, Ontario became a global leader when it comes to accessibility. In 2005, the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act set the goal of creating an accessible Ontario by 2025 so that all people of all abilities can try. To support that goal, in 2017

the Accessibility Directorate of Ontario reorganized to reflect an expanded mandate and provide an increased focus on compliance and enforcement. In fact, a new branch was created to focus solely on compliance and enforcement. In fact, a new branch was created to focus solely on compliance and enforcement activities that is:

- operating a call centre across the province that provides responsive compliance assistance;
- conducting compliance outreach activities to thousands of organizations; and
- performing risk-informed audits.

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Following the second legislative reviewer's report completed by Provost Mayo Moran, the former Liberal government worked to implement many of the recommendations, including:

- the creation of a minister responsible for accessibility;
- the expansion of the ADO to provide enhanced guidance on the AODA; and
- the development of a new standard in both health and education.

In the fall of 2017, we asked the Honourable David C. Onley to conduct a third review for the Accessibility of Ontarians with Disabilities Act. During his time as special adviser to the minister responsible for accessibility, Mr. Onley consulted with a wide variety of stakeholders with vastly differing viewpoints of the AODA and general accessibility matters. He displayed both an objective and empathetic perspective on accessibility issues. This was a comprehensive review of the AODA and its regulations, and will examine the role of the AODA through to 2025 and beyond.

I understand that this report was submitted to the government in January of this year, and I believe we are still waiting on what action the government will take based on Mr. Onley's recommendations.

Access Awareness Week is a chance to show what we have done and also focus on what we can do to empower businesses, enlighten communities and embrace inclusion. However, Ontarians with disabilities still face far too many barriers from activities that many of us take for granted, and we all know there is still a lot of work to be done.

We need communities, businesses and individuals across Ontario to understand that inclusion is important for building a strong society and developing a dynamic economy. We lose millions in potential tax revenue every year due to the limited inclusion of persons with disabilities in our workforce. A 2017 Martin Prosperity Institute report outlined that an inclusive Ontario would result in a \$7.9-billion increase to our gross domestic product. I repeat: \$7.9 billion—not million, but billion.

This week is a chance for us to raise awareness about supporting access in all of our communities. Building accessibility into policy and practice is incredibly important. It makes life better for everyone. I am proud to be a member of a party that is committed to supporting Ontarians with disabilities. Ontarians deserve to live free

from barriers, and we remain committed to continuing to work to make Ontario a most accessible place to live.

I'll end by giving a shout-out to Carleton University. I know that all of us from Ottawa would like to recognize the great work they do. They have a tunnel; they also provide 24/7 attendant care, making life better for students to pursue education. I want to say thank you to them for their great work, and, certainly, for all the students who are attending Carleton University, good jobs. Merci.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Percy Hatfield):** Thank you. The time for responses is over.

## PETITIONS

### ABUSE AWARENESS AND PREVENTION

**Mr. Michael Mantha:** It is with great pride that I present this petition entitled "Loverin's Law." I want to introduce Charmaine Loverin, who is joining us here today.

It's addressed to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario.

"Whereas the government of Ontario does not provide direct use of education and real life skills language, nor prevention tools about abuse in elementary ... middle schools and high schools; and

"Whereas the government of Ontario does not provide direct use of education and real life skills language, nor prevention tools for five top abuse situations facing many Canadian and diverse families today: physical, neglect, emotional, verbal and sexual, grooming; and

"Whereas abuse affects ages younger than 5 and 93% of abuse happens in the hands of those that young people and youth are supposed to trust; and

"Whereas statistically two in five girls and one in six boys are currently abused in Canada today, not including unreported; and

"Whereas abuse has no culture, status nor religious divide and is a long-term injury that causes stigma, shame, guilt, anxiety, even isolation that can result in bullying, self-harming behaviours, depression, youth addiction and even suicide; and

"Whereas early education, including evidence-based and new community prevention programs, will greatly benefit intervention, awareness and empowerment for prevention of bullying, addiction and suicide for victims and early offenders;

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

"Request an act to designate an 'annual awareness of abuse prevention week' in all Ontario primary, middle and high schools, and to provide for abuse curricula for healthy families and safe community policies, administration and accountability."

I could not agree more with this petition. I present it to page Sophia to bring down to the Clerks' table.

## VETERANS MEMORIAL

**Mr. Will Bouma:** This is a petition entitled "Petition in Support of Constructing a Memorial to Honour Our Heroes."

"To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas over 40,000 Canadian Armed Forces members served in the war in Afghanistan including the 159 Canadians who made the ultimate sacrifice; and

"Whereas the Premier made a commitment to the people of Ontario to build a memorial to honour the bravery and sacrifice of our armed forces; and

"Whereas, by remembering their service and sacrifice, we recognize the values and freedoms these men and women fought to preserve; and

"Whereas the memorial will show our gratitude to our veterans, their families and to their descendants; and

"Whereas the memorial will be a place of remembrance, a form of tribute, and an important reminder to future generations of the contributions and sacrifices that have helped shape our country;

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

"That the government of Ontario immediately construct the memorial to honour the heroes of the war in Afghanistan."

I heartily endorse this petition, will sign it and give it to page Liam.

## EDUCATION FUNDING

**Ms. Bhutla Karpoche:** I'd like to thank the Canadian Federation of Students and the almost 300 students at Humber College who signed this petition as part of the We The Students campaign. It reads as follows:

"Increase Grants Not Loans, Access for All, Protect Student Rights.

"To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

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

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

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

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

"Whereas the proposed 'Student Choice Initiative' undermines students' ability to take collective action;

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

"—provide more grants, not loans;

"—eliminate tuition fees for all students;

"—increase public funding for public education;

"—protect students' independent voices; and

"—defend the right to organize."

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

#### TRAFFIC CONTROL

**M<sup>me</sup> France Gélinas:** I would like to thank Roger Fournier from Wahnapiatae in my riding for collecting the names on this petition. It reads as follows:

“Whereas residents of Wahnapiatae are concerned about the safety of the intersection of Highway 17 and Highway 537 and would like greater traffic control measures in place to prevent further accidents and fatalities; and

“Whereas an accident that occurred on October 1, 2017, resulted in loss of life; and

“Whereas two different accidents occurred on October 13, 2017, that involved multiple vehicles and closed Highway 17 for seven hours, delaying traffic; and

“Whereas the Ministry of Transportation has completed a review of the intersection of Highway 17 and Highway 537 and concluded that improvements such as traffic signals are warranted to improve safety; and

**1550**

“Whereas there have already been multiple deaths at this intersection and we do not want any further loss of life or injuries;

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

“That the Ministry of Transportation install traffic signals at the intersection of Highway 17 and Highway 537 to enhance traffic safety as soon as possible and no later than September 2019.”

I fully support this petition and ask Sadee to bring it to the Clerk.

#### FISH AND WILDLIFE MANAGEMENT

**Mr. Mike Harris:** I have a petition here.

“To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

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

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

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

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

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

I fully support this petition, will affix my signature and pass it to page Catherine to bring to the table.

#### EDUCATION FUNDING

**Ms. Marit Stiles:** It gives me great pleasure to present these hundreds of signatures that have been provided to me in this petition by parents and students and volunteers who are working with the On Your Mark tutoring program, a really important program. I was honoured to be at their graduation this weekend.

It reads as follows:

“Save Community Use of Schools Fund.

“To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“Whereas the Ontario government has cancelled the Community Use of Schools funding;

“Whereas the Community Use of Schools funding supports important programs, such as On Your Mark that provides at-risk, vulnerable children, youth and newcomers with tutoring programs;

“Whereas programs such as On Your Mark keep children occupied after school and build self-esteem;

“Whereas these programs provide additional support at a time when classrooms are expected to increase in size;

“Whereas student success is linked to a strong economy;

“We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to direct the Minister of Education to immediately reverse the decision to cut the Community Use of Schools fund.”

I am very supportive of this petition. I will be affixing my signature and handing it to page Ariana to table with the Clerks.

#### FISH AND WILDLIFE MANAGEMENT

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Percy Hatfield):** Further petitions? The member for Peterborough–Kawartha.

**Mr. Dave Smith:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It is good to see you in the chair today.

“To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

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

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

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

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

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

I’m happy to affix my signature to this. The eastern hybrid wolf is a major problem in my area. I’ll give it to page Christopher to take to the table.

### EDUCATION FUNDING

**Ms. Jessica Bell:** This petition is labelled “Increase Grants Not Loans, Access for All, Protect Student Rights.

“To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

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

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

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

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

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

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

“—provide more grants, not loans;

“—eliminate tuition fees for all students;

“—increase public funding for public education;

“—protect students’ independent voices; and

“—defend the right to organize.”

I support this petition. I will be affixing my signature to it and giving it to page Sadee.

### FISH AND WILDLIFE MANAGEMENT

**Mr. Robert Bailey:** This petition is 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 ... 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 agree with this petition and will send it down with Julien.

### LIBRARY SERVICES

**Mr. Joel Harden:** I won’t read the entire text of this petition because colleagues of mine have done it before. I’ll just say that it’s about public libraries and public library services. The signatures on these petitions from all

over eastern Ontario: Rockland, Hammond, Metcalfe, Ottawa, Carleton Place, Perth and Smiths Falls. Thank you to everybody who signed it.

I’ll just read what it asks the government to do:

“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 maintain base funding for Ontario public libraries.”

I enthusiastically will sign this and give it to page Kian for the Clerks’ table.

### FISH AND WILDLIFE MANAGEMENT

**Mr. Sam Oosterhoff:** I have a petition to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario that reads as follows:

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

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

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

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

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

I’ll be pleased to support this petition, Speaker. I’ll affix my signature to it and give it to page Aaryan to bring to the table.

### AUTISM TREATMENT

**Ms. Teresa J. Armstrong:** I have a petition here from Brenda Lawrence of London. The petition reads as follows:

“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 fully agree with this petition and give it to page Declan to deliver to the table.

#### FISH AND WILDLIFE MANAGEMENT

**Mr. Jim McDonell:** I have a petition 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 ... 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 agree with this and will pass it on to page Richelle.

1600

#### ORDERS OF THE DAY

##### MORE HOMES, MORE CHOICE ACT, 2019

##### LOI DE 2019 POUR PLUS DE LOGEMENTS ET PLUS DE CHOIX

Resuming the debate adjourned on May 14, 2019, on the motion for second reading of the following bill:

Bill 108, An Act to amend various statutes with respect to housing, other development and various other matters / *Projet de loi 108, Loi modifiant diverses lois en ce qui concerne le logement, les autres aménagements et d’autres questions.*

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Percy Hatfield):** Pursuant to the order of the House passed earlier today, I am now required to put the question.

Mr. Clark has moved second reading of Bill 108, An Act to amend various statutes with respect to housing, other development and various other matters. Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry?

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.

As they say in TV news, this just in. We have breaking news instead of calling for a vote:

“Pursuant to standing order 28(h), I respectfully request that the vote on second reading of Bill 108 be deferred until deferred votes on May 29, 2019.”

Signed by Lorne Coe, MPP, chief government whip.

*Second reading vote deferred.*

##### PROTECTING WHAT MATTERS MOST ACT (BUDGET MEASURES), 2019

##### LOI DE 2019 POUR PROTÉGER L’ESSENTIEL (MESURES BUDGÉTAIRES)

Resuming the debate adjourned on May 28, 2019, on the motion for 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 Acting Speaker (Mr. Percy Hatfield):** Further debate?

**Mr. Mike Schreiner:** I rise to speak on the budget bill, Bill 100.

Speaker, budgets are about priorities, and it is clear that the rollout of the government’s boozy budget does not align with the priorities of the people of Ontario. After all the hype about making it easier to gamble, drink beer and tailgate, there has been a slow drip of short-sighted cuts that download the pain onto school boards, municipalities and the most vulnerable: cuts to public health that jeopardize disease control; cuts to tree planting and flood control that threaten communities; and cuts to municipalities that threaten services without proper consultation.

The government thought it could hide all the bad news behind clickbait about beer and stickers, but the people of Ontario are not falling for it. People are pushing back, whether it’s 10 former health ministers, Ontario’s large urban mayors or simply average people protesting. They’re rejecting this budget because it fails to lay out a compelling vision for a just Ontario and for the future of our economy.

I’m especially shocked that the budget is so silent about the clean and caring economic revolution taking place around the world. The clean-tech sector alone accounts for 138,000 jobs in Ontario and contributes \$13.6 billion to our economy. But what does the budget have to say about the \$26-trillion global clean economy? Nothing. Worse than nothing, it is cutting funding for innovation, research and investment; eliminating youth job programs in the tech sector; and ramping up a partisan sticker campaign to defend pollution and sabotage climate solutions. Just imagine what we could do if the government was on board in investing in the clean and caring economy, instead of pretending that the fastest-growing sector of the global economy doesn’t exist.

I want to finish with a powerful example of what’s happening in the clean economy. In the Henvey Inlet First Nation, Ontario’s largest wind farm is coming online shortly and will power 80,000 to 100,000 homes, creating local jobs to benefit the local economy. Experts say that 85% of the jobs by 2030 haven’t even been invented yet,

but the tea leaves suggest that those jobs will be in the clean and caring economy.

Speaker, I cannot vote for a budget that is silent on the biggest economic opportunity we have and is outright hostile to the biggest challenges we face: rising income inequality and the climate crisis.

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

**Mr. Vijay Thanigasalam:** Our government of Ontario is protecting what matters the most in our budget 2019. It is starting the province down the path to fiscal sustainability to protect critical services such as health care and education. We are investing an additional \$384 million in hospitals and an additional of \$267 million in home and community care.

The Ontario government for the people is committed to balancing the budget in a responsible manner. We are restoring trust, transparency and accountability to the province's finances. Balancing the budget will help protect what matters most—as I mentioned, health care, education and other critical public services—and that will ensure that people have the funding they need for generations to come.

We're projecting a deficit of \$11.7 billion in 2018-19, a \$3.3-billion improvement from the deficit of \$15 billion inherited from the previous Liberal government.

As we are moving forward, we're investing \$3.8 billion—a historical investment—in mental health and addictions and housing supports over the next 10 years, beginning with the creation of a mental health and addictions system.

Mr. Speaker, not just that, but we are creating 15,000 new long-term-care beds over the next five years and upgrading another 15,000 older long-term-care beds to provide more appropriate care to patients with complex health conditions.

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

**Mr. Ian Arthur:** It's a pleasure to rise and contribute to the debate, and I hope that one day I stand up and get to have a back-and-forth with the government on the debate that was actually given because it was about the green economy.

The member from Guelph spoke quite eloquently on the need to grow the green economy and why it should be so vital to this government and any government looking towards future growth anywhere on the planet. It's the largest growth sector on the planet, and we are closing the door to it here in Ontario, which is a travesty. We are forgoing massive amounts of tax revenue in the future which would actually help balance the budget that they talk about so much, because we are shutting the door on that growth.

When you meet with the exciting new companies, the young companies that are really pushing the boundaries in so many of these sectors—we should be fostering them. We should be helping them access new markets. We should be making sure that there are actual markets for

them here in Ontario, and that is a fundamental point that we have to pay attention to.

The scaling of these companies and the new technologies that they have developed—we need to ensure there are markets here in Ontario for them, and so far from this government, all I've seen is us closing the door on them. We turned our back on green energy. We have just turned our back on funding research in AI, one of the other most exciting and fastest-growing areas in the tech sector in Ontario and across the world. It is like Trump chasing coal, where we see opportunity, we see new innovations and we say we don't want to be part of that. We're going to try to bring us back to something the world has moved on from but that this government is unwilling to accept. They're really living up to their conservative name, Speaker, and I hope it changes going forward.

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

**Mr. Norman Miller:** I'm pleased to have the opportunity to comment on the speech from the member from Guelph on Bill 100. He was painting a picture, and I certainly disagree with the picture he's painting. The government is having to make some tough decisions, undoubtedly, and I think we all know why: because the province is not in the best financial situation. Starting off, there was a \$15-billion deficit. We've heard that we're spending \$40 million a day more than we're bringing in, so that involves the government having to make some tough decisions.

It's really easy to say yes to everything; it's a lot harder to try to prune the spending a little bit. But what we've planned and set out in our budget is a five-year plan, a reasonable plan to get back to balance over five years. We're setting the stage for private sector job creation and, so far, I'd say, based on the numbers in the last year, we're doing a pretty good job of it: 170,000 new jobs created in the last year since we were elected June 7, with 47,000 new jobs in the month of April alone. Those are pretty darned good numbers.

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We're doing that by reducing burdensome red tape by 25% over a number of years. This allows us, as the budget said, to invest in what matters most. That's things like increasing funding in health care, increasing funding in education, increasing funding for autism services and social services and increasing funding significantly in mental health services, but also thinking about our children and grandchildren and not burdening them with debt because we just want to keep on spending and spending and spending. That's really easy to do, but we're trying to get the province back on track so that we have a balanced budget and hopefully surpluses in the future so we can pay down some of that debt and not burden the young people of our province with that future debt.

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

**Mr. Tom Rakocevic:** It's always an honour to rise here. I, with much trepidation, am watching a spectacular, four-year unelection campaign by this government that is

killing Ontario with not just 1,000 cuts but 10,000 or 100,000 cuts.

Part of what I spoke about in my member's statement today—because this is survivors of crime week—is the removal of the Criminal Injuries Compensation Board and the slashing of support funds for pain and suffering by 80%. At an event that was hosted by Out of Bounds grief support and Rev. Sky Starr, I listened to very, very difficult, tragic and touching stories of individuals who are victims and survivors of crime. The ones who spoke at this event primarily were victims of domestic abuse. One person who spoke in detail was someone who was shot and paralyzed at a barbecue.

When I shared with them the news of the cuts coming to victims and survivors of crime, I can tell you that not a person in that room was in support of it. Not a person in that room thought, "Yes, balance the budget on our backs." Not a person thought that any of the suggestions that are being made are good ones. If members of this government had been there in that room, I wonder how their conscience would feel. This is wrong-headed.

Though it's not the budget bill, what they're doing with development in the city of Toronto is unimaginable and will set the city planning division and everyone back by years and years and years. I don't understand where this government gets its advice from. It's certainly not the residents of Ontario. It's big developers, it's big money and it's the corporate elites. This is not a government for the people.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Percy Hatfield):** Now we'll return to the member from Guelph to summarize what he's just heard.

**Mr. Mike Schreiner:** I appreciate all the members for participating in the debate. I want to just start by responding to the member from Scarborough–Rouge Park, who talked about the importance of education and health care. I remind the members opposite that this bill actually doesn't even keep up with inflation when it comes to health care investment. How are we going to deal with the hallway health care crisis we have when health care is actually getting an effective cut?

When it comes to education and the increase in class sizes, I'm being told by school boards that some of the programs that the members opposite talk about wanting to support—things like the trades, things like tech and alternative education programs—are the ones that are on the chopping block because they need lower class ratios in order to be able to fund those kinds of programs.

I appreciate the member from Kingston and the Islands talking about the importance of a clean economy. One of the reasons that I am so excited about the economic opportunities for Ontario and a clean economy is that not only is it the best way to generate wealth and prosperity and actually address the climate crisis; it's also a way to grow government revenue so we can invest in the things that we really care about, like education, health care and social services that protect the most vulnerable.

The member from Parry Sound–Muskoka talked about the need for tough choices. That member is absolutely

right. I remind the government that when they were in opposition they used to hammer the Liberals for their unfair hydro plan but we're borrowing \$3 billion a year to subsidize electricity prices. That's what blew the budget out of whack. Why aren't they cutting it or at least reducing it?

At the same time, they're offering a tax cut in the fall economic statement to the wealthiest people. That doesn't provide funding for the vulnerable crime victims that the member from Humber River–Black Creek talked about in his statement—

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

**Mr. Jim McDonell:** I'll be sharing my time with the member from Kitchener–Conestoga.

It's a pleasure to rise today to join the debate on Bill 100, the Protecting What Matters Most Act. This bill, introduced by my colleague the Minister of Finance, will implement the budget presented in the Legislature by him in April.

In June 2018, the people of Ontario voted for a new approach in government. They had seen the waste and mismanagement of the previous administration and said, "Enough is enough."

I have been a member of this Legislature for almost eight years now and have said repeatedly, during every campaign, that the biggest threat to Ontario's public services, which people have come to expect and depend on, is the suffocating debt that our province is continuing to accumulate. Those spending habits of the previous government, supported by the opposition NDP caucus time after time, were completely unsustainable, leaving behind a \$15-billion deficit while still somehow managing to starve programs and services across the province.

I'm proud to be a member of this side of the House that is going to fix this mess that has been left behind for us and our children and grandchildren. The government was given the task of cleaning up this fiscal mess. It's time to protect what matters most to Ontarians.

Given that there is a \$15-billion deficit and that we were spending \$40 million more than we are taking in each day, it's not going to be easy. To put it another way, we were spending over \$35 million a day just in interest payments to support the \$350-billion debt left to us by the Liberal government.

People know that it's a big number, but they don't really know what it means. What would \$35 million buy you? Some 390,000 more nurses; or 14 million MRIs per day—these are big numbers—over five million per year. The new Cornwall hospital: We could purchase three of them. This is what we spend in interest every day.

That's what we're wasting every day. It's mind-boggling, because we just don't believe the members opposite care. But I believe these numbers resonate with the people of Ontario as to the lost opportunities and the need to take action.

We are taking a responsible approach to balancing the budget that restores confidence in Ontario's finances while protecting what matters most. Our responsible path to

balance projects a balanced budget with a surplus by the end of the year in 2023-24.

In addition to balancing the budget and protecting our critical public services, we will be bringing \$26 billion in relief to families, individuals and businesses over the next six years. We will be providing relief and restoring balance, all without having to raise taxes. Our plan restores trust and sustainability in the province's finances for generations to come while bringing real relief to families and businesses today.

This budget outlines how we are providing the \$26 billion over six years. For example, we will be eliminating \$3 billion in tax increases planned or imposed by the previous government; returning over \$10 billion to the pockets of families and businesses by cancelling the previous Liberal government's cap-and-trade carbon tax; bringing over \$2 billion in relief to low-income families and individuals through the LIFT Credit; helping families with the new CARE Tax Credit, totalling over \$2 billion; and cancelling \$150 million in scheduled fee increases.

The budget introduced by my colleague the Minister of Finance lays out a plan to bring the budget back to balance and make new investments in health care, child care and education. The health care budget itself increases by \$1.3 billion this year: \$384 million in hospitals and \$267 million in home care.

In addition, we are investing \$90 million in a new low-income seniors' dental plan. Since I have been an MPP, our party has brought up the importance of seniors' dental care year after year. The Liberal government, supported by the NDP, failed to act on it. So now, for the first time, we are investing \$90 million in a new low-income seniors' dental plan. This will make a real difference in the lives of seniors.

We were also elected to end hallway health care. As part of that, we are investing some \$1.75 billion to create 30,000 new long-term-care beds. We believe this will help get people out of the hospital who require care and cannot get it anywhere else. This investment will help fix what everyone in the House knows is an urgent problem.

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I want to give credit to my colleague the Minister of Health and Long-Term Care for the commitment she has shown in increasing the support for mental health. This government is investing \$3.8 billion into mental health care: \$1.9 billion from the feds and \$1.9 billion from the government as well.

I want to talk about the education budget for a moment. I am proud of the work being done by the Minister of Education. She is a strong supporter of our educational system and works day and night to improve it. The education budget in Ontario increases by \$700 million this year alone. We've all heard the fearmongering from the other side, and there's nothing to it. We're investing \$13 billion over 10 years in upgrades and capital expenditures, including \$1.4 billion this year alone. We're investing \$1 billion over five years to build 30,000 child care spaces in our schools—another incredible investment in our entire education system. Those child care spaces can be operated either by for-profit or not-for-profit businesses.

That leads me to talk about one of our signature programs, and that is the CARE Tax Credit. It technically is called the Ontario Childcare Access and Relief from Expenses Tax Credit; thankfully, we'll just call it the CARE Tax Credit. This would support families with incomes of up to \$150,000 and help them access a broad range of child care options. This is the most flexible child care program offered in the history of the province. It is offering families up to \$6,000 per child under the age of seven, \$3,750 per child from the age of seven to 16, and up to \$8,250 per child with a severe disability, regardless of their age. This is up to 75% of the eligible child care expenses for about 300,000 families in the province of Ontario. From a technical perspective, this is beyond the existing provincial and federal tax credits that can be claimed by families.

The previous government's budgets could have been considered works of fiction. The people need to know that the numbers are accurate and that the numbers are being presented according to the laws of the province, the country and the standards of the accounting profession. This is not another shell game, like the one orchestrated by the previous Liberal government to conceal debt and confuse the general public.

Therefore, we have developed the Fiscal Sustainability, Transparency and Accountability Act. This act comes with a guarantee that the law will require the Premier and the Minister of Finance to pay a penalty of 10% of the Premier's salary or ministerial salary for missed public reporting deadlines. This adds accountability. Speaker, nobody should take that lightly. There are multiple dates where the Minister of Finance and the government must present documents to the Legislature. Sadly, in the last government, there were many dates that were either missed or just not honoured at all.

We're also ending the fight with the provincial auditor, so that the numbers we present will be able to come with a clean audit report—something the previous government didn't think was so important.

We will be ending the runaway spending of the previous Liberal government and holding program expense growth. We promised to find efficiencies in the way the government spends taxpayers' money, and that is exactly what we are doing. For example, we have improved OHIP+ to continue paying coverage for children and youth 24 years of age and under without a private plan. But those with private coverage will now bill their plans before billing the government. It just makes sense.

Efficiencies like this will allow us to continue making investments in child care and education, while still ensuring we are on the responsible side of the path to balance. We are putting people first, ensuring that every dollar spent goes towards protecting what matters most to the people of Ontario.

Thank you, Speaker. I will now turn it over to the member from Kitchener–Conestoga.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Percy Hatfield):** The member did say that he would be sharing his time, so I turn now to the member for Kitchener–Conestoga.

**Mr. Mike Harris:** It's always a pleasure to be able to rise in the House and take part in debate, and especially when we're talking about Bill 100, our first budget, Protecting What Matters Most.

The core measures of our mandate include restoring accountability and transparency in government while making life more affordable for the average Ontarian. Bill 100 is crucial to obtaining these objectives.

Upon taking office, our government wasted no time getting Ontario's fiscal house back in order. The fact is, few things were more damaging to this province than the complete disregard shown by the previous government towards our taxpayers and their hard-earned money.

To put this into perspective, Mr. Speaker, let's review a few of the facts. We inherited a \$15-billion—with a “b”—deficit. This means that the previous government was spending \$40 million more a day—\$40 million—than it was generating in revenue, and on what? Bad energy contracts—that's not fair—and also, debt repayment; we can't forget about that as well. But I will get to that in a few minutes, because we are still paying for that interest, Mr. Speaker, and we are still paying dearly for the previous government's outrageous spending habits.

For all the money the previous government spent, I have one question: What were they doing to get the people of this province ahead? Whereas budgets under the previous government may have been good for political gain, our budget is all about protecting what matters most for Ontario's families. We are making the hard decisions that need to be made now, to ensure that our province and future generations inherit a stronger and more prosperous province than before we took over.

Our plan is a reasonable one that would deliver Ontario to a balanced budget—and surplus, might I add—by the year 2023-24. We are moving quickly, but let me stress that we are taking a balanced approach and providing real relief to businesses and families along the way.

While cleaning up this province's finances, our government has also committed to delivering \$26 billion in relief over the next six years through:

- the elimination of harmful taxes implemented under the previous government, such as the job-killing and regressive cap-and-trade carbon tax;
- the elimination of planned tax hikes;
- the implementation of new tax credits for individuals and families, like the LIFT Tax Credit and the CARE Tax Credit;
- providing corporate income tax relief through the Ontario job creation incentive;
- cancelling over \$150 million in scheduled fee increases; and
- increasing funding for electricity price relief.

Our plan, unlike the previous government's, is a plan that Ontarians can trust. Don't take my word for it, Mr. Speaker. Take the word of the Financial Accountability Officer, who was quoted in the Toronto Sun just a few days ago stating the following: “If the government is able to maintain its spending plan, restraining spending growth to 1%, I think it's got a very realistic chance of achieving

its plan. The last time that's been done in Ontario”—are you ready for this, Mr. Speaker?—“was in the 1990s.”

That's right. Just like my father's government, ours came into power at a time when the province is confronting a crisis, just like when they had to come in and clean up the mess that Bob Rae left—a crisis generated by the previous government's spending problem, spending frivolously to do little more than rack up the debt.

Oh, yes, it's time that we talk about the debt. Did I mention the fact that Ontario is the most indebted sub-sovereign nation in the entire world, Mr. Speaker?

**Mr. Robert Bailey:** Tell us more.

**Mr. Mike Harris:** I will tell you more.

What does this mean for the people of Ontario? Why is that such a bad thing? I think we all know the answer to these questions, but allow me to refresh our memories. It's quite simple: Debt accumulates interest, and that takes up space on the budget. Right now, Ontario is facing over \$13 billion in interest payments on debt each year—\$13 billion a year—servicing the debt. That would be—that is, actually—the fourth-largest line item in the budget.

The sad reality is, every dollar we spend towards paying interest on the debt—I know that my colleague from Stormont-Dundas-South Glengarry mentioned this earlier. Every dollar that we pay on the debt, in other circumstances, could have been directed to more profitable pursuits, such as health care, education, hospitals, you name it. That is why it is so important that our government has come in to clean things up.

Cleaning up this mess begins with changing the way we scrutinize our spending, and this comes with adding measures of accountability for government officials, agencies and programs.

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With our new Fiscal Sustainability, Transparency and Accountability Act, our government has demonstrated its commitment to restoring transparency and trust in the management of taxpayers' dollars by ensuring that the Office of the Premier and the Minister of Finance are held financially accountable in the case a reporting deadline is missed. Our government is guaranteeing that the Premier and Minister of Finance will pay a penalty of 10% of their wages for a missed public reporting deadline. What this is about is holding ourselves, as a government, to the highest possible standards so that we may be able to perform to our highest abilities in fulfilling our mandate set out by the people of Ontario.

Consider this, Mr. Speaker: Under the previous government, eight of the last 14 third-quarter financial reports were either late or not released at all. This kind of neglect will not fly, not for a minute, under this team. I have to say, I am so unbelievably impressed by the measures, big and small, that our government is taking to put the interests of everyday Ontarians back at the heart of decision-making in this province. We are putting this province back in the green while continuing to invest in what matters most. Whether it is hospitals, schools or transit, our government is putting forward sizeable and strategic investments to make sure that we can boost economic activity,

create more jobs and make life more affordable in this province for years to come.

The previous government had announcement after announcement but failed to deliver, and this is one of the biggest frustrations that our constituents had with the way things were run previously. Over the last five years, the infrastructure investments doled out were, on average, 17% below what was expected.

Thankfully, Mr. Speaker, our government does not deal in whimsy and promises; we deal in results. Where there is real need, we will fill it. For example, with an aging population, we need to make sure that we have capacity to meet demand in future years. That is why our government is spending \$17 billion over the next 10 years to improve our hospitals. New hospital developments are already under way across this fine province. There are around 60 major construction projects either currently under way or in the planning stages.

It's not just hospitals that will need more investment in the years ahead. For many years to come, demand on long-term care will only increase. In confronting this reality, our government is allocating \$1.75 billion towards the expansion and modernization of long-term-care beds across the province. We're building 15,000 new long-term-care beds while also restoring 15,000 that have been outdated. See, Mr. Speaker? This kind of material impact is achievable for government when it is strategic and focused on the way that it makes use of taxpayer dollars. We are ensuring that those who have paid their dues get the services that they require upon retirement.

Our government is also ensuring that younger generations can create an even more prosperous future by investing in their education today. Part of fostering a better learning experience for students is making sure that our facilities are up to current standards. Under the previous government, our education system was mismanaged. Over the past 15 years, we saw closure after closure of schools—725, if my math is correct, Mr. Speaker. Let me say I care passionately about this issue—very passionately. How could I not, as a father of five? You knew I was going to work that in there somewhere. I want a better future for my children and all of the children across this province—one filled with more opportunity. My colleagues and I on the government benches are working day in and day out to make that vision a reality. Our commitment to this is clearly reflected in the budget we debate today.

So what are we doing for our education system, Mr. Speaker? Well, here's something, and it's no small drop in the bucket: Our government has committed to devoting \$13 billion in capital investment towards building new schools and expanding our existing infrastructure. This investment will be rolled out over the next 10 years, and it begins with this budget. Over the next year, Ontario students will benefit from \$1.4 billion in school renewal and repair.

Expanding our infrastructure, whether it be in the form of hospitals, schools or roadways, is one of the principal ways in which our government can create a more profoundly positive impact on Ontario's economic outlook. It

should come as no surprise, therefore, that our government is investing \$1.3 billion towards rebuilding and restoring our highways. All of this comes in addition to the record-breaking funding we're putting forward on the transit file with the expansion of transit options for Scarborough residents, like the extension of the Yonge line, the extension of the Eglinton West LRT, and of course the introduction of the new Ontario Line.

With that, Mr. Speaker, I'll be fully supporting this budget. I'm looking forward to the questions and comments.

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

**Mr. Paul Miller:** Speaker, when I saw this part of the budget, I was really upset, because in my riding 20% of the people live below the poverty level, 20% of those people depend on legal aid for support. Cutting legal aid by one third is devastating to these people. The action will slow down the court proceedings and tie up more resources because there's a lack of bureaucrats to deal with it, there's a lack of lawyers to expedite the process.

What do people do who are financially restrained, injured—low-income tenants, people on ODSP or OW? Who do they turn to for help? There's no one there. They cannot afford to go into the legal system because they can't afford a lawyer. That's what legal aid is all about—to give those people a voice in court, to give them an opportunity to deal with the situations that are devastating in their lives. It may not be important to some of the people in this room, but to them it means everything. It's just obnoxious to me to cut that by one third and put these people in a worse position than they are now. Some of them wait for months to get in front of a judge or even Family Court or a justice of the peace.

So what does this government do? They cut it by another third, so these people don't have access to due process. It's outrageous. I can't believe they haven't looked at this and revisited this particular situation. I'll have more people in my office, and the people in the cities that are suffering and the communities that are suffering are going to have more people in their offices, including some of the government offices. There are going to be more people in there looking for help. What do you do? Turn them away? It's pretty bad stuff, Speaker.

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

**Mr. Dave Smith:** We've been talking about the budget bill for quite some time, and it's really important now that we get this passed. There are a lot of things that we're trying to do with this budget. We inherited a debt that no other province or state in the world has ever been in a position with. We owe more money than anyone else does. This budget is getting us back to a point of fiscal sustainability. We're paying more than a billion dollars a month in interest. What could you do with a billion dollars a month if we had that to use for services? There are so many things that we've had to take a step back at because we simply don't have the money. Over the last 15 years, so much money has been wasted, so much money has been

borrowed, and we're now in a position where we have to say, "Why? How do we stop it?"

I have three kids. At some point, I think I'm going to have some grandchildren. I want to make sure that they have a future.

I grew up in a time in Ontario when there were a lot of opportunities for us. We had a great Premier at the time; I grew up in the 1970s and the 1980s. Bill Davis was one of the best Premiers this province has ever seen. He did things that were intelligent. Yes, he borrowed some money, but he took us from a 4% to a 6% debt to GDP. Yes, he borrowed money. He didn't take us from 27% to 41%. That's what we got left with.

We need to be in a position where we are financially sustainable so that we can provide all of those services for all of the people who depend on us. It's incumbent on us to make good decisions, to take the money that we have and spend it wisely on the people of Ontario.

I'm looking forward to the vote on this bill. I'm happy to support it, and I hope everyone in the House will support it, as well.

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

**Mr. Terence Kernaghan:** In reading this bill, I've been struggling with it, and then I finally realized exactly what's going on here: This bill was written between the Conservative and Liberal coalition. They relied upon their Liberal friends in order to create this. In fact, the Conservatives have done even better; they're spending \$5 billion more than the spendthrift Liberals. So you've one-upped them again, Conservatives. Well done.

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But further, they're undermining accountability by immunizing the government from legal liability with section 17. But it wasn't enough to do just that. The Conservatives didn't just want to immunize themselves; they wanted to help their Liberal forefathers and friends. So they've made that retroactive so they can give a pat on the back to Wynne and McGuinty, again the people that came before them.

Ultimately, what they're doing with this is threatening the entire principle of democracy itself. They have really rejected the separation of powers. Quite frankly, this is utterly shocking.

Recently, there was—I believe it was Travis Dhanraj who was speaking with the Premier. The Premier accused families of children with autism of having their hands in the "trough." He also went on to say, "Those people would never vote for me." Well, pardon me from where I stand, but in democracy, regardless of whether someone votes for you or not, as the Premier of Ontario, you really ought to stand up for them and do something. But instead, we have a Premier who only considers his base. Again, he said, "Those people would never vote for me." So those people don't exist in the Premier's Ontario. He's not for those people.

Really, we need a government that stands up for children, stands up for health and stands up for education, not one that attacks all of them, such as they've done in this bill.

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

**Mr. Will Bouma:** It's great to rise and talk about the budget. I'm so glad to hear that we're getting close to actually getting this passed so that we can continue the great work of getting Ontario back on track. I'd like to thank the member from Stormont–Dundas–South Glengarry and, of course, the wonderful member from Kitchener–Conestoga for bringing out some excellent points, but it's time that we get this done.

As was said by my colleague from Peterborough–Kawartha, we have more debt in this province than any other subnational province or state in the entire world. I can remember, just a few years ago, when it was a crisis in California, and yet they have less debt than we do and they have 10 times the population. That's what we have to do for the sake of our future.

It's interesting, listening to the member from London North Centre talking about the base of our party and our Premier. What's really great to note is the fact that—you know, my question to the NDP would be, where have you lost your way? Because I can recall, in the heady days of the great leaders of the NDP, where they would represent the working man and the working woman, they would represent the little guy. But those days are long gone. Now it's union leaders and the socialists and elite people with these far-left policy ideas—tax and spend and tax and spend. It's time that they remembered their base too, the people who work hard in the province of Ontario.

That's what our government is committed to, and that's what we're trying to fix with this budget. So I trust that if the NDP really stands firm with what they claim to stand for, the working person of Ontario, they will prop up the budget by voting for it.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Percy Hatfield):** We'll return now to the member from Kitchener–Conestoga.

**Mr. Mike Harris:** I'd like to thank the member from Hamilton East–Stoney Creek, the member for Peterborough–Kawartha, the member for London North Centre and, of course, wrapping up with the member from Brantford–Brant.

We had the opportunity during the last election to go door to door. I know I and a lot of colleagues in the House have had a chance to speak with numerous constituents, whether that be at a farmers' markets or at their office or knocking on doors themselves now, a year later. Some of the same issues keep coming up, when we're talking about affordability in the province of Ontario.

I was door-knocking in a neighbourhood just west of Kitchener back during the election, and I actually ran into a few people that were considering moving themselves and their businesses out of the province because things were getting too hard here. It was costing too much for electricity. It was costing too much to heat their homes. It was costing too much for fuel. These were average people. We're not talking super-high-net-worth people. But they realized that we were on a path to unsustainability. They realized that we were on a path to financial ruin, and they didn't want to be part of that.

I think it's really important that we acknowledge that there are actually people who wanted to move out—and I've had a chance to touch almost every province and territory through my life. Ontario is a beautiful place. For people to say that they want to leave Ontario because they can't afford to live here anymore, that's a sad state.

I don't think anybody wants to see things come to that, but we keep hearing from the opposition how they just want to keep perpetuating that, and raising taxes and spending is not going to help that situation. What we're doing is, we are protecting what matters most, and we are making sure that we have a sustainable future for everybody here in Ontario.

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

**Ms. Catherine Fife:** It's a pleasure to join the debate as always and bring the voices of the people of Waterloo to this Legislature. It's always a privilege to do that because I get to correct some of the noise that comes out of this Legislature, particularly on the Ontario News Now channel.

I have to say that Bill 100, the Protecting What Matters Most Act, is a piece of legislation that, I think, as the mayors across this great province notified the Premier of just recently, is a downloading by stealth. That's pretty powerful, actually, for the mayors to unify themselves and come in to Toronto last Friday to point to the very specific lines in Bill 100 which would harm the people in Hamilton, Windsor, Peterborough, Brantford—Brant and Toronto, and I want to thank the mayors and the councillors from across the province. I also want to thank the school board trustees because they've done a very good job of really pulling back the layers on this piece of legislation, this budget bill, and speaking truth to power.

Even over the weekend, I participated in an education town hall. The MPPs from Kitchener—Conestoga, Cambridge and Kitchener South—Hespeler were invited to this education town hall to tell the people in that forum about the education changes that are part of the new transformation and funding model around education. They didn't; they chose not to attend and they left a vacuum there, really, that leaves so many questions about the real priorities of this government.

I know you know that we have never spoken about beer so much in this Ontario Legislature. This budget liberalizes alcohol and particularly beer. It obviously opens the door to tailgating. You can go to a grocery store, a corner store, at 9 o'clock in the morning. At the Toyota event I attended not that long ago, the Premier said, "Yes, finish your shift and go to the corner store and have a couple of beers." Who wants to go down to the Short Stop and have a couple of Pabst Blue Ribbons? Actually that's the kind of beer that will be in our corner stores. It won't be our local craft brewers; it'll be the large beer manufacturers that get the shelf space, quite honestly.

That's a real concern from small businesses which are craft brewers in the province of Ontario, and it really leaves us questioning what the priorities of this government are, because the general sense out there in the

province of Ontario in our local communities—and all of us got to spend some time in our ridings last week—is that this government is intent on creating chaos. They've created chaos with the health transformation and not letting front-line workers know what's going on. In education, the reorganization of class sizes and the new ratio have created pure and utter chaos for school boards who are going through their staffing models right now. On the environment, there is just a general sense that this government is willing to let Ontario burn.

We have to question where the money is going in this budget because even with the deal that was announced yesterday, a piece of legislation which is accompanying the budget around liberalizing beer, freeing the beer in the province of Ontario because this is a priority in someone's world—and the way it was reported was interesting because it lends itself to truly compromising the confidence in Ontario's economy, the manner and the volatility by which this Premier, in particular, is conducting himself.

**1650**

With the announcement yesterday that this government, the Ford government, will be cancelling the contract that they have with the Beer Store—and obviously there is a contract on the table. It's contractual law. It still exists in the province in the province of Ontario, and the Beer Store president, Ted Moroz, warned that the company is "pursuing ... legal options," as you would expect a company to do if the government—or any entity, really—rips up a contract in a very public way by introducing legislation. He goes on to say, "The government cannot extinguish our right to damages as outlined in the master framework agreement."

"An arbitration tribunal ... shall treat all obligations in this agreement ... as binding and enforceable against the province despite its status as the crown, even where the alleged breach results from a change in legislation or public policy," the agreement states. What does this say to the general population and to businesses that are looking to invest in Ontario? Not only are 7,000 jobs at risk—those are good jobs in the Beer Store—and not only does it speak to the priorities, where beer trumps health care and education and the environment; not only does the general public wonder what is going on in this Legislature, where beer dominates the entire agenda of this government, but businesses worry, and genuinely so. They worry that a government would just rip up a contract. That certainly does not instill confidence.

Also, there is a cost. There is a cost, a financial cost, to this endeavour: "The contract spells out that Queen's Park might have to compensate the Beer Store for \$100 million already spent on infrastructure improvements, lost profits during a two-year price freeze in the contract, the cost of broken leases and pension obligations if the company is forced to close some of its 450 outlets and lay off employees due to a decrease in business.

"Brewery industry sources have suggested that the payout to the Beer Store for breaking the contract could cost taxpayers as much as \$1 billion," an estimate that this government will not even entertain. How irresponsible is

it to just put a blanket statement out there that this will not cost us any money? The laws still exist in the province of Ontario, and \$1 billion is one-zero-zero-zero-zero-zero-zero-zero-zero-zero-zero. It's a lot of zeros, Mr. Speaker.

The people of this province have not indicated at all that putting some Pabst Blue Ribbon in a corner store is a priority for them, because it isn't. At no time did the people of this province indicate to this government that beer should be more important than addressing hallway medicine—now we have hallway education, because the new student formula will actually push kids out of the classroom, because classrooms are not designed to hold 40 students. We have hallway medicine, which is continuing. We have hallway education, which we're just on the cusp of.

The Financial Accountability Officer filed his report yesterday indicating that on the health care file, this government has already slashed \$2.7 billion, and he couldn't even get a very good idea of where that money is exactly being cut—it's just gone—because this government declared health care funding to be a matter of cabinet confidentiality. Whatever is happening in those back-rooms, the one thing we know for sure is that it isn't in the best interests of the people of this province. We do know that for sure.

If businesses are looking to Ontario to invest, social infrastructure matters. The quality of the health care system matters. The quality of the education system matters. That matters to companies because they want the best for their employees and they want to make sure their employees have access to that. It's a matter of productivity. What does it say that a government will just arbitrarily rip up a contract? It does not instill confidence in this government or in this economy. Basically it says, and there was this comment today, that you might as well be writing these contracts with businesses on toilet paper—and not even the good kind of toilet paper; the really cheap kind of toilet paper, Mr. Speaker.

It is really interesting, too, because the Premier and the finance minister said, "Okay, well, listen." If this is the new reality, they'll rip up the contracts, go to court, spend a lot of money on lawyers—the lawyers are doing very well in this province since this government got elected. What does that say to those companies? It says, "You know what? This government does not bargain or negotiate or collectively bargain in good faith," and they will look away.

We actually are seeing consumer confidence, as an economic indicator that measures the degree of optimism that consumers have, regarding the overall state of a country's economy and their financial situations—we're seeing that confidence drop. Private consumption constitutes about two thirds of all economic activity in Ontario. During an economic expansion, consumer confidence is usually high. So if Ontario is open for business, then the consumer confidence should be high, right? Wrong. Consumer confidence in Ontario is at its lowest point since 2015, Mr. Speaker. And I would suggest to you, based on the reports that are coming to this House, that the

instability, the volatility and the temper tantrums, quite honestly, that come right out of this government do not instill any kind of confidence that this government knows what they're doing, especially when they've had to walk back a lot of legislation already.

We've said this straight up: Your process, by drafting and constructing legislation, is not an inclusive process. You're not talking to front-line health care workers, for instance. You're not even talking to the people who were elected to serve. You're shutting those people out of the process by time-allocating pieces of legislation that go through this House. You're even preventing those pieces of legislation from coming to committee. How is that strengthening our democracy? How is that open and transparent? Well, I'll tell you right now: It's not.

It begs the question: Where is the money being cut? Because you hear some specific little lines that don't incorporate a rate of inflation. Conservatives used to believe in this concept of rate of inflation and funding for it. So far, what we've seen is what this government doesn't care about. They don't care about trees, because they eliminated the 50 Million Tree Program at a cost of \$4.7 million. They don't care about ensuring that people have access to justice, because the cut to legal aid funding was \$164 million. The cut to tuition revenues for universities and colleges, the operating grants, was \$440 million.

They cut children's aid societies, Mr. Speaker. The most vulnerable children in the province of Ontario: They cut \$84.5 million from that. They cut the arts council; we know they don't care about the arts. They cut the Indigenous Culture Fund by \$2.25 million.

They eliminated the funding for the Ontario college of midwives. Midwives save the health care system money; they do. They do before care, and they do aftercare, and it prevents women and their babies from going into crisis. Midwives are a strong investment in the health care system.

They cancelled the Basic Income Pilot Project; that was \$50 million. They cancelled the Green Ontario Fund, which provided financial incentives for energy savings, because the smart investment on the energy file is on conservation; that was \$377 million. They did the original cancellation of funding for school repairs of \$100 million. They reduced funding for electricity conservation programs; that's \$147 million.

It goes on and on.

So we know what they don't care about; we do. The people also see this. I know that you've heard that, because when you were in your riding, my PC friends—

*Interjection.*

**Ms. Catherine Fife:** You should read your Twitter feed there, Bob. I think you would be really surprised to see what's on there.

But where is the money going, then?

*Interjection.*

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Percy Hatfield):** The member for Sarnia-Lambton: No cross-aisle chatter. Thank you.

**Ms. Catherine Fife:** If the money is not going to trees and environmental policy and conservation and education, if it's not going to those places—because it's not—where is it going?

Do you remember—you remember this, Mr. Speaker—when the Auditor General really pushed back against the Liberal changes to government advertising? You remember that, right? The Minister of Finance, my former friend, said, “One of the first things we will do is reverse this partisan government advertising policy, because it is not fair, it is not right, it is not just to spend taxpayer dollars on partisan political advertising.” But, no, they've just doubled down on it.

The Auditor General was in committee, the public accounts committee, which you know that I chair, and she said straight up—she was speaking specifically about the carbon tax commercial, where all the coins fall out of the furnace and the vents, and the fruits and vegetables. It's really interesting—I don't know who did this commercial for the government—that if you turn the sound off, it looks like people are getting money; they're not losing money. It's sort of a trick question, I guess, there.

1700

But the auditor says very clearly that it's partisan propaganda, pure and simple. That's what she said. “And it's being delivered by a government that vowed in opposition not only not to partake”—

*Interjection.*

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Percy Hatfield):** Member for Kitchener–Conestoga, come to order, please.

**Ms. Catherine Fife:** They don't like it because it's the truth.

*Interjections.*

**Ms. Catherine Fife:** Oh, you still don't like it.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Percy Hatfield):** Second time for the member for Kitchener–Conestoga to come to order, please.

**Ms. Catherine Fife:** “And it's being delivered by a government that vowed in opposition not only not to partake of such chicanery, but also to restore a provincial law banning such advertising.” Promise made, promise broken.

It has been a long time since I've had an opportunity to quote the Toronto Sun. This is what the Toronto Sun says about all the money that is going to government advertising—once again, that this government, when they were the official opposition, said they would not do.

This is the Toronto Sun editorial from May 14. It says, “Ford and the PCs promised they would be better than the Liberals on this issue”—better.

“They should live up to it.

“A recent Nanos poll found two-thirds of Canadians and Ontarians oppose this kind of provincial spending fighting the federal carbon tax.”

Then it goes on to say, “But if the PCs want to attack the federal carbon tax on a partisan basis using selective information”—because you don't mention the rebate—“they should use party funds to do it.” This is the Toronto Sun.

“Right now, they are doing the opposite of what they said they would do when they were in opposition.

“This is also a self-inflicted wound which, politically, is the most dangerous kind.”

I just love that the Toronto Sun has called this government out on spending taxpayer dollars on partisan ads, and then also is speaking truth to them by saying, “This will hurt you.”

It hurt the Liberals. Do you remember the 2014 election, and the pension commercial where the guy is running? Nobody ever thought the guy was going to make it to the other side, because they knew that the Liberals had no intention whatsoever of bringing in a provincial pension plan. People were very angry—especially on the hydro, too; they were very angry about that.

So, here we have a government that said that they were going to be different, and were very vocal and very public about how different they were going to be. But what I've always said in this place is, you can tell the true intentions of a government, of an individual, of a party by following the money. In this instance, we have seen the cuts to the very principal endeavours across the province, be it education, or be it Communitech, for instance. Communitech saw a 30% reduction in their funding. For every dollar that goes into Communitech, there's a \$24 return on the investment. But this government cuts them.

They cut the Mowat institute even though they quoted them in the budget, even though they look to the Mowat institute for advice on the economy. They cut the Mowat. Actually, I think they dissolved the entire Mowat institute.

The Institute for Competitiveness and Prosperity in the province of Ontario, that former Premier Mike Harris brought into the legislation—you cut it. You didn't just cut it; you slashed it, and you got rid of it.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Percy Hatfield):** Through the Chair, please. Comments through the Chair. Thank you.

**Ms. Catherine Fife:** So there you are. Even evidence and research which could strengthen the economy, which could build a very competitive and green-tech economy in the province of Ontario, which we certainly need—we're losing out on so much revenue on the clean-tech file.

Here we are, in the province of Ontario, where we have a budget that does not meet the priorities of the people of Ontario. It fails on so many fronts. It actually will cost us more. This budget is so short-term in its vision that it will cost us money down the line.

I think specifically of all the children on the autism spectrum who are on the wait-list. There is this beautiful mom who comes here every day. Her name is Faith. She is here to hold the government to account, because her child is still waiting for services and waiting for therapy. With every day that passes, you lose an opportunity to significantly intervene and give him the therapy that he needs, so that he can participate in society. If that window closes because this government, who haven't established their advisory committee, who haven't flowed the money that they promised that they would do on April 1—

*Interjection.*

**Ms. Catherine Fife:** How about that? Yes, how about the money? How about actually doing what you say you're going to do?

*Interjection.*

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Percy Hatfield):** Through the Chair, please. And the member for Sarnia–Lambton will come to order.

**Ms. Catherine Fife:** He's feisty today; it's great.

What I want to say about this budget is that, regardless of the messaging from this place, regardless of the news that comes out of here and the public relations exercise that this government is engaged in, the people in our ridings see first-hand what is happening. They asked me at the education forum, where the PC MPPs didn't show up, "Should we still keep fighting?" And I told them, because it's the only thing that I know, "Of course. You have to keep fighting because this province is worth fighting for. The only way that we're going to take it back is if we continue to push back against this government, hold them to account and call them on their lack of openness and transparency, particularly with this budget bill."

We'll proudly vote against it.

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

**Mr. Dave Smith:** My initial response is, "wow." That almost rivals the Brothers Grimm for some of the stories that they come out with.

Two minutes really isn't enough to address everything that came out there. One of the questions was, what are our priorities? Let me tell you what the priorities are. Our number one priority is health care. Right now we have more than 32,000 people who are in hospital beds who should be either in long-term care or in home care; we have more than 1,200 people who are being treated in hospitals; we have an opioid crisis; and we have a mental health crisis. To simply throw more money at a system that's not working is not an intelligent way to do things. One of our top priorities is health care and redesigning it so that we're delivering the services to the people who need it. We're increasing that budget by \$1.3 billion.

Our second priority is modernizing education. Our education system is designed, or supposed to be designed, to prepare our kids for life after school. When they go to college or university or straight into the workplace, we need to make sure that our education system is preparing kids for that. We're making changes to it so that it does prepare kids for that. We're increasing the funding by more than \$700 million through this budget.

Another comment that was made was about our environment plan. We have no environment plan, according to the member from Waterloo. I suggest she take a look at [www.ontario.ca/environmentplan](http://www.ontario.ca/environmentplan). She could read it.

She said businesses were worried, and yet growth in Ontario—we have more than 150,000 new jobs in Ontario since January.

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

**Ms. Jessica Bell:** Thank you to the member for Waterloo for your summary of the impact of this budget bill on the everyday people of Ontario. It was very concerning to hear the cuts and cuts and cuts that are coming that will affect people in my riding, and your riding as well, from the cuts to public health—so that it's more difficult to tackle SARS and measles, it's more difficult to increase the vaccination rate or to ensure that every small child in school gets a dental screening or that every baby gets their hearing tested.

Also the cuts to legal aid societies: We have two legal aid clinics in our riding. They're the first and last points of call for people who are facing illegal evictions or for people who need basic help to access our very expensive legal system.

And then there are the cuts to paramedic services. I have many paramedics who live in my riding of University–Rosedale. I've met a bunch of them, and they're very concerned about how this is going to impact their ability to keep people alive.

It goes on and on—and just the announcement today about the \$2.7-billion cut to health care, and then this government isn't even able to tell us where these cuts are going to happen or how this is going to affect the treasured health care system that we have. I'm deeply concerned.

This government wants to change the channel to talk about beer. But we cannot drink ourselves into having a quality education system or having a quality health care system. People can see that. They're not buying the spin. We can see that in the polls, and I bet you saw that. I bet this government saw that when they went home to their constituents this week and they heard from them about the impact of these cuts on people's daily lives.

I pledge to continue to work with the people of Ontario, and the 100,000 people who live in my riding, to fight for something better.

1710

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

**Mr. Mike Harris:** It's nice to get a bit of a workout in the House today.

My colleague from Waterloo—obviously, we're riding mates, next door to each other; neighbours, if you will. But what she hears is a lot different than what I hear from constituents in her riding as well.

I really want to know what that member has against a good Pabst Blue Ribbon. I'm not sure why she has such a hard time with people being able to go out on Friday night, stop at their corner store after they've worked a hard shift and be able to buy a six-pack of beer and be able to take that home and enjoy it on the back deck. Mr. Speaker, I'm sure that you've had a chance to enjoy a good PBR at one point or another, and I just don't get why the member for Waterloo seems to think that that's such a bad idea.

And when we're talking about bad ideas, she wants to criticize us about how we're running so-called partisan commercials, but I don't hear her standing up and shouting from the rooftops about what the federal government is

doing, running partisan commercials about how apparently great the carbon tax is. She's very silent when it comes to that.

Communitech is another great organization based in Kitchener. I get a chance to meet with them pretty much on a weekly basis. I've been through their facility many times. We've had several ministers there. Since day one, from the time we got elected back almost a year ago now, in June, we've been working with them. We've been trying to help them find savings, trying to figure out some ways that—just like we're asking all the ministries and other agencies throughout the province to try and scale things back a little bit. Because we are in a fiscal disaster, Mr. Speaker. I had a chance to speak about it when I took part in debate a little bit earlier. We're talking about a \$350-billion debt in this province, the largest subnational debt in the world. Every man, woman and child in this province is responsible for almost \$24,000 of that—

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

**Mr. Terence Kernaghan:** I would like to thank the member from Waterloo for her comments. Whenever she gets up and speaks, frequently we see the other side getting all upset. Through you, Speaker, I'd like to mention to the member from Waterloo: Never fear, the truth gets stuck in their ears, and that's why they stand up and shriek.

I also would like to thank her for her comments about hallway education.

*Interjection.*

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Percy Hatfield):** The member for Kitchener—Conestoga, for a third time, come to order.

**Mr. Mike Harris:** It's okay; I'm leaving.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Percy Hatfield):** Make that four.

**Mr. Terence Kernaghan:** But I'd like to ask, what about students who are in portables? Will they be then rendered into the parking lot for their education?

Further, her comments about the government saying one thing and doing another are quite apt. We see a government that needs to have plaques on their desks to remind them of some sort of principles, kind of like the Twilight Zone, with this blind adherence to cultish principles.

I know everyone on the government side doesn't necessarily believe in all these things, but I'd like to also mention that on the International Day Against Homophobia, Transphobia and Biphobia, there had been a statement made a day prior to that day. The statement was made on Thursday. On Friday, I noticed that nobody's social media on the government side mentioned that day. And so I said something. Needless to say, I was attacked by some Conservative staffers and communications people accusing me of lying. I would love to hold up a calendar right now and show them the difference between Thursday and Friday, but they might not get that either. It might be a little tricky for them.

Instead, we saw that not one person on the government side—and it's not to say that they don't support LGBTQ people, but they must have heard from up on high, from

the Premier's office, to not say anything about the International Day Against Homophobia and Transphobia. It's quite disturbing, and really disappointing. I saw some retweets, but nobody actually had the backbone to say anything in their own words. Quite frankly, it's shocking, Speaker.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Percy Hatfield):** Thank you. I should remind the member that it is not in the parliamentary tradition to impugn the motives of somebody that is also a parliamentarian. So I'll advise you in the future not to suggest that somebody in somebody's office obviously did something that we have no evidence in front of us for.

Where are we? Returning to the member to wrap up what she's just heard. I'll give you two minutes for that.

**Ms. Catherine Fife:** Thank you. I'd like to thank the members from London North Centre, University—Rosedale and Peterborough—Kawartha for their comments—and Kitchener—Conestoga. He actually has a really good MPP: It's me. So we are hearing the same things because it's my riding.

I also want to say that the member for Peterborough—Kawartha went on about the priorities—he did try to explain some finance stuff to a former finance critic, but that's okay. But the Kawartha Pine Ridge District School Board confirmed that there are 35 teachers to be laid off on top of 20 being eliminated through attrition. This is what the board chair says, "As we have expressed before, this speaks to our long-term concern with the increased class average direction—a significant loss of educational programming for our students" in Peterborough—Kawartha. Of course, we've heard that no front-line teachers were ever going to be laid off.

On the business side too—because I've spent some time travelling this province—the Muskoka Small Business Centre in Bracebridge—and this is Terri Plaxton Smith and this is a quote from the Globe and Mail. Terri goes on to say that because the government cut "its Starter Company Plus funding," it "will 'drastically impact' not only funding to eligible businesses, but also access to training and mentoring that are a big part of the program.

"This is taking away opportunities from small business, especially in a small community where they can be hard to come by. These cuts do hurt—and not just one individual here and there. It hurts the whole community."

Particularly, I also want to say, those small business grants supported women. I do want to say to this government that women and children are feeling the brunt of these cuts the hardest. Women have actually contacted our office and said, "What is next?," because there have been members in this House who have raised the rights of women to access a safe abortion in the province of Ontario. I feel like, in some days when I come here, it's a new *Handmaid's Tale* episode operating here, Mr. Speaker.

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

**Ms. Donna Skelly:** I will be sharing my time this afternoon with my colleague the member from Chatham—Kent—Leamington.

I'd like to take a few minutes to elaborate more about what our government actually plans to do, as outlined in this budget. This budget contains several measures that will be beneficial to all Ontarians. First of all, there is the CARE Tax Credit, which will allow families to claim up to 75% of their children's child care expenses. There is the new dental plan that will make it easier for low-income seniors to actually get access to dental care. There is the \$400-million emissions reduction fund that will help to speed up the low-carbon solutions and encourage private sector investment in clean technology.

As the parliamentary assistant to the Minister of Economic Development, Job Creation and Trade as well as a member of the Standing Committee on Finance and Economic Affairs, I've heard one message come through loud and clear as I travelled right across the province: Employers want to be able to expand their businesses here in Ontario and stay competitive with our neighbours south of the border. Our business owners are eager to do business in Ontario, but the conditions need to be right so that they can make safe, sound investments into their future.

This budget contains several measures that support businesses and provide them with much-needed change after being ignored by the Liberal government for the past 15 years. One of these measures is the Ontario Job Creation Investment Incentive. This incentive parallels the immediate write-off measures and the Accelerated Investment Incentive announced by the federal government last year. Under these measures, the purchase of manufacturing and processing machinery and equipment and specified clean energy equipment can be immediately written off. Also, most other capital investments are eligible for an accelerated investment incentive that provides a depreciation rate of up to three times the normal rate in the first year that the asset is put to use. These incentives provide an astounding \$3.8 billion in tax relief over the next six years, including tax savings of \$615 million in 2018-19 and over \$1 billion in 2019-20.

I'm proud to be part of a government that is getting our province back on the right track towards fiscal responsibility while at the same time strengthening the economy and creating thousands of jobs. The policies of this government are giving businesses and employers the confidence to invest in Ontario, policies aimed at reducing tax burdens or reducing layer upon layer of red tape. It's our goal to make Ontario open for business and open for jobs, and that has helped employers in this province create over 116,000 jobs since January and over 170,000 jobs since we were elected last June. These numbers are proof that our government is moving in the right direction when it comes to reviving Ontario's economy, and this is a record that my colleagues and I are very, very proud of.

1720

Mr. Speaker, let's remind Ontarians how this budget emphasizes fiscal responsibility while protecting what matters most. Let's begin with education. In recent weeks, our government gave more details on our record \$24-billion investment as we modernize education funding for the 2019-20 school year. Let's break this down a bit. As

announced this past Friday, the Hamilton public and Catholic boards have seen an increase in the amount of funding being allocated for special-needs education and student transportation. Both boards combined will see almost \$1.3 million more in funding for special education, and over \$1.2 million more for student transportation.

Our government is making these vital investments to ensure that students can get to school safely and ensure that students requiring special education get the help they need to see success in the classroom. Our government's investments include \$2.25 million to help school boards implement the new curriculum, including an improved career studies course. We are investing over \$2 million in opportunities and culturally appropriate programs to support learning and help foster a greater sense of community for students in Ontario's French-language education system. We are investing over \$4 million in providing Indigenous students with more opportunities, including help with transitions into higher education or work, including in the skilled trades. We are investing \$50 million in a four-year math strategy to support students, boards and educators, to ensure that math scores actually improve.

Our government is investing \$34.5 million on mental health programming for students who require that extra support. We are investing \$15.2 million for school staff to be trained in ABA and over \$17 million to support students with special education needs, including pilot programs to improve supports for students with autism, as well as other developmental disorders. We are investing \$1.4 billion to repair and renew schools right across Ontario. We are also making an historic \$1.6-billion investment in attrition protection, to prevent school boards from laying off teachers. All in all, our government is investing over \$700 million more in education this year compared to last.

Mr. Speaker, we have seen through standardized test scores that the Liberals' discovery math program didn't work, as math scores dropped right across Ontario. It's shameful that less than half of Ontario's grade 6 students are meeting provincial standards, and I'm glad that our government has taken steps to reverse this downward trend. It seems that the opposition have taken discovery math lessons, as they see this \$700-million investment—more dollars, an increase—as an actual funding cut.

It's not just in education where opposition members are spinning this funding-cut narrative. Our government is increasing spending in social services. We are investing nearly \$1.5 billion more in health and long-term care. Base funding in the Ministry of Infrastructure is more than triple what it was last year. We are increasing spending in the Office of the Solicitor General by nearly \$60 million. We are increasing base funding in transportation, total funding up over half a billion dollars, to get our province moving again. These are significant investments to protect what matters most.

Like hard-working Ontario families, our government realizes the importance of living within our means. That is why this budget delivers a measured, responsible approach to returning to fiscal balance within a realistic five years.

Mr. Speaker, when the Liberals were in power, they were spending \$40 million a day more than they were bringing in. It was simply unsustainable. This government is making smart investments, calculated decisions, moving the government into the 21st century and finding efficiencies, where possible, without putting front-line services in danger. Last year, we campaigned on that promise. We pledged to find efficiencies that added up to four cents on the dollar, and that is exactly what we are doing.

We campaigned on ending halfway health care. We've pledged billions of dollars in hospital infrastructure, mental health and are well under way to meeting our target of creating 15,000 long-term-care beds. We said we would end the Liberal era of spend, spend, spend; tax, tax, tax. We ended the job-killing carbon tax and have taken steps that have led to our government reducing the deficit by over \$3 billion in just 10 months.

Speaker, it's clear. While our government is busy working hard for all Ontarians to protect what matters most, the opposition is spending its time spreading misinformation about our government's policies. This budget really does fulfill its title. It really does protect what matters most to Ontarians: publicly funded education, publicly funded health care and so much more.

Mr. Speaker, I will now be sharing my time with the member from Brantford—Brant.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Percy Hatfield):** Thank you for correcting your record. When you first stood to say that you were going to share your time, your friends around you made so much noise that neither I nor the chief government whip could hear you, but you did say you were going to share it with the member from Chatham-Kent—Leamington. You've now corrected it to say it's going to be Brantford—Brant.

**Ms. Donna Skelly:** That's correct.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Percy Hatfield):** So we will now turn to the member from Brantford—Brant to continue the debate.

**Mr. Will Bouma:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's always a pleasure to rise. To the member from Flamborough—Glanbrook: I don't know how I'm supposed to follow that—so measured, so eloquent, talking about how our budget is going to help get Ontario back on the right track and protect what matters most for the people of Ontario—but I'll make a crude attempt at it.

As always, it's an honour to rise and speak in this House, and it really is a special honour to speak about our first budget. When we came to government almost a year ago now, our government made a commitment to restore accountability and sustainability to our province's finances.

Last Friday afternoon, I had the opportunity to tour the Aboriginal Health Centre in my community in Brantford. It was great to be able to walk around and see the great work that these people do. We sat down and chatted for a while about how we want to change health care, how we want to get things back on track. One of the staff looked at me after I had spoken for a bit, and she said, "How on earth did you ever run for the Progressive Conservatives?" I

looked her in the eye and said, "Well, I just realized that you can't continue to throw money at a problem and hope that it will go away." When we finished, I just said, "You know, the best part about today was the fact that we got to blow up your preconceptions about who I was. So I really appreciated the opportunity to do that."

We made a commitment to do so in a way that protects the most vulnerable among us, in a way that safeguards the most important services and programs that Ontarians can rely on and in a way that makes life more affordable for the people of Ontario. This budget does just that, and it comes at a critical moment for our province. To put it simply—and we've heard that many times already—Ontario's finances are a mess. For the last 15 years, the previous government was characterized by reckless and irresponsible spending and huge deficits.

I did the math the other day, and it works out to something in the magnitude of around \$38.3 million a day for 15 years of spending more than what the province took in, and so we were left with a structural deficit of \$15 billion. As a result of the spending practices of the previous government, Ontario now has the distinction of being the most indebted subnational jurisdiction in the world with a debt, I think, of \$347 billion today. I think most would agree with me that this is certainly not a distinction that we want to be known for, and this is unfortunate. It's unfortunately not surprising when we consider that the former government was spending \$40 million a day most recently. This kind of spending was clearly unsustainable. It put our province's fiscal health in jeopardy, endangered the continued viability of important services such as education and health care, and diminished business and investor confidence.

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When we speak about our province's fiscal health, about the deficit and the debt, we aren't just talking about abstract concepts that have no bearing in reality. In fact, what we're talking about has a significant and real impact on the lives of the people of this province. In 2019-20, we are projected to spend \$13.3 billion just servicing our debt. That money that's going to service the debt, a debt that has accumulated over years of reckless spending, is more than most provincial ministries receive in a year. It is indeed the fourth-largest line item after health care, education and social services. This was the mess that our government inherited when we came into office last June.

I think most people would understand that spending more money than you earn in revenue is unsustainable and wildly irresponsible, that eventually the bill will come due. It's clear that the previous government just couldn't understand this. As the budget shows, our government clearly does. Getting our province back on track is one of the defining challenges right now in Ontario, and that's why this budget is so important. Maintaining a healthy and sustainable fiscal position will ensure that the critical services that the people of Ontario depend on will remain both high-quality and viable into the future.

But we also have a fiscal responsibility to our children and to their children. A government can spend all it wants,

but as I have stated, the bill will eventually come due. That is why I would urge every member of this House to support this budget, which sets forth a practical and sustainable way to fiscal health.

Since our government was elected last June, we have already made significant progress in reducing the deficit and making life more affordable for the families in Ontario. In the first nine months we were in office, we already eliminated \$3 billion in planned or imposed tax increases. We cancelled cap-and-trade, the carbon tax that strangled businesses and killed jobs. That alone saved Ontario families and businesses over \$10 billion.

We made early investments in health and long-term care through our commitment to add 15,000 new long-term-care beds over five years. Of those, we have already announced 7,232 new beds. These investments and new long-term-care spaces are part of our government's ongoing commitment to end hallway health care.

Our government has already made early strides in reducing the tax burden in Ontario, especially that of lower-income families. We've done this through the introduction of one of our most innovative and generous tax credits of its kind, the Low-income Individuals and Families—or LIFT—Tax Credit. The LIFT credit provides up to \$850 in personal income tax relief for low-income workers. That's money that those families can use towards paying their bills, furthering their education or whatever they need to.

As I've already stated, restoring the fiscal health, sustainability and public confidence in the province's finances is one of the core tenets of our budget. It sets this out in three ways: to return the budget to balance; to reduce Ontario's debt burden; and to build public trust, accountability and transparency. Taken together, these three measures will lay the foundation for a financially sound, sustainable and prosperous province.

To begin with, this budget sets out a practical and responsible path to balance. It lays the groundwork for year-over-year reductions, resulting in a balanced budget in the 2023-24 fiscal year. In fact, there is supposed to be a small surplus that year.

This certainly will not be an easy task—as we've seen, there are sacrifices that all of Ontario is going to have to make to get there—but it is a vital one, and we've already made significant strides towards realizing this important goal. Over the past year, our government has taken the \$15-billion deficit that we inherited and reduced it to \$11.7 billion. That's over \$3.3 billion already. We will continue to reduce the deficit every year until 2023, when we finally reach balance after decades of reckless deficit spending.

Speaker, it's important to reiterate how important this is. For each dollar that is reduced from the deficit, that's a dollar that is not added to the debt. Every dollar that doesn't have to go towards servicing the debt can go towards making investments in the people of our province and to making Ontario more competitive. Again, this will not be an easy task, but it is critical to ensuring that our province is in the financial position not only to succeed but to prosper as we move forward into the 21st century.

Speaker, I've got pages and pages to go here. We had to trim it back, but I could talk a lot longer. I have two minutes left.

I want to just finish by speaking about something that's very near to my heart: the support of those with what I'm now calling post-traumatic stress injury. We called it a disorder before, but I like the concept of injury, because injury really talks about what happens to people, that this is a job-related injury that they've experienced.

Many in Ontario suffer from PTSD, and many of those suffer in silence. They may be first responders. They may be nurses or doctors, corrections workers or parole officers, among many others. The people who work in these very stressful professions perform vital jobs. Many of them do it with little thanks.

As a volunteer firefighter myself, I have seen the impact that PTSD can have on a person's life. I've had friends go through it. I've talked to people who have shared with me some of the difficulties that they had. That is why I'm so glad to see the measures included in this budget that go towards supporting both Ontario's first responders and to those with PTSD.

One of the most important first steps in supporting those with PTSD is raising awareness of it and dispelling the stigma around it. Included in this budget is a proposal that June 27 of each year be proclaimed as PTSD awareness day. We owe it to our first responders, to those who serve our communities and to those with PTSD to support them however we can. This support for raising awareness of those living with PTSD is one of the many reasons why I am standing today in support of this budget.

Speaker, in this first budget, our government is making good on its commitments. It's standing by its commitment to restore fiscal balance to our province, to put us on a sustainable path forward. It's making good on our commitment to fiscal accountability and transparency, and importantly, it's doing so while maintaining and investing in the important programs and services that Ontarians rely on.

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

**Ms. Catherine Fife:** To comment on what I just heard, I feel like it's incumbent on me to express what a disconnect there is from the language that we hear from the government side to the reality of what is actually in this budget. I cite the Financial Accountability Officer. The FAO is non-partisan. He is an independent officer of the Legislature. He was brought in to look at expenditures, particularly on estimates, and comment on what is happening in the budget.

*Interjections.*

**Ms. Catherine Fife:** I know that they don't like to hear it, but this is his report, Expenditure Estimates. This is a document that has been tabled with the Legislature. He very clearly in this paper highlights the fact that he examined the Ministry of Health funding and found that Ford's 2019 budget will see \$2.7 billion slashed from health care spending over the next two years. The FAO also said that it was unable to provide a detailed breakdown of the massive cut because the province has deemed

this information to be a cabinet record. This is an independent officer of the Legislature trying to get us to pay attention to actually what is in this bill.

The FAO report also revealed that the Ford Conservatives are slashing funding for children and youth mental health services by \$69 million compared to last year. All of us in this House know that mental health, particularly children's mental health, is in a state of crisis, and yet this budget cuts it by \$69 million. These are the facts. This is based on estimates as funding goes through this Legislature.

I have to say, it wasn't that long ago that I was fighting for a little six-year-old girl to have access to OHIP+, because your transformation program is so short-sighted that it cut off her nutritional supplement. You can't fight cancer if you don't have the nutrition to do so, Mr. Speaker.

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

**Mr. Daryl Kramp:** I certainly want to thank the members from Flamborough–Glanbrook and Brantford–Brant for their dose of economic reality here today. It's so easy to spend, but it's so difficult to pay.

When we take a look at the opposition over there—in 2003, our debt was \$138 billion under McGuinty, and, of course, the official opposition as well now: “Spend more, spend more, spend more.” So they did. In 2011, our debt was \$236 billion: “Spend more. We need more money spent. We have to spend more money.” And now, of course, the debt is \$312 billion and growing dramatically, in that short period of time. It's unbelievable.

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A lot of people can't comprehend: “How much is that?” A lot of people in my area, in my riding, can't comprehend a million dollars or a billion dollars. It's just a bunch of zeroes that they'll never, ever see or comprehend or put in their pockets or understand how they could ever make that money to pay their bills. Let me put it into context. If you give your wife \$1,000 a day, she'd come back and see you in about three years and say, “Well, I spent a million dollars.” Not bad. Wow. Well, try giving her a billion dollars. Do you realize how long that would take? Three thousand years. That's the kind of generosity that we're paying out and never, ever seeing a return on.

Folks, here's something to really consider: 40% of our entire debt is coming up for renewal by the end of the term of this government. Our debt was taken at a very, very low rate. As this rate accelerates, unfortunately, that interest is going to compound even more. We've got to take control of our finances.

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

**Ms. Rima Berns-McGown:** It's an honour to stand up and contribute to this debate.

This government is very much the government of, “Let them drink beer.” Like the famous monarch whom that quote references, it's the government of, “We will cut everything that matters to you, and we will dangle this shiny thing out here for you to look at,” as something that

can maybe take your mind off the fact that they are cutting education, social services, legal aid, trees, children's aid, the arts council, the Indigenous Culture Fund, public health, of course—and it goes on and on and on.

I want to speak to the disconnect that my colleague was mentioning just now, because it is almost surreal to stand here in this House and listen to them talk about the need for getting the deficit under control when we know that in their haste to break the contract with the Beer Store, they could rack up as much as a billion dollars for the taxpayer of Ontario—which is absolutely appalling when you consider that they keep standing there and saying that they don't have money for kids with autism; that it's important for them to cut mental health for kids by \$69 million; that it has been important to take \$2.7 billion out of the health care budget, but then not say where it is, to be secretive about it; that it's important somehow to cut legal aid by 30%.

All of these cuts are happening on the backs of the province's most vulnerable people. They have cut transitional funding to single moms, many of whom are refugees. I want to point out how incredibly racist it is to call refugees “illegal border-crossers.” It's absolutely disgusting and despicable.

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

**Mrs. Daisy Wai:** When I was back in my riding in Richmond Hill, I met with real people. I have seniors who are coming to me and asking, “I have heard that dental is free. Can I start making my appointments with the dentist now?” I say, “Yes, it is free. We are expecting dental care to be free. But wait, not yet, not until the bill is passed.”

My daughter has two university degrees and a master's degree, but she has four children. She came to me and said she heard, and it was a relief for her to learn, that now children under seven, each one of them, will be supported for child care with \$7,000 each, and then the one who is older will have \$3,500. That is real, real good news for her. She said, “Can I start signing them up for summer programs?” I said, “Not yet; not until the bill is passed.”

These are the real people who are coming to me. I just can't wait—and I would encourage and ask members from the opposition to help us—to get this bill passed as soon as we can. Actually, when we see the debt that is growing—that is why I put myself forward to be an MPP. I'm happy to see that we are in the right direction.

When our member from Flamborough–Glanbrook was listing out all of the things, the amount of money that we are funding for different things, including social work, health care and education, and I also heard the member from University–Rosedale as she was talking about cut, cut, cut—we're totally talking about a different, different thing. I could not understand where the cut comes from. She must be—

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Percy Hatfield):** Thank you. We'll now return to the member from Flamborough–Glanbrook to summarize.

**Ms. Donna Skelly:** I want to thank the members from Brantford–Brant, Waterloo, Hastings–Lennox and

Addington, Beaches–East York and, of course, Richmond Hill for their comments this afternoon.

It's interesting, Mr. Speaker. The member from Niagara West and I were chatting a little bit about the debt that we inherited and what we could do if each one of us in this Legislature was simply given one week's worth of what the Liberals were spending on a daily basis. They were spending \$44 million more than we brought in each day. We each get seven days' worth of it, so over \$300 million. What would you do? What could each one of us do with \$300 million in our ridings? Another hospital? More long-term-care facilities? Schools? Repairing schools? Community groups? What could we do?

This is why this government believes so strongly that we must find efficiencies, that we must tackle this out-of-control spending, this wasteful spending—spending that we inherited from a government that simply didn't care about the debt that they were leaving our children and our grandchildren. I go back to that \$300 million: That's just one week of overspending from the previous Liberal government.

That is why we find it so important to ask our ministries to go through line by line, to ask our municipalities to go through line by line and find efficiencies, so that we can tackle this unsustainable debt so that we can start protecting what matters most. When we say that we want to protect what matters most, we're talking about hospitals; we're talking about the homes that our parents will eventually be living in. Those things matter to the members of my caucus. Those are the reasons why we're taking a lot of hits. It's much easier to stand here and spend, spend, spend, but we know we're running out of money and we are doing what's right to protect what matters most.

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

**Mr. Ian Arthur:** It's a pleasure today to rise and contribute to the debate on Bill 100, cutting what matters most to Ontarians.

I would like to start with what I call the five-year phenomenon. There is a little bit of resource-sharing going on. Frankly, Speaker, it's almost downright socialist how much resource-sharing there is going on. I've just heard that Jason Kenney will actually be spending the next couple of months here in Ontario campaigning for Scheer instead of running the province of Alberta.

What I actually want to talk about is this ridiculous promise that the budget will be balanced in this magical five-year number: In five years we'll balance the budget. First we heard that here in Ontario, although we now know that the projections for that are totally thrown off because you had to reverse your cuts to municipalities and that's going to throw off your five-year projection significantly. So that's not a good start to your five-year mission.

It's always conveniently just after your self-prophesied re-election. Conveniently just after—"If you elect us again, then we'll do it." Now we've heard the same thing in Alberta. Kenney: "Five years. Five years. We'll balance the budget if you just give us one more mandate to balance the budget." And now we've heard it from Scheer, somehow. How did he come up with that number? It was so

original: "Five years—just, if you give me a second mandate." This is like listening to Annie: "Tomorrow, tomorrow, I will balance the budget tomorrow." It doesn't really make sense, Speaker. It really, really doesn't.

Let's just talk about this budget and cutting what matters most to Ontarians. It's the beginning of years of cuts. It's going to hurt our economy. It's going to hurt our reputation in Canada and across the world. It already has. These cuts are hurting our reputation. Moody's downgraded our credit rating because you gave up existing revenue streams before you had actually bothered to balance the budget. And it's going to hurt the very families that it purports to help.

**1750**

Let's put this in context a little bit: Ontario is dead last among provinces for total per capita spending.

**Ms. Catherine Fife:** Dead last.

**Mr. Ian Arthur:** Dead last. We spend the least per capita of any province in Canada. That's not really a good place to start for quality services. We also have the lowest per capita revenue. So now you start to realize where the fiscal mess has actually come from. We're unwilling to reconcile—I do have to give you credit; you are willing to reconcile the idea that we don't have enough revenue to pay for what we have, but your answer to that is going to have detrimental effects on the people of Ontario.

This is a sin budget. It's a booze-and-gambling budget. It's about tailgating, drinking at 9 a.m. and lawsuits with international conglomerates over the right to buy beer in the corner store. It's the wrong set of priorities.

I do try to bring some balanced debate to this Legislature, Speaker. I do try to bring some balanced debate, so let's talk about a couple of the schedules. They did some okay things, and I feel it's important to acknowledge them. During pre-budget consultations, one of the groups we heard from most was credit unions. They wanted their mandate updated, and it's nice to see that in the budget. It's nice to actually see a group come in and testify and have a government that is responsive.

We only knew that because we did the pre-budget consultations, because we travelled across Ontario to hear from different constituents. But we only did that for one thing, the pre-budget consultations. So it's good that it's in here; imagine what this government could learn if they travelled other parts of their legislation, if they actually did take the time to listen to Ontarians in a public way, in a way where they actually got to bring their ideas—

**Interjection:** If they did their homework.

**Mr. Ian Arthur:** In a way where they actually did their homework, yes.

I'm a fan of the idea being able to get electronic copies of my car insurance. I think that's a very small but okay move in the right direction.

**Ms. Catherine Fife:** It's common sense.

**Mr. Ian Arthur:** It's common sense, and I don't think it is really momentous to do that. I think that's one kind of small check mark in a long list of terribleness. Amending the Juries Act to allow more Indigenous representation: This is probably the only beneficial thing I've seen this

government do for Indigenous peoples in Ontario so far, so I do respect that.

The problem is that the rest of this bill is abhorrent. It's less about what matters and more about seeing how much fecal matter they can actually stuff into one piece of omnibus legislation.

What is clear in this bill is actually not what matters to this government, but what doesn't matter. What doesn't matter to this government are children. Children do not matter to this government. They cancelled the office of the child advocate. They just removed it, in the midst of ongoing investigation, in the midst of incredibly positive work that that advocate was doing. And in this budget, they've cut a huge amount from children's aid societies. Children's aid? That's where you want to save money? That is the organization that you're asking to do more with less? I have a really hard time trying to reconcile that with "what matters most in Ontario."

What doesn't matter is Indigenous people. This government cut the Indigenous Culture Fund significantly. They have made it so that Indigenous history is not mandatory in schools. I'm actually incredibly proud of the Limestone District School Board—and we should recognize them here—for making the grade 11 Indigenous English class mandatory, because that's leadership. That is living up to our international obligations—

**Ms. Catherine Fife:** And truth and reconciliation.

**Mr. Ian Arthur:** —under truth and reconciliation, to teach Indigenous history. It should be mandatory. It has to be taught to everyone, so they actually understand the colonial history of Ontario and Canada. So what doesn't matter to this government are Indigenous peoples.

What doesn't matter to this government are single mothers and refugees, Speaker, and this is incredibly sad. To axe a child tax benefit for refugee claimants and others, like single mothers, who rely on this to clothe and feed children—a tax benefit to clothe and feed children. Again, how is this where you are deciding to drop the axe? How do you go home at night and sit there and think that these are the services we're yanking money away from, while we embark on a billion-dollar lawsuit with international beer conglomerates?

What doesn't matter is the Anti-Racism Directorate, which has had its budget significantly cut and where the programming section of it was given \$1,000 as a placeholder because they didn't want to eliminate the line completely from the budget. They hadn't really decided what they were going to do so, they put the placeholder of \$1,000—which is an accounting practice, I know that, but what it really says is that what doesn't matter at all is the Anti-Racism Directorate.

And what doesn't matter is being truthful to the people of Ontario—

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

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Percy Hatfield):** The member for Whitby has raised a point of order.

**Mr. Lorne Coe:** Speaker, the member opposite has indicated that the government is being untruthful, implying motive.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Percy Hatfield):** I would turn to the member from Kingston and the Islands and ask him to withdraw, please.

**Mr. Ian Arthur:** I withdraw, Speaker.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Percy Hatfield):** Thank you. Please continue.

**Mr. Ian Arthur:** On the Federal Carbon Tax Transparency Act, schedule 23, the Auditor General of Ontario—this is quoting a newspaper article—urged the government to stop "factually inaccurate" advertising. This is the Auditor General that this government was so enthused by because—

*Interjection.*

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Percy Hatfield):** The member for Kitchener–Conestoga, this is the fifth or the sixth time that you've been called to order. One more time this afternoon will be a warning, and the time after that, you'll be gone.

*Interjection.*

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Percy Hatfield):** You are challenging the Chair, my friend from Kitchener–Conestoga. You are now warned. One more time and you're gone.

**Mr. Ian Arthur:** Thank you, Speaker. We're nearing the end of debate, but thankfully there are three maybe quiet minutes at the end for me to—

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Percy Hatfield):** It's never too late to be named.

**Mr. Ian Arthur:** It's never too late to begin.

The Auditor General urged this government to stop "factually inaccurate" advertising. This is the same Auditor General that this government loved for pointing out the flaws in Liberal accounting practices before, but now, when they're in government and being urged not to spend taxpayer dollars on partisan ads in favour of a federal political candidate, suddenly they don't really want to listen. They're maybe going to look at the financial transparency act. Maybe they're going to look at it.

What a change in their attitude because, under the Liberals, these Progressive Conservatives, many of whom sat while the Liberals were in government—many of them sat in this House while the Liberals were in government—they screamed to high heaven about the changes brought in in 2015 to the transparency act, horrified at the public money the Liberals were spending on partisan ads in Ontario. So how is it in what doesn't matter to this government that they can find the time and the money to cut from children, to cut from single mothers, to cut from refugees, to cut from services that actually do matter, but they have the money and the time to pay for partisan ads with our money? With our money, Speaker. I have such a hard time with that, and so does the Auditor General. I'm really happy to see that she continues to take a stand on this so that no matter what government is in, she at least tries to—but she has urged this government to strengthen the laws again because she says she has no choice but to approve the ads, even if she does find them partisan. To me, that actually sounds like needless red tape. If you're

really not going to actually give her the power to tell you when it's partisan—

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Percy Hatfield):** I'm sorry to interrupt the member from Kingston and the Islands, but the time has expired for your portion of the debate this evening. You'll have a chance to continue the next time this is brought up.

*Third reading debate deemed adjourned.*

1800

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Percy Hatfield):** Pursuant to standing order 38, the question that this House do now adjourn is deemed to have been made.

## ADJOURNMENT DEBATE

### ANTI-RACISM ACTIVITIES

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Percy Hatfield):** However, the member for Kitchener Centre has given notice of dissatisfaction with an answer to a question put to the Solicitor General. The member from Kitchener Centre will have up to five minutes to debate the matter, and the minister will have up to five minutes to reply.

We turn now to the member from Kitchener Centre.

**Ms. Laura Mae Lindo:** As the anti-racism critic for the official opposition, my job is to hold the government to account. I have written letters requesting a briefing; I've gone to the legislative library with research requests, trying to find out what is happening with the anti-racism work in this province; I've put questions on the order paper; and I've asked questions during question period. Here's what I've found so far, as of today: The three-year Anti-Racism Strategy that community members took as a signal that the Ontario government was serious about doing anti-racism work remains archived, and only \$1,000 has been allocated, whether it's a placeholder or not a placeholder, to anti-racism initiatives.

Here's what the public needs to know: The public wants to know what the government's anti-racism plan is and whether or not the Anti-Racism Directorate is the sole place where this work is going to be done. They want to know how this government will know that their plan is effective, and that means they want to make sure, whatever the plan is, that there's an accountability mechanism within so that we know that the job is being done. They also want to know whether or not the Anti-Racism Directorate is external-facing or internal-facing.

External-facing: The reason they want to know this is because—there are only five minutes, so I'm only going to be able to look at two different aspects of racism today. Anti-Indigenous racism that's being perpetuated in our communities still continues. For instance, some Indigenous communities have no access to clean drinking water. They wait for months to have flood mitigation resources come to their neighbourhoods, or their homes are more susceptible to house fires than the average Ontario resident. Indigenous youth are taking their lives at epidemic

levels, and the government hasn't considered it to be an epidemic and the resources haven't been brought into the community. A new Indigenous curriculum has been announced, but we know that it has not been authentic consultation with Indigenous communities, because they have said this to us. The Minister of Education has actually said that the consultations will take place after the curriculum has been implemented.

In the last three weeks alone, we have had a huge rise in anti-Black racism. One woman woke up with the N-word painted on her garage door. Two students have come forward with examples of their experiences of anti-Black racism, bullying, harassment and attacks in a public school, and at least one board has actually admitted in writing that they have not done enough work to address anti-Black racism in the school system. Just recently, a Black woman was racially profiled by the police after dropping her children off to daycare, something that, to be perfectly honest, could have happened to me.

If the ARD is internal-facing, we still have questions: How can racist rhetoric be allowed, justified and/or supported when it's spoken in this chamber? Why aren't the ARD staff advising the minister and the members of government that using words like "illegal border crossers" perpetuates racism? Is the staff telling them this? Is it that they're just choosing to ignore it? If they're choosing to ignore it, then why are you saying that the ARD is doing a great job? As a Black woman who is also an expert in anti-racism initiatives, I'm offended by the racist rhetoric in this chamber. I know that the ARD will not be able to achieve its mandate if the only focus is internal.

So here's what we know: \$1,000 has been allocated in the budget to anti-racism initiatives. The government has said it's a placeholder. So here are more questions: When will more money be allocated? How much money will be allocated?

The Anti-Racism Directorate was created because Black, Jewish, Indigenous, racialized and white Ontarians said they wanted an end to racism. They knew that you couldn't hug it out; they knew that you couldn't talk it out. They knew that there were community organizations that are experts in this area, that are doing the work, that have been underfunded for years. The ARD was supposed to be a conduit to get funding to them. Unfortunately, as far as I can tell, \$1,000 is all that's allocated for that work.

My last question in the last couple of seconds: I would like to know if the community organizations that are experts in this area will be funded, and I would like to know if the government is prepared to do better, because the language that they use in this House is perpetuating racism. I'm looking forward to the debate.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Percy Hatfield):** The Solicitor General now has up to five minutes to respond.

**Hon. Sylvia Jones:** I'm pleased to have the opportunity to speak this evening. The NDP is using an inaccurate figure and fearmongering to advance their political objectives, so I plan to address that. More importantly, I'll take the opportunity to highlight the work being done by the professional, dedicated public servants at the Anti-

Racism Directorate in the face of baseless political attacks by the NDP.

But I first want to speak about why it's so important to be informed on such an important issue. Fighting hatred in all its forms, including racism, is not a partisan issue. In fact, we've joined our colleagues on both sides of this House many times to vocally denounce discrimination, racial and otherwise, at every opportunity.

While Canadians overwhelmingly reject hate, we know that racism and other forms of bigotry persist on the margins and are a serious threat that must be addressed. History and the experience of marginalized groups has taught us that hatred grows when it is allowed to fester, when it is normalized, when it is accepted. That's why it's important to know the facts and to understand that, as a government, we care deeply about this issue.

So let's review the facts: According to the public estimates tabled in this House, the Anti-Racism Directorate budget is \$4.9 million—nearly the same as last year, when it was \$5.1 million. One of the line items under the ARD uses the \$1,000 figure. Now if the NDP bothered to actually read the estimates, they would see that the \$1,000 figure is used throughout the estimates under virtually every category of expenses. They'd also read the following explanatory note to readers at the beginning of the estimates: "In cases where the anticipated recovery of costs of an item is equal to or greater than the expenditures, the balance of the item is shown at the nominal value of \$1,000."

As we've explained before, the \$1,000 nominal figure is a technical accounting placeholder. Again, the Anti-Racism Directorate, whose work, as the name implies, is entirely dedicated to fighting racism, remains at \$4.9 million.

I get that accounting isn't the NDP's strong suit. During their campaign, the Leader of the Opposition admitted to a \$1.4-billion hole in the NDP's proposed spending plan. And we can look at the financial disaster created by Bob Rae's NDP government in the 1990s. The inability to manage public finances may explain why the people of Ontario haven't trusted an NDP government with their tax dollars in more than 20 years.

Our government has been fortunate to have access to the advice and expertise of the incredible professionals at

the ARD as we put forward the most ambitious agenda in Ontario's history.

*Interjections.*

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Percy Hatfield):** No cross-aisle chatter, please. Thank you.

Sorry to interrupt, Minister. With this cross-aisle chatter that's interrupting, I can't hear you.

**Hon. Sylvia Jones:** I heard it, but I was doing my best to ignore it.

I've worked directly with the ARD team and will continue to do so. The NDP undermines these professionals' contributions by falsely claiming the ARD has not been doing its job.

Here are just some recent examples of ARD projects:

—having developed regulations under the new police legislation;

—identifying and helping address racial barriers in the recruitment of corrections officers;

—developing a cutting-edge program to equip members of the Ontario Public Service with anti-racism skills, to create a better work environment and customer service for every Ontario citizen.

In conclusion, I want to speak about the responsibility we have as legislators to fight hate and build a better society that treats its members with the respect they are due as individuals, regardless of race, religion, sexual preference or anything else. We can lead by example. We can celebrate the achievements of all of our people. We can call out unfair circumstances, discrimination and hate.

What we must not do is politicize this issue. We cannot spread misinformation. We cannot normalize racism and hate.

Acceptance and respect for the dignity of every human being are fundamental Canadian values, ones that we cherish across Ontario. Our government will continue to fight racism and hatred through the ARD and through our words and our deeds. I invite all members of this House to join us in that fight.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Percy Hatfield):** Thank you. There being no further matter to debate, I deem the motion to adjourn to be carried.

This House stands adjourned until 9 a.m. tomorrow.

*The House adjourned at 1810.*

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Gill, Parm (PC)	Milton	
Glover, Chris (NDP)	Spadina—Fort York	
Gravelle, Michael (LIB)	Thunder Bay—Superior North / Thunder Bay—Supérieur-Nord	
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Lindo, Laura Mae (NDP)	Kitchener Centre / Kitchener-Centre	
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Mantha, Michael (NDP)	Algoma—Manitoulin	
Martin, Robin (PC)	Eglinton—Lawrence	
Martow, Gila (PC)	Thornhill	
McDonell, Jim (PC)	Stormont—Dundas—South Glengarry	
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Mitas, Christina Maria (PC)	Scarborough Centre / Scarborough- Centre	
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Rakocevic, Tom (NDP)	Humber River—Black Creek	
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Sabawy, Sheref (PC)	Mississauga—Erin Mills	
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Singh, Sara (NDP)	Brampton Centre / Brampton-Centre	Deputy Leader, Official Opposition / Chef adjointe de l'opposition officielle
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