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of Ontario



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

Wednesday 20 November 2019 / Mercredi 20 novembre 2019

ORDERS OF THE DAY / ORDRE DU JOUR

Plan to Build Ontario Together Act, 2019, Bill 138, Mr. Phillips / Loi de 2019 sur le plan pour bâtir l'Ontario ensemble, projet de loi 138, M. Phillips

Mr. Jeremy Roberts.....	6155
M. Guy Bourgouin.....	6158
Mr. Stan Cho.....	6158
Mr. Sol Mamakwa.....	6158
Ms. Jane McKenna.....	6158
Mr. Jeremy Roberts.....	6159
Ms. Judith Monteith-Farrell.....	6159
Mr. Randy Pettapiece.....	6161
Mr. Chris Glover.....	6162
Mr. Sheref Sabawy.....	6162
Ms. Teresa J. Armstrong.....	6162
Ms. Judith Monteith-Farrell.....	6162
Mr. Randy Hillier.....	6163
Mr. Sam Oosterhoff.....	6163
Mr. Taras Natyshak.....	6164
Mr. David Piccini.....	6164
Mr. Chris Glover.....	6164
Mr. Randy Hillier.....	6165
Second reading debate deemed adjourned.....	6165

INTRODUCTION OF VISITORS / PRÉSENTATION DES VISITEURS

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott).....	6165
Mme France Gélinas.....	6165
Ms. Goldie Ghamari.....	6165
Ms. Peggy Sattler.....	6165
Mr. Lorne Coe.....	6165
Mr. Mike Schreiner.....	6165
Miss Monique Taylor.....	6165
Hon. Kinga Surma.....	6165
Mr. Paul Miller.....	6165
Mr. Randy Hillier.....	6165
Hon. Raymond Sung Joon Cho.....	6166
Ms. Jennifer K. French.....	6166
Mr. John Fraser.....	6166
Hon. Monte McNaughton.....	6166
Ms. Marit Stiles.....	6166
Mr. Dave Smith.....	6166
Ms. Suze Morrison.....	6166
Mr. Sheref Sabawy.....	6166
Ms. Jessica Bell.....	6166
Hon. Rod Phillips.....	6166

Ms. Judith Monteith-Farrell.....	6166
Hon. Todd Smith.....	6166
Mr. John Vanthof.....	6166
Ms. Christine Hogarth.....	6166
Ms. Jill Andrew.....	6166
Hon. Bill Walker.....	6166
Ms. Andrea Horwath.....	6166
Hon. Doug Downey.....	6166
Mrs. Lisa Gretzky.....	6166
Hon. Lisa MacLeod.....	6166
Mr. Kevin Yarde.....	6167
Mrs. Robin Martin.....	6167
Hon. Lisa M. Thompson.....	6167
Mr. Norman Miller.....	6167
Ms. Lindsey Park.....	6167
Mr. Michael Parsa.....	6167
Hon. Ross Romano.....	6167
Mrs. Daisy Wai.....	6167
Mr. Mike Harris.....	6167

Committee sittings

Hon. Paul Calandra.....	6167
Motion agreed to.....	6167

ORAL QUESTIONS / QUESTIONS ORALES

Government contracts

Ms. Andrea Horwath.....	6167
Hon. Greg Rickford.....	6167

Government contracts

Ms. Andrea Horwath.....	6168
Hon. Greg Rickford.....	6168

Trans Day of Remembrance

Hon. Paul Calandra.....	6169
-------------------------	------

Government contracts

Ms. Andrea Horwath.....	6169
Hon. Greg Rickford.....	6169

Education funding

Ms. Marit Stiles.....	6170
Hon. Stephen Lecce.....	6170

Real estate industry

Mrs. Gila Martow.....	6170
Hon. Lisa M. Thompson.....	6171

Government contracts

Ms. Sandy Shaw.....	6171
Hon. Rod Phillips.....	6171

Affordable housing

Mr. Mike Schreiner.....	6172
Hon. Monte McNaughton.....	6172

Seniors' dental care	
Mr. Logan Kanapathi	6172
Hon. Raymond Sung Joon Cho	6172
Hon. Christine Elliott	6173
Autism treatment	
Miss Monique Taylor	6173
Hon. Todd Smith	6173
Services en français	
Mme Natalia Kusendova	6174
L'hon. Caroline Mulroney	6174
Social assistance	
Ms. Rima Berns-McGown	6174
Hon. Jill Dunlop	6174
Hon. Todd Smith	6175
Seniors' dental care	
Mrs. Gila Martow	6175
Hon. Christine Elliott	6175
Services for persons with disabilities	
Mrs. Lisa Gretzky	6175
Hon. Todd Smith	6176
Mr. Joel Harden	6176
Aggregate extraction	
Mrs. Robin Martin	6176
Hon. John Yakabuski	6176
Water extraction	
Mr. Ian Arthur	6177
Hon. Jeff Yurek	6177
Notice of reasoned amendment	
The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott)	6177

INTRODUCTION OF VISITORS / PRÉSENTATION DES VISITEURS

Mr. Jeremy Roberts	6177
Ms. Suze Morrison	6177
Mr. Ian Arthur	6177
Mr. Terence Kernaghan	6177
Ms. Donna Skelly	6177
Mme Gila Martow	6177
Mr. Dave Smith	6178

MEMBERS' STATEMENTS / DÉCLARATIONS DES DÉPUTÉS

Social assistance	
Mr. Ian Arthur	6178
Skilled trades	
Mr. Randy Pettapiece	6178
Impaired drivers	
Mr. Wayne Gates	6178
Nepean Sailing Club	
Mr. Jeremy Roberts	6179

Homelessness	
Mr. Chris Glover	6179
Hamilton Tiger-Cats	
Ms. Donna Skelly	6179
Multiple sclerosis	
Mme France Gélinas	6179
Agriculture industry	
Mr. David Piccini	6179
Anti-bullying initiatives	
Mr. Kaleed Rasheed	6180

REPORTS BY COMMITTEES / RAPPORTS DES COMITÉS

Standing Committee on Regulations and Private Bills	
Mrs. Gila Martow	6180
Report adopted	6180

INTRODUCTION OF BILLS / DÉPÔT DES PROJETS DE LOI

Stop Cyberbullying in Ontario Day Act, 2019, Bill 146, Mr. Rasheed / Loi de 2019 sur la Journée pour l'élimination de la cyberintimidation en Ontario, projet de loi 146, M. Rasheed	
First reading agreed to	6180
Mr. Kaleed Rasheed	6180
Public Safety Related to Dogs Statute Law Amendment Act, 2019, Bill 147, Mr. Nicholls / Loi de 2019 modifiant des lois en ce qui a trait à la sécurité publique liée aux chiens, projet de loi 147, M. Nicholls	
First reading agreed to	6181
Mr. Rick Nicholls	6181

STATEMENTS BY THE MINISTRY AND RESPONSES / DÉCLARATIONS MINISTÉRIELLES ET RÉPONSES

Trans Day of Remembrance	
Hon. Jill Dunlop	6181
Adoption Awareness Month	
Hon. Jill Dunlop	6181
Hon. Ross Romano	6182
Bullying Awareness and Prevention Week	
Hon. Stephen Lecce	6183
Trans Day of Remembrance	
Mr. Terence Kernaghan	6184
Adoption Awareness Month	
Miss Monique Taylor	6184

Bullying Awareness and Prevention Week	
Ms. Marit Stiles.....	6184

PETITIONS / PÉTITIONS

Multiple sclerosis	
Mr. Jamie West.....	6184
Dog ownership	
Mr. David Piccini.....	6185
Education funding	
Mr. Tom Rakocevic	6185
Access to personal health records	
Mrs. Gila Martow.....	6185
Documents gouvernementaux	
Mme France Gélinas	6186
Government regulations	
Mr. Dave Smith.....	6186
Public sector compensation	
Ms. Sara Singh	6187

OPPOSITION DAY / JOUR DE L'OPPOSITION

Services en français / French-language services

Mme Andrea Horwath.....	6187
Mme Gila Martow.....	6188
M. Guy Bourgouin	6190
L'hon. Caroline Mulroney.....	6191
Mme Marit Stiles.....	6193
Mme Natalia Kusendova.....	6193
Mme France Gélinas	6196
M. Joel Harden	6197
M. John Vanthof.....	6197
Ms. Jill Andrew	6197
Mr. Jeff Burch	6198
L'hon. Paul Calandra.....	6198
M. Jamie West.....	6199
M. Taras Natyshak	6200
M. Gilles Bisson.....	6200
Mme Andrea Horwath.....	6201
Motion negatived	6202

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY
OF ONTARIO

Wednesday 20 November 2019

ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE
DE L'ONTARIO

Mercredi 20 novembre 2019

The House met at 0900.

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

Let us pray.

Prayers.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

PLAN TO BUILD ONTARIO
TOGETHER ACT, 2019

LOI DE 2019 SUR LE PLAN
POUR BÂTIR L'ONTARIO ENSEMBLE

Resuming the debate adjourned on November 19, 2019, on the motion for second reading of the following bill:

Bill 138, An Act to implement Budget measures and to enact, amend and repeal various statutes / Projet de loi 138, 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?

Mr. Jeremy Roberts: It's a real pleasure to rise today to talk about our fall economic statement and the legislation that's going to bring this fall economic statement into force.

As a millennial, one of the reasons why I decided to stand for office was because I was incredibly concerned about the rising debt load that was facing future generations in this country. I remember one day having the chance to sit down and look and realizing that my own share of the debt was north of \$23,000 and growing. My mother is a labour and delivery nurse in Ottawa; she has been doing this for almost 20 years. It struck me that every single child that she was helping to deliver—that child was being born with a debt load on their back that they would carry for the rest of their lives, and I did not think this was fair. I realized that I wanted to get involved to help put us on a better path so that we could make sure that we weren't leaving this intergenerational debt load to my generation, my kids' generation and my grandkids' generation.

I often like to look at historical parallels to find examples that teach us what mistakes we should avoid making again in the future. One need not look any further than the Canadian federal government in the early 1990s to find a parallel to the situation that we find ourselves in in Ontario today. In the early 1990s, the Canadian federal government found themselves with a truly enormous debt and deficit burden that countless governments had been fighting to get down since the government of Pierre Trudeau left that enormous debt behind, that enormous

deficit, for future governments to grapple with. The Canadian federal government went out into the global markets to try to sell Canadian debt bonds and nobody wanted to buy them. Nobody wanted to buy Canadian debt because it was viewed as something unsustainable. The Canadian government had not put themselves on a responsible track, and therefore people didn't want to lend us money. If we aren't able to finance our debt, that means that all of the critical public services that we rely on from our federal government, including health transfers, social transfers, pensions, social benefits—all of those things would not be possible. That's why the Canadian federal government at the time took the decisions that it did to make sure that we got ourselves on a more responsible fiscal track. We got ourselves on a path to return to balance that successive governments have followed through on since then, of course until the most recent federal government—but we won't go down that road today.

Mr. Sam Oosterhoff: That's a long road.

Mr. Jeremy Roberts: That's a long road.

When I stood for office a year ago, I was looking at an Ontario government that had the largest sub-sovereign debt of any state or province in the entire world—the entire world. That's not a Guinness world record that we should be proud of, Mr. Speaker. So I knew that we needed to get a government in place that was going to take this seriously, that was going to put us back on a path to return to a balanced budget, that was going to make our economy competitive again so that we could attract more business, grow businesses here, grow our economy and help get us on to a sustainable path so that I felt confident that when I grew up and decided that I wanted to raise a family of my own, we wouldn't have that kind of debt burden waiting for us at the other end.

Mr. Speaker, when our government got elected last year, we tabled our first budget. We committed to returning to balanced budgets over a five-year period of time, a responsible period of time. All the while, we were going to continue making those critical investments in the things that matter most to Ontarians: that's health care, that's social services and that's education.

In our fall economic statement that the finance minister tabled a week or so ago, we reaffirmed that commitment. We reaffirmed that we are on track to return to balance over that five years. In fact, we're ahead of schedule. Our deficit, which used to be \$15 billion, is now down to \$9 billion. We are making impressive progress towards that goal of getting us to balance, towards that goal of making sure that when we do have to go out and finance Canadian debt in foreign markets, people look at Ontario and think,

“You know what? This is a responsible group of managers. We can trust them to lend to them so that they can finance the things that they need.”

So we got our deficit down to \$9 billion. And how are we doing on those critical investments that I talked about earlier? Turns out, Mr. Speaker, that because of the responsible financial decisions we’re making, we’re actually investing more in those areas. We’re actually investing \$1.9 billion more in health care than the previous government last year. We’re actually investing \$1.3 billion more in education than the former government. On social services, we’re investing \$600 million more than the former government. These are the sorts of things that we are able to do when we are responsible fiscal managers. That’s why this plan to return to balance is so critically important and something that I am proud to stand here today and support our finance minister on.

Of course, Mr. Speaker, there was another challenge also facing Ontarians at the last election, and that was affordability. Affordability was something that was eating away at our families, at our small businesses and at anybody who was trying to get ahead in Ontario. They found life getting more and more expensive, whether it was from hydro rates or growing taxes. So we committed to getting that under control as well because we understand that you can balance a budget while making life more affordable for everyday people and for businesses.

Again, Mr. Speaker, I can draw on an easy parallel from history. That’s the former federal government under Prime Minister Stephen Harper, who balanced the budget while lowering the federal tax burden to its lowest level in 50 years. That’s a model that we can use today to make sure that we can get our budget balanced and make life more affordable.

So what are some of the things in this fall economic statement that we’re doing to make life more affordable? One of the wonderful ones, Mr. Speaker, is that we are taking action to lower the aviation fuel tax in the north. We have a lot of representatives from both sides of the aisle here, who represent ridings in northern Ontario. I have had the chance, since being elected, to visit some of those northern ridings on tours for round tables with families with children with autism, and on tour with the finance committee. Affordability is always an issue that comes up. By lowering the aviation fuel tax, we’re going to help make things like groceries less expensive in the north. The prediction at this point, from our measure in the fall economic statement, is that this will lower costs for families in the north by an average of \$230 per year. That’s savings that go into folks’ pockets that they can spend on those critical things that they need for their families.

0910

There are other things that we’re doing as well. For example, we are going to be lowering the small business tax rate by 8.7%. We all know that small businesses are the backbone and engine of our economy here in Ontario. Small businesses are the number one employers in our province. I think back to my own family. My uncle Dennis Larocque is the bathtub king of Hamilton. He has worked

hard throughout his life to build his small business. He started out in a van going around reglazing bathtubs at different people’s homes. He grew that business into a thriving small business now in the Hamilton-Ancaster area, where he does refurbishments of bathrooms.

Things get tough for small business owners when all of those costs on affordability are piling up, whether it has increased hydro costs, small business taxes or burdensome red tape. All of those different things start adding up onto these small business owners, and that’s not what we want to see.

My uncle Dennis employs a team of people. It may have just started out with him in a van, going around reglazing bathtubs, but he now employs a team of people at his small business. We want to make sure that he can keep growing and keep hiring more people, so that those people get a long-time paying job to support them and to support their families.

By lowering that small business tax rate, this is probably going to provide, on average, \$1,500 of tax relief per year to over 275,000 small businesses across Ontario. Let me repeat that: a saving of \$1,500 to over 275,000 small businesses every year. That’s big savings, and I know, having spoken to the bathtub king of Hamilton, that this will make a difference, that these savings will help him continue to grow his business and continue to find new ways to support his local economy, support his family and support the families of those people who work for him. So I’m thrilled that this is the sort of thing that our government is continuing to do to make Ontario competitive again.

We have to remember that if we, as a government, do not take these measures to make life more affordable for businesses and families in our province, other jurisdictions will. Other jurisdictions will take the time to lower their taxes, lower their regulations, and attract those businesses and families right out of Ontario, which is going to leave us worse off in the end.

We want it to be the other way around. We want to be attracting those businesses here to Ontario. We want people to think of Ontario as the engine of Canada’s economy, as it once was, where people can come, start a family business, grow it, employ more people and find long-term prosperity.

These are the sorts of things that we’re going to be doing as we follow through on our fall economic statement and as we prepare for the tabling of our next provincial budget sometime in the spring. I can’t tell you how much I’m looking forward to that budget. I think it is going to be a fantastic document that lays out a truly strong plan to get us to that competitive environment, to that prosperous environment, and to return us to the balance that we need to be fair to our future generations.

In the fall economic statement, we also took some actions to simply make life easier for people by getting rid of some rules and regulations that were getting in the way. For example, we are starting to clear the way and make it easier for us to move to electronic documents at the Ministry of Transportation. As a millennial, I just find it

ridiculous that we haven't moved towards a truly digital system for a lot of these different things, so I'm so pleased to see our government taking this step.

We took an initial step last year when we moved to electronic proof of insurance, which, again, I thought was just an easy thing for us to do. I always remember that when I got my first car and signed up for insurance, they emailed me some documents, and I thought, "Great! I can just have these on my phone." But, no, I was told I needed to print them at the time. Just ridiculous. We should be able to have safe, secure technology to have those sorts of electronic driving records on our cellphones.

Beyond that, we're also making some changes to the highway act. Now, Mr. Speaker, as a member from an Ottawa riding, I often have to commute down here to Toronto. I often have to take that long, arduous drive down the 401, which is not always the nicest drive.

Hon. Todd Smith: To Belleville.

Mr. Jeremy Roberts: You certainly drive through some beautiful communities—like Belleville—but the highway itself can be bit of an arduous journey. I occasionally take Highway 7 just because it's a bit of a nicer drive. But one of the things that I struggle with, as many drivers do, is when you are driving down those highways and you're trying to pass somebody and there is a slow driver in the left lane. It makes absolutely no sense. We need to do a better job at, first of all, educating drivers that the left lane is for passing and the right lane is for driving at a normal speed, but also enforcing it. So we're giving the tools necessary to our team of OPP officers to track down those slow drivers and make that commute better for our families that have to commute back and forth, for our workers that have to commute back and forth, for our truck drivers who are keeping our economy moving. So that's one thing that we're doing to make sure that we are making life a little bit easier for commuters.

There is another one as well, Mr. Speaker. We are currently in the middle of a pilot—you might have heard about this—to test raising the speed limits on Ontario highways. There are three pilots under way right now—one in London, one in Niagara and one in Ottawa—where we have raised the speed limit on a short stretch of highway up to 110 kilometres an hour.

I took the time to do a bit of research on this because it was something that always baffled me. Out of Ontario's seven neighbouring jurisdictions, six of them have higher highway speeds than we do. Six of our neighbouring jurisdictions are at roughly 110 to 113, depending on how you convert the miles to ours. There is only one of our neighbouring jurisdictions that has the same speed as us. All of these folks who are commuting for work, carrying goods across borders and going between provinces and states are having to slow down in Ontario for no apparent reason. A lot of these places, Mr. Speaker, that have those higher speed rates do not necessarily have higher accident rates, and that's one of the biggest things that people say when they are concerned about raising the speed: "Is this going to cause more accidents?" Well, the data doesn't actually back that up.

We are testing this 110 kilometres an hour out on these three stretches of highways. I actually went, on the first day, and drove along the stretch of highway in the east end of Ottawa and did a little video with my staff to highlight it and let people know. I know that my colleague from Niagara has said that it's something that has been incredibly popular in the Niagara area so far. So let's test that pilot. Now we have given our Minister of Transportation the tools that she needs to make sure that we can raise those speed limits in a responsible way to get our goods moving and get our commuters where they need to go. This is the sort of common-sense thing that I think is going to help all Ontarians across the board. Again, it's something that I think is long, long overdue, and I'm very pleased to hear it.

I've outlined a number of different things. We've talked about the importance of returning to balance and talked about some historical parallels there about why returning to balance is so critical. Again, I think that the plan that we have laid out, this five-year horizon, is the responsible way to do it because it allows us to continue making those investments we need. Those investments are so critical in those three key areas.

In health care—in my riding of Ottawa West–Nepean, we have the largest seniors' population in all of Ontario—lots of people struggling with that challenge of hallway health care. So we need to make sure we are continuing to make those investments to make our health care system better so that those seniors get the best possible care that they deserve, given that they have been paying into it through their taxes for their entire lives.

0920

We're making those increased investments in education, Mr. Speaker, to make sure that our kids are getting the best possible education that they can. That's an additional investment of \$1.3 billion into the education system that wasn't there before.

Then, lastly, an area, of course, very close to my heart, and that's social services. In the fall economic statement, we reaffirmed that we are doubling the budget for the Ontario Autism Program from just over \$300 million to \$600 million. I know how much this is going to mean to families. I know how much it would have meant to my family when we were growing up and dealing with the challenges that we were with my younger brother, Dillon. Having criss-crossed the province over the last six to eight months speaking with parents, I know that this investment is going to mean so much to each and every one of those families. We now have a wonderful blueprint on how to spend that money. We have the Ontario autism panel's report in front of us. We are going to be moving forward with those recommendations, and we're going to make sure that that \$600 million is being spent as effectively and efficiently as possible to help those kids get the outcomes they deserve and build those better, stronger lives.

I'm so thrilled to stand today in support of this fall economic statement. I urge all of my colleagues in the House to support this so that we can leave behind a better province than we found for the next generation.

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

M. Guy Bourgouin: Ça me fait plaisir de me lever pour parler sur l'énoncé économique de l'automne.

I was listening to the member from Ottawa West–Nepean talking about how they're going to reduce the taxes on fuel. But what he failed to mention was that in their first budget, they cut the budget for Indigenous affairs by half. And in this fall economic statement, they reduced it again by \$2.2 million.

I invite any people in this House to come to my riding, come visit these northern communities and see the conditions they live in. We have water advisories in multiple communities—northern communities, First Nations communities—yet we cut the budget by half and then another \$2.2 million? We have a lack of housing. Some communities have a lack of housing of 300 houses. They take sleeping rotations, because they have two or three generations living in a house that is built for six people. And we are cutting the budget by another \$2.2 million?

We have a minister that said he's lived in the community. Well, he's disconnected, because the reality we're seeing here—and I know my colleague from Kiiwetinoong has mentioned that many times. Cutting budgets that will affect the most vulnerable—tell me of anywhere else in Ontario where having water advisories for over 10 years, if not more, is acceptable, or of anywhere in Ontario that we have a lack of houses where six people live in one dwelling.

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

Mr. Stan Cho: I'm proud to stand to speak to Bill 138 once again this morning. Bill 138 is really a status update on the plan that we outlined in the spring of 2019. I'm proud to say that our plan is ahead of schedule in many ways, and that plan, of course, is to make life more affordable, to prepare Ontarians for jobs, to create a more competitive business environment, to connect people to places, to build healthier and safer communities and to make government smarter.

My colleague the member for Ottawa West–Nepean outlined some of the highlights of these various pillars of our plan and the update to our plan. But there is also a side story here. I spoke to that side story at length yesterday, and that's talking about the importance of debt reduction. It's no secret, in the province of Ontario, that our debt stands at almost \$360 billion. That is the highest of any state or province in the world. That means that that debt is leading to an interest charge, which we pay in this House as the fourth-largest line expenditure, behind education, behind health care and behind social services. We all know in this House that that's money that should be going to protect those vital programs and services for our future generations.

So I am really proud to say that our status update, Bill 138, shows that our debt reduction strategy is working without additional regressive taxation measures. And because we've had strong revenues through job growth, the province sits in a much better financial situation today than

it did a year and a half ago, when we took office. In fact, I'm proud to say to the House that our debt reduction strategy has resulted in a decrease in our interest payments. Our interest payments have gone from \$12.9 billion a year—we've reduced that by \$400 million. That's money that's going to go towards health care and education. That's money that's going to go towards social services.

I'm proud of Bill 138, and I hope we have support in the House for this.

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

Mr. Sol Mamakwa: Meegwetch, Mr. Speaker. I'm going to speak to this bill from a different lens. Indigenous people continue to be an afterthought for this government. There is no specific path to fulfillment of reconciliation or treaty obligations. My colleague spoke about the cuts to Indigenous affairs.

I got a note a few days ago: Up in Fort Severn, the price of gas per litre is \$4.19. This person bought 40 litres of gas and it cost them \$167. I hear members talking about affordability. I hear members talking about "all Ontarians." I hear about cutting red tape to bring down the price. What is that red tape that this government is going to cut to bring down the cost of the fuel? Just because people tell me that it's all Ontarians, what about Fort Severn? What about the price of gas? How is this government going to be able to help these residents of Ontario to bring the price of gas down?

One of the things that I'm starting to realize is that when we're talking about Indigenous people, talking about First Nations people, talking about First Nations communities—with the cuts and some of the policy approaches to Indigenous people—I'm starting to understand that this government does not care about First Nations people. That's what I'm starting to realize. Just because we're small doesn't mean that we should not matter.

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

Ms. Jane McKenna: It's a privilege here today to stand up and talk about Bill 138, the Plan to Build Ontario Together Act, 2019, and I'll tell you why. We sit in this House, day after day, and we listen to a lot of facts that aren't true and rhetoric that goes back and forth. But here's what I can tell you, and I say this to my kids all the time: When you're always looking in the rear-view mirror, you can never move forward.

The reality is this: When you've had 15 years where you haven't done anything for health care, hallway health care, infrastructure, education, anything—the list just goes on and on and on. There are schools in Burlington everywhere that are falling apart. There is \$15 billion that they didn't spend on the schools to get them fixed.

Here's the reality: We have a Premier and we have a government that cares about the next generation. I know I do with my kids and my grandkids and the rest of the kids and grandkids that are out here. They deserve to have a life that they can live and breathe, and there are going to have to be changes. People don't like change, but the reality is that we need to make changes. Because without changes, we're not going to make anything any better.

So I sit here—and I actually am thinking about this. Ontario used to be the engine. If we can believe it, we took equalization payments from Newfoundland and Labrador. It's shocking to me that we actually say that out loud. Newfoundland and Labrador were paying our bills.

I sat here and I talked to my son the other day. We were talking about Bob Rae days. Everybody remembers the billboards in Buffalo that said, "The best thing that happened to us was Bob Rae," as all the businesses were running there. They started out with a \$35.4-billion debt in 1989; when they left in 1995, it was \$90.7 billion. They almost tripled it.

So when you watch the things that we're doing—we're spending \$1 billion a month just on the interest alone. My God, can you imagine what we could do with that money?
0930

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): I return to the member from Ottawa West—Nepean for his final comments.

Mr. Jeremy Roberts: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I always appreciate the vim and vigour with which you announce riding names. It adds a certain spice to the proceedings here today.

I'd like to thank my colleagues from Mushkegowuk—James Bay, Willowdale, Kiiwetinoong and Burlington for their comments. I will say to my colleagues opposite that, as Vice-Chair of the finance committee, I look forward to having a chance to visit some of those northern communities this coming budget season when we have a chance to travel again, and getting a chance to hear about some of these issues on the ground. I think that will be a fantastic opportunity.

My colleague from Willowdale spoke about interest payments, and that was something that I didn't get a chance to address in my comments. It is so crucially important. I will repeat what my colleague from Willowdale said in case folks at home didn't catch it: The fourth-largest spending item in the Ontario budget is interest payments on the debt. It goes: health care, education, social services, interest payments on the debt. We spend more on interest payments on our debt than we do on colleges and universities in this province. That's shameful. That money that we are spending on interest, which we are literally pissing away each and every day, each and every hour, could be spent on critical public services that we all rely on.

I just happened to pull up the Ontario debt clock, and as of right now we are at \$353 billion. Each and every one of us has a share of \$24,000. We need to make sure that we're getting this under control, and the plan that our Minister of Finance has put forward will do just that.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): Further debate? I recognize the member from Thunder Bay—Atikokan.

Ms. Judith Monteith-Farrell: Thank you, Speaker. Good morning.

Something I want everyone to remember is that this fall economic statement is a statement of cuts. The bill is called the Plan to Build Ontario Together Act. I fail to see what

in this act has anything to do with building Ontario together. What I see is a long list of regulatory changes that increase access to alcohol and online cannabis, and allow the Ontario Securities Commission to make blanket exemptions from the Securities Act—a wish list for inside lobbyists.

The government is not reversing their callous plan to fire 10,000 teachers or the brutal squeeze they're putting on health care. Despite their messaging to the public, the cuts are still on and the people of Ontario will feel the brunt of them. Delaying, backtracking or softening the \$1.3 billion in cuts is not new spending.

With their first budget, this government took things from bad to worse, and we saw the chaos that followed, with people from all across this province making their voices heard about how this government's cuts would hurt their communities and families. And with this fall economic statement, this government is sticking with their cuts.

Nothing in this budget shows that they have heard the concerns of everyday Ontarians. They are cutting 10,000 teachers and thousands of education workers, taking them away from children who need them. They are squeezing hospitals and health care, siphoning off funds for the creation of a super bureaucracy, leaving patient care starved, all while parents cradle crying children in emergency rooms during hour-long waits and patients on gurneys line hospital hallways because there aren't enough beds. Of additional concern to me is the war they have waged on the environment, putting everything at risk for our children and grandchildren. It is hard to understand the kind of Ontario this government is looking to create. I believe the people of Ontario understand this, and I urge everyone to speak out and let your voice be heard about this deeply misguided plan for the future of our province.

Before I go any further, I'd like to do the numbers on the cuts that the government is leaving in place. There is the \$700-million cut from training, colleges and universities, with a threat to withhold up to 60% of what's left. Health care and education have been squeezed to less than inflation, just like the 2019 budget, and things are even worse for Indigenous affairs, the environment, and legal aid. The Indigenous affairs budget was cut nearly in half in the 2019 budget, and this bill, the fall economic statement, strips out another \$2.2 million. Doug Ford has been waging a war on the environment. Rather than tackling climate change, after decimating every environmental effort in the 2019 budget, Premier Ford has slashed another \$25 million out of what's left. Justice, especially legal aid, has been slashed by \$330 million.

The Liberals put Ontario into a hallway medicine crisis. They left post-secondary students struggling—struggling to afford their education, struggling to pay off their student loans—and they let Ontario's schools become so run-down that rain leaks through the ceiling, water fountains are full of lead, and little ones have to wear their coats at their desk. This government should be fixing, not making it worse. We should be investing in people by investing in children's education, investing in the best health care system in the world and investing in the fight against climate change.

I want to address the environmental sections of this bill, starting with schedule 13. Schedule 13 would amend the Fish and Wildlife Conservation Act and allow for the killing and abandoning of the double-crested cormorant. I don't know how many of you have ever seen a cormorant. It's quite a pretty bird. There are quite a few up in my region. A new subsection would be added that exempts double-crested cormorants from the part of the current law that prohibits a hunter or trapper who kills game wildlife, other than fur-bearing mammals, from abandoning it or allowing its flesh to become unsuitable for human consumption.

This schedule comes about a year after the government initially proposed making legal changes about hunting the double-crested cormorant. Schedule 13 is an attempt by the government to change the fish and wildlife act as part of their efforts to bring their 2018 proposal to establish a hunting season for double-crested cormorants in Ontario into force.

Across the province, concerns have been raised about the effect of cormorant populations on certain sensitive ecosystems. However, the government's plan to allow hunters to kill up to 14,000 cormorants a year, or 50 per day, and leave their bodies to rot is no substitute for scientifically based wildlife management programs. At best, the government's plan is short-sighted and ineffective. At worst, it could harm our environment.

I would like to share with this House an extended quote from the submission made by the Canadian Environmental Law Association regarding this government's proposed 2018 changes that schedule 13 is part of:

"[T]he MNRF's proposal is contrary to the conservation and sustainability purposes of the Fish and Wildlife Conservation Act (FWCA). In 1997, when the FWCA was first introduced to the Ontario Legislative Assembly for debate, then-Minister of Natural Resources John Snobelen stated the following about the act's purposes:

"The proposed Fish and Wildlife Conservation Act will help ensure conservation and management of the province's abundant fish and wildlife resources. It will contribute to the sustainability of the environment, social and economic benefits associated with those resources, and it will give Ontario tougher fish and wildlife enforcement provisions."

"This statement by the minister provides direct evidence of the legislative purpose of the FWCA. The current proposal, however, is void of any consideration demonstrating how sustainability and the conservation of wildlife resources were taken into account. Neither does the proposal reference any science-based justifications for its approach. Rather the proposal references 'concerns expressed by ... commercial fishing industry, property owners.'

0940

"The proposal to allow cormorants to spoil is contrary to the objects of the FWCA. Section 36 of the FWCA, states that 'a hunter or trapper who kills game wildlife other than a furbearing mammal shall not abandon it if its flesh may become unsuitable for human consumption.' The proposal notice—which states it will add provisions to the FWCA allowing cormorants to spoil and lawfully

exempt hunters from possessing the carcass—does not align with the Legislature's intended purpose of spoilage exemptions in ... the FWCA. As then Minister of Natural Resources, Minister Snobelen stated when the act was being debated, there may be 'situations where this [an exemption] is necessary to prevent or control the spread of disease.' As further explained by member of provincial Parliament Chudleigh, any exemption to the spoilage prohibition would be reserved for instances in which it would 'be necessary to kill fish and allow them to spoil in order to prevent or control the spread of disease.' Unless the exemption now proposed by the government is for the purposes of controlling or preventing disease, the intention of the Legislature should not be overridden absent public debate and scientific study."

"Due to the timing of the proposed hunt and allowable bag limit, the proposal also violates the objectives of the FWCA which include considerations of animal welfare, humane and ethical hunting practices." As Justice Abella "speaking for the Court of Appeal stated, 'The Fish and Wildlife Conservation Act received royal assent on December 18, 1997 and was proclaimed on January 1, 1999. It was enacted to provide a scheme of wildlife conservation and management including the establishment of ethical, humane and responsible hunting practices. The act assigns to the government the responsibility for balancing the interests of people against the welfare of animals to determine what constitutes humane treatment or the unnecessary suffering of animals.'

"Concerns regarding animal welfare, including humane and ethical hunting practices, fall squarely with the policy and objectives of the Fish and Wildlife Conservation Act."

This government's obsession with double-crested cormorants is problematic, but that they ignore climate change is catastrophic. This government lacks a real climate change plan. The people of Ontario know that. What they have proposed is not an actual climate change plan. Our caucus brought forward a motion to declare a climate emergency this year, and the members opposite voted it down. Instead, they like to talk about littering and their deeply flawed climate change plan. I think schedule 32 illustrates that. I am part of many community clean-up projects in Thunder Bay, including two this year, and I want more to be done about litter, but I also want to see this government do a lot more about climate change. Real solutions would include reducing or eliminating the sources of litter. Schedule 32 would create a provincial day of action on litter the second Tuesday of May.

I think this government has been cynical in its focus on litter when the issue of climate change and climate emergencies have been raised in the House. Climate change is no longer only about our future; it is an imminent emergency, and it is happening now. When I think about my own children and their partners and my two grandchildren and their future, I'm filled with fear. More and more Ontario families are going to find themselves in situations where they are forced to flee their homes on a moment's notice if we don't act now to dramatically reduce carbon emissions. Each flood, tornado and wildfire that ravages

our province adds to the growing imperative for Ontario's leaders to come together in common cause in the fight against climate change. Our best hope of keeping people's homes and businesses safe in Ontario is to stop climate change from accelerating.

In northern Ontario we feel the effects of climate change acutely. We can smell the forest fires every spring, summer and fall. As someone who goes out into the forest regularly, I've seen the blackened terrain and the impact on wildlife habitat. Communities have to be evacuated regularly because of forest fires and flooding, and now we have the community of Bearskin Lake that had to be evacuated due to flooding.

In southern and eastern Ontario we are witnessing the devastating consequences of climate change first-hand. We have seen this in Bracebridge, Ottawa and in the southwest, where there has been significant flooding. We have seen this in the wildfires in recent years, and we need to take immediate and decisive action to tackle climate change.

Research shows that the window for staving off the worst effects of climate change is rapidly closing, and projections show that the cost of doing nothing is much greater than the cost of taking action. This government must reverse course and join the millions of Ontarians committed to fighting climate change. Declaring a climate emergency is an opportunity for Queen's Park to change direction and take on the biggest challenge humankind has ever faced.

Since taking office last year, this government spent \$231 million cancelling renewable energy contracts; has cancelled climate change mitigation programs, including Ontario's participation in the cap-and-trade market; cancelled conservation programs; scrapped green vehicle rebates; removed electric vehicle charging stations; and eliminated the 50 Million Tree Program.

If we want to build Ontario together, we would want to protect our water, air and soil and not decrease penalties for polluters. Reducing fines to a one-time penalty rather than daily fines is not incentive enough for big polluters to fix their problems.

I call on this government to change course and prioritize the fight against climate change. Our children and grandchildren are counting on us. Unfortunately, we have another example of this government dropping the ball on the climate crisis.

Just like taking real action on climate change, Ontario needs action on improving and strengthening our public health care. Our system is one of our most cherished assets, and we must do everything to protect it. Unfortunately, this government is hard to trust when it comes to the future of Ontario's health care system. In this year's budget, health care was cut in real terms. Their 2019 budget allocated a 1.6% annual increase for health; health inflation is 5.3%. The fall economic statement does not add a single dollar to stopping hallway medicine, adding long-term beds or improving mental health services. This government cut funding to our health care system. This act confirms their plans. It also raises concerns about the privacy of our medical information.

Schedule 15 will make a host of changes to the Health Insurance Act. Unfortunately, just like so much of this act, the government has been very vague on details. The people deserve a thorough explanation of what this government plans to do with our health care system.

Schedule 15 will dissolve the medical eligibility committee and Physician Payment Review Board. It removes the language that states that every person who is a resident of Ontario is entitled to be eligible for OHIP coverage.

Schedule 30 allows specific persons to use de-identified information to identify someone, and also provides cabinet with regulatory-making powers to allow Ontario Health to collect, use and disclose personal health information. It is known that when people are afraid that their health information will be disclosed, they access health care less. This move could lead to privacy violations, and we need to know more from this government about what they are proposing.

0950

The Liberals hurt our health care system, underfunded education and left so many people behind. This government should be making things better, not worse.

With their first budget earlier this year, this government took things from bad to worse. People in Ontario saw what these cuts would mean, and they fought back against this government's cuts. Unfortunately, despite what they say, this government is sticking to its misguided plan for Ontario.

This government isn't listening to all the people, and it's time they started. If we want to build Ontario together, this isn't the way to do it.

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

Mr. Randy Pettapiece: It's great to be here today and offer my comments on the previous speaker with the official opposition. It's interesting that all we hear from the opposition side every day is doom and gloom—nothing is working, the world is going to end soon, and all this type of thing.

I like to talk about positive things. What I like to talk about is that businesses are looking at our fall economic statement with positive eyes because there are things in it that will help them prosper and grow in this province. Small and medium-sized businesses are the drivers of Ontario's economy, and if we don't create an environment that helps them grow, we're in trouble. Certainly, we've seen this in the past 15 years with the previous government, with all the manufacturing jobs we lost in this province. We had companies move away—actually, that is still happening a little bit now, but it has slowed down, because I think businesses have seen that this government is determined to make an environment that will help them grow in this province so that we're not a have-not province anymore. It breaks my heart that we have to accept money from other provinces to keep us going; it used to go the other way, but not anymore in Ontario. We're proposing to reduce the small business corporate income tax rate to 3.2% from 3.5%. This is a positive step.

That's why I say that businesses are looking at what we're proposing to do and they're saying that Ontario is a place to grow—I think there was a slogan about that at one

time. They want to stay here, and they're looking at us very positively.

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

Mr. Chris Glover: It's a pleasure to stand in the House today to talk about the fall update.

The member from Perth–Wellington just said that he wanted to create an environment where businesses can grow. I've also heard the government side talk about the deficit and the debt, and I share that concern about the deficit and the debt. Instead of addressing it on the backs of the children of this province by cutting their teachers and bringing in online courses and cutting funding for our colleges and universities, I'd suggest that you actually look at what has caused the debt and the deficit that we're facing right now.

A big portion of it, \$4 billion a year, is actually going to pay for hydro costs, to subsidize hydro rates. The reason we have such exorbitant hydro rates in this province is because the former Conservative government and then the Liberal government privatized our Ontario Hydro. Between 1904 and 1995, Ontario hydro rates were about four cents a kilowatt hour. It was a competitive advantage for us. But then, the Conservatives and the Liberals privatized it, and now our rates range anywhere from eight cents to 25 cents a kilowatt hour. So our hydro rates are actually a competitive disadvantage for us.

The other piece of it, the other \$3 billion: The corporate tax rate in this province, when the last Conservative government was in, was 15.5%. It's now 11.5%, and the government is planning on cutting another \$4 billion over the next four years in corporate taxes. It's not that you don't want—you don't want to have taxes at a rate where it's going to discourage companies from investing in this province, but at the same time, these companies are benefiting from having a well-educated, healthy workforce in this province, and they need to contribute to that. They need to contribute to the education and health care of the next generation of workers.

I would suggest that the government—if they're going to address the deficit, don't do it on the backs of the children. Look at the causes.

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

Mr. Sheref Sabawy: I'm very happy to rise today to speak about this bill. I'm very glad to see that there is a focus on technology, science, engineering and math. These are the skills we need for the graduates to be able to compete at the university level and in different jobs in the future. We see a huge decline in the level of the graduates when it comes to math and physics.

As a professor before—I was teaching in IT—we received students who did not want to get into any computer science or technology because they lacked the math skills, they were behind in the physics and science. They don't like this. They are not prepared to compete in a very competitive and fast-moving market like technology. This is going to hurt us, because technology is everywhere now, even in health.

If you are not going to be a technology specialist, you are going to touch technology in some way or shape in your specializations. Even if you aren't going to be a doctor; if you're going to be a writer, if you're going to be a journalist, you need to be able to deal with technology in every aspect of our lives going forward, and I'm very glad to see there is a focus now on getting this back on track.

We are complaining; all the professors, instructors and teachers in colleges and universities have been complaining about students coming from high school with a specific level, and then, when the jump comes to the level of college or university, there is a very high rate of failure because students are not prepared for that level of academia.

I think this is great to see.

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

Ms. Teresa J. Armstrong: It's always a privilege to stand and talk to any bill that has come before this House for debate, and, in particular, Bill 138, implementing budget measures and to enact, amend and repeal various statutes. There are a lot of schedules in this bill, and, quite frankly, the one that—they're all significant, of course. I think some of them are just feel-good things, which is important. I understand that as well. The litter bill or the Hellenic heritage piece as well—those are important, absolutely, and they all have merit.

But I do have to say, the health bills that are incorporated in here are very concerning, because the privacy issue piece is something that we need to, as far as I'm concerned, look at separately. It's not something we can rush. If we get that wrong, it can really jeopardize someone's future, the issues of getting those records back. It can also jeopardize them—people having it in the wrong hands and using them for the wrong purpose.

So I urge this government, in the health pieces, to really consider taking those out of this bill and letting us debate them and examine them in a full way. I say that because the pattern that we've had is that there's a certain amount of time, six and a half hours, and then, at the seven-hour mark, there's time allocation. I get the government wants to push their priorities through this Legislature, but I think, when we stop and pause and look at the health care priorities that are so important—it's the transformational change that this government talks about—we can't get it wrong. When we get it wrong, it's a trickle effect to the future, and some of those things are very damaging to the public.

Again, I understand why the government wants to put these things all compiled together and make it a one-stop shop and push it through, but when it comes to health, that's not a good policy.

1000

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): Now I return to the member from Thunder Bay–Atikokan for her final comments.

Ms. Judith Monteith-Farrell: I'd like to thank my colleagues from Perth–Wellington, Spadina–Fort York, Scarborough–Agincourt and London–Fanshawe for their comments.

When I looked at this bill, Bill 138, I was impressed by the number of facets that it touched on. We've talked in this House before about the real problem with putting too many things under one bill, because the devil is in the details. If we don't take a bill with all of those different types of regulatory changes and all of the different stakeholders that may want to comment or may want to engage on this bill—I am very, very hopeful that it will be sent to committee and that we'll maybe even travel to where people can actually have a comment about what this bill will do to them.

There are private members' bills that are in the House that were included in this bill. I can understand that the government wants to give those members a win and get them covered off in this bill, but there is a process for private members' bills. They're in committee, and that should be allowed to go through the process, because we are still in a parliamentary democracy, the last time I checked, and I think the process is important.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on Bill 138. I hope to listen to further debate.

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

Mr. Randy Hillier: It's lovely to be here this morning to engage in debate on Bill 138, to have the freedom to offer an independent perspective on Bill 138 and to offer some constructive criticism.

The government often states that Ontario is open for business. But when it comes to cannabis, are these words factual? Are they accurate? Or do they mask and hide an inconvenient truth? It may be more truthful to say that the black market, the illegal and the illicit market for cannabis, remains open for business in Ontario.

The very premise, the foundation that legalized cannabis rests upon, is to eliminate the black market. If we judge Ontario's cannabis policies by this measure, it has been a dismal failure.

The government assumed office 18 months ago and now believes that it ought to consult and learn what it is they ought to do with legalized cannabis. Well, I guess that "it's better late than never" is the best that we can say about those comments.

Should the minister or his staff be listening to or reading the transcripts of this debate, there are a few questions that need answering, and an explanation is due. But let's lay out a few facts first for this government and this assembly to consider.

Ontario has 24 cannabis retailers opened up. Alberta, with a third of the population, has over 300. Newfoundland and Labrador, with a population half the size of Ottawa, has more stores than Ontario.

Licensed cannabis producers have begun laying people off—200 alone at the Hexo facilities in Niagara.

Canopy Growth in Smiths Falls lost \$375 million this quarter and is curtailing its investment and expansion in Smiths Falls and throughout Ontario. Ontario has lost an estimated \$500 million of economic growth. Another \$75 million has been lost in provincial tax revenues.

In a letter to the Premier, the cannabis industry stated, "Unless the government facilitates the continued success of the sector by allowing an increased retail footprint, continuing these investments in Ontario will simply be unsustainable."

But the black market continues to boom in Ontario since Canada legalized cannabis, all because Ontario adopted a harebrained, bizarre lottery model to issue retail cannabis licences, a model cooked up by three backroom operatives and lobbyists. I know the finance minister once headed up the Ontario lottery and gaming commission, and he may have a penchant for games of chance, but really, lottery licences for retail cannabis stores? What was this government smoking?

The government can remedy this situation, Speaker. It has the statutory authority under existing legislation. Will the government utilize their licensing functions, similar to the AGCO, which successfully licenses privately owned agency stores to sell beer, wine and spirits? Will they allow producers, licensed producers, to have a retail licence? Will they provide direct—

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): Thank you very much. Time has expired.

Over to questions and comments.

Mr. Sam Oosterhoff: It's a privilege to be able to stand, and I want to thank the member opposite for his contributions to the debate this afternoon.

I think it's really important, when we hear the member opposite speaking about some of these numbers—we have clearly shown our commitment to following through with an agenda of accountability and transparency. That's why, in the estimates committee where I had the privilege of sitting last week and this week with the Minister of Education, for example, we saw a very clear laying out of what our plan is when it comes to investing in the things that matter most. That's why I think the name of the fall economic statement is so very important, because it demonstrates our commitment to investing in the things that Ontarians care about most and ensuring that we have a sustainable public sector that goes forward in a way that is here not just for the students of today and the patients of today, but the patients of tomorrow and the students of tomorrow and those who depend on our social services.

I do want to challenge the assertions of the member. I think it's important that when we look at the breakdowns that are included in the fall economic statement, we see how our government has decided to invest in the things that people depend upon and has also chosen, simultaneously, to address the long-term fiscal sustainability of our province's finances. This is something that is so, so important.

But I want to also return to something that came up a little bit earlier from the member for Thunder Bay—Atikokan, where she was talking about our plan to fight climate change, our plan to deal with environmental concerns across Ontario. She spoke very derisively, I found, about the day of littering. I want to be clear, that's in addition to—that's not a substitute for—our plan to address climate change and to tackle the very real concerns that

Ontarians have about climate change and the need to address it as a challenge to future generations.

I want to say—we're talking about debt and interest—if we had more money that wasn't going into interest payments, we could spend a lot more in the Ministry of the Environment to make sure that we're doing what needs to be done to address climate change. I know our excellent minister is committed to doing so every single day—

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): Thank you very much.

Further questions and comments?

Mr. Taras Natyshak: I'm pleased and honoured, as always, to rise in this chamber, especially this morning, having the chance to listen to my esteemed colleague the member from Lanark-Frontenac—it used to be “Lennox and Addington”; I got it close enough. He is free and unchained from the burdens of partisanship, and I think you can sense the relief that he has in his debate this morning.

When he raises the issue of retail cannabis sales in the province of Ontario and how this government, and particularly this Premier—who has experience and self-professed acumen on various models of business, whether they be independent or retail chains, as it were, Speaker. You have to wonder how this Premier could, in fact, lose, in the first year of retail sales of cannabis—something that was anticipated in a market that was already existing—around \$40 million. It does certainly boggle the mind, and the member raises some important questions. Can't they wrap their heads around this? Hasn't he given enough thought to actually capitalizing, supporting and making sure that that revenue supports the important programs that this province requires in education and health care?

We should also talk about addictions and support for addictions, and the critical crisis that is happening in our communities around fentanyl and such. It gives us an idea of where this government has failed.

1010

Certainly there was an existing model built in for the LCBO with its retail chain and distribution network—the training, the support, the protection for consumers—that they had already. It was ready to go off the shelf, but as the member eloquently put it, it was cooked up in some backroom, and obviously this government has failed on that file.

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

Mr. David Piccini: It's a great pleasure to rise to speak about the fall economic statement. I'd just like to touch on two things, which were spoken about earlier by members, that are really important to me in rural Ontario, in the Northumberland–Peterborough South area that I represent.

First, to contextualize: We got into the situation we're in by excessive government spending, by excessive government intervention. I heard from rural farmers; I heard from plumbers; I heard from businesses that operated in my riding; health care, “Just get off our backs.”

From the institutions that I represent in the Ministry of Training, Colleges and Universities: Program approval

processes would take upwards of two years when universities and colleges are trying to pivot to position our next generation to get the jobs they so desperately need.

What has this fall economic statement done? I want to hit on two things. First, the backbone: public transit. I spoke to the Minister of Transportation yesterday at estimates where she outlined the 25% increase for commuters with GO Transit. This has been done in less than a year—a 25% increase for the residents in Durham in my riding. Second, health care: investing in what matters most, which my colleague spoke about here.

I want to touch on the medium-sized hospital funding that this government has addressed in the statement on the increased funding for medium-sized hospitals. This was a funding formula that was broken. The previous government had a decade to address this; they didn't. Funding shortfalls meant a demoralized workforce and meant underfunding in medium-sized hospitals. Thankfully, we've addressed that.

At my hospital, the Northumberland Hills Hospital, we've committed over \$3 million to address historical underfunding, and we've seen investments in HIRF funding to support hospital repairs. We've seen investments into community health.

Mr. Speaker, this fall economic statement gets government off businesses' backs, gets government off post-secondary education institutes' backs, invests in transit, invests in education, invests in what matters most.

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

Mr. Chris Glover: I just have to respond to the comments from the member from Peterborough South? Have I got that right? Let's see. He was talking about—

Mr. David Piccini: Northumberland.

Mr. Chris Glover: I apologize; from Northumberland–Peterborough South—because he was talking about how people have been asking the government to get off their backs, and yet this government is actually creating an entire bureaucratic framework to control our colleges and universities and what programs they offer.

As the critic for colleges and universities, I've been touring around and one of the things I've realized is how important colleges and universities are as economic engines of the 21st-century economy—the innovation centres that are happening there, the research that is happening.

I was touring the BioZone at U of T a couple of weeks ago. They're actually taking farm waste, like corn stocks and things, and converting it into glycol, which is a very useful industrial product.

I was at the quantum computing lab at Waterloo University. They've got quantum computers that are actually operating now. They're developing the technology for this next generation of computing, and yet this government is creating something called “strategic mandate agreements.” They're threatening to withhold up to 60% of the operating grants for colleges and universities in any one year if they don't meet the benchmarks the government sets, and it's creating chaos.

The research shows that when you have performance-based funding like this, it actually creates the opposite effect, instead of allowing organizations to be more successful, because they don't know what their funding is going to be in the next year, so they can't invest in technology; they can't invest in new lab equipment; they can't invest in buildings or in permanent staff to actually create the elements of success.

This government is creating a level of bureaucracy that's going to undermine the success of universities and colleges that are the economic engine—

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): Thank you very much.

Now I return to the member from Lanark–Frontenac–Kingston for his final comments.

Mr. Randy Hillier: I want to thank the member from Niagara West and the member from Essex for engaging in the debate on the substance of my comments, and the members from Northumberland and Spadina for commenting on something entirely unrelated to what my comments were.

Speaker, we know and you know the cannabis industry is an important element to this province. In your riding alone, in Chatham–Kent–Leamington, there is a raft of producers there. They are under threat. The member from Niagara West—he knows it. There are lots of producers there. Some 200 people are laid off in his riding.

Speaker, we cannot allow our recreational, legalized cannabis industry to be used as a game of chance and a lottery to pick the winners and losers of who is going to be in there, while we continue to allow the black market to prosper, to flourish, and we stifle our own economic growth in Ontario as a result.

Thank you for opportunity to engage in Bill 138. I do hope to hear some answers from this government on opening up the retail market so that the cannabis business can flourish and the black market can have an end put to it quickly.

Second reading debate deemed adjourned.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): The time for debate this morning has expired.

It is now 10:15. This House will stand recessed until 10:30.
The House recessed from 1016 to 1030.

INTRODUCTION OF VISITORS

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): I first want to draw the attention of the House to the fact that we have a former member in the chamber today: Cheri DiNovo, who served Parkdale–High Park in the 38th, 39th, 40th and 41st provincial Parliaments. Welcome back.

Applause.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): And in the Speaker's gallery today, we have a good friend of mine who is a councillor on the town of Halton Hills' council: Bryan Lewis. Welcome to Queen's Park today. Good to have you here.

In a former career, Bryan was the chief of officiating in the National Hockey League. He gave me a whistle this

morning, in case I needed to use it. Just to warn the members, I have the whistle, and I'm ready to use it.

M^{me} France Gélinas: I'd like to welcome volunteers from Wounds Canada: Olena Veryha, Robert Ketchen, Sue Rosenthal, Jackie Hickey, Tobi Mark, Ghada Malek and Morty Eisenberg, as well as Todd Boyd, Catherine Muir and Gord Rymal. Welcome to Queen's Park. They're having a reception in room 228 right after question period. I hope you'll be able to join them.

Ms. Goldie Ghamari: I'd like to welcome from Advocis, the Financial Advisors Association of Canada, Janice McFarlane from Canada Life, John Saikaley from Desjardins and, from Carleton, my very own riding, Rob Stewart from HollisWealth. It was great to meet with them today. Welcome to Queen's Park.

Ms. Peggy Sattler: I'm pleased to welcome several people to Queen's Park today. Linda Davis, Dani Bartlett and Marnie Sherritt are all here from the Coalition to Empower Gender Equality.

From the Ontario Good Roads Association, I want to welcome two London West constituents: Chris Traini, who is with the county of Middlesex, and John Parsons, who is with the city of London, as well as my neighbour Joanne Vanderheyden, the mayor of Strathroy–Caradoc. Welcome to Queen's Park.

Mr. Lorne Coe: I'd like to welcome to Queen's Park my wife, Sue; my son, Neil; and my brother-in-law Robert Cochrane.

Mr. Mike Schreiner: I have two very special guests in the west members' gallery I'd like to welcome today. My daughter Beata Schreiner had so much fun at take-your-kid-to-work day that she brought her grandmother and my mother, Barbara Schreiner, to Queen's Park today. Welcome.

Miss Monique Taylor: I have a list of invitees that I would like to announce today. First, from Advocis, from the great riding of Hamilton Mountain, we have Grace DiLeo–Lindsay. Welcome back to Queen's Park.

From CUPE child welfare workers we have Carrie Lynn Poole–Cotnam, Noelle Racicot–Kelly, Matthew Stella, Chris Watson, Kenneth Giesen, Nancy Price–Hutley, Lorrie Pepin, Julie Riley, Sonia Yung, Beverley Bedeau, Lidia Vieira, Aubrey Gonsalves, Nancy Simone, Heather Murray, Andrew Hunter and Adi Rao.

From the autism community—it's my daily welcome back to them—it's Michau van Speyk, Amy Moledzki and Stacy Kennedy. Welcome, all, to Queen's Park.

Hon. Kinga Surma: Filip, the page from my riding of Etobicoke Centre, is page captain today, so I want to welcome his family, who came out to support him. I want to welcome his mom and dad, Kalipsa and Mate Matevski; his younger sister Angelina Matevski; and his grandparents Kiril and Rodna Iliev. Welcome to the House.

Mr. Paul Miller: It's my pleasure to introduce Susan Sharma. She's a constituency assistant of mine in Hamilton, and it's her first time to Queen's Park. Welcome, Susan.

Mr. Randy Hillier: I'd like to welcome Sean Lawrence and Rob Stewart from my riding to Queen's Park today. They're here with Advocis.

Hon. Raymond Sung Joon Cho: I'd like to warmly welcome members of Professional Engineers Ontario, from the Scarborough chapter. Welcome to Queen's Park.

Ms. Jennifer K. French: I am pleased to welcome folks from the Ontario Undergraduate Student Alliance: Rayna Porter, who is the student rep from Trent University Durham; Shemar Hackett; Auston Pierce; and Bilal Khan.

Also, I have the opportunity to welcome folks from the Ontario Good Roads Association: Scott Butler, Rick Kester and Rick Harms.

Welcome to Queen's Park.

Mr. John Fraser: I'm pleased to introduce some folks who are here from Wounds Canada: Ramzi Shenouda, Frank Berns, Susan Pinzer, Tom Weiz, Charles de Mestral and Robyn Evants. They have a reception today in room 228 at lunchtime, and I invite all members to join them.

Hon. Monte McNaughton: I'm proud to welcome to Queen's Park today one of the greatest mayors in Ontario—my mayor—and a good friend: Joanne Vanderheyden. Welcome to Queen's Park.

Ms. Marit Stiles: Speaker, it gives me great pleasure to welcome to the House today Maria Rizzo, the chair of the Toronto Catholic District School Board, who is here today as an advocate with Wounds Canada. Welcome to Queen's Park.

Mr. Dave Smith: I'd like to introduce a member of Advocis from my riding, Linda Gratton.

I don't see them here yet, but Westmount Public School, from the city of Peterborough, will be coming later on today as well.

Ms. Suze Morrison: I'd like to welcome one of my constituents, Susan Gapka, a long-time, fierce trans activist. Welcome to Queen's Park.

Mr. Sheref Sabawy: I would like to welcome a special friend from my riding today, Jeannette Chau. Welcome to Queen's Park.

Ms. Jessica Bell: I'd like to introduce Dianne Robinson. Her mother, Betty Robinson, is one of the last remaining people living at Davenhill seniors' home. Thank you for coming, Dianne.

Hon. Rod Phillips: I'd like to welcome all of our guests from Advocis, the Financial Advisors Association of Canada, to Queen's Park, including Greg Pollock, the president and CEO, and, from Durham, Karen Low, Chris Hudson, Irene Walsh and Ron Fennell. Welcome.

Ms. Judith Monteith-Farrell: I would like to welcome the College Student Alliance to Queen's Park. There are three students here from Thunder Bay: Brian Mpoza, Sterling Finlayson and Kiran Ramesh.

It's a Thunder Bay day, because I also have, from the Ontario Basic Income Network, Ruth Westcott. I'd like to welcome her to Queen's Park.

And joining us from the Ontario Good Roads Association, from Thunder Bay, is Rick Harms.

Hon. Todd Smith: I'm happy to welcome attendees with the Ontario Agencies Supporting Individuals with Special Needs, OASIS. They're visiting the Legislature today.

We're welcoming self-advocates along with representatives from OASIS, Community Living organizations from across the province, the Ottawa-Carleton Association for Persons with Developmental Disabilities, the Reena Foundation, the Cochrane Temiskaming Resource Centre, Community Visions and Networking, Participation House Durham, and Counselling Services of Belleville and District. They have a reception tonight, and I'd encourage everyone to head there after the debate is over.

I also want to welcome two members of Advocis from Bay of Quinte who are here: my good friends Paul Reed and Shannon Neely.

Mr. John Vanthof: I'd like to take this opportunity to welcome Paul Schoppmann, the mayor of the beautiful town of St.-Charles in Timiskaming-Cochrane.

Ms. Christine Hogarth: I just want to welcome my friend Sam Ingram, who is here from Etobicoke. Have a great day at the Legislature.

Ms. Jill Andrew: I'd like to welcome again former MPP Dr. Cheri DiNovo.

I'd also like to welcome Susan Gapka, friend and mentor, CUPE women's committee, Pink Triangle representative—congratulations again for getting the keys to the city of Toronto—and Rhonda Sussman.

Hon. Bill Walker: I have two announcements today.

I'd like to welcome Aakash Desai, the deputy mayor of the municipality of Grey Highlands, who is in the audience with us.

And this one is a really special one: I'm pleased to announce the birth of Millie Sajfert, born to proud parents Ana and Milan Sajfert, and little sister to Tara. Baby and mom are both healthy and happy. I'm a little lost, though, because Ana has served with me as my executive assistant since I arrived at Queen's Park, so I wish her a great year of maternal leave, but I wish her to get back as quick as she can.

1040

Ms. Andrea Horwath: I was unable to mention this yesterday, but I do want to wish my son a belated happy birthday. He turned 27 yesterday.

Hon. Doug Downey: I'd like to welcome the delegation from the Professional Engineers of Ontario: Nancy Hill, president; Johnny Zuccon, CEO; Warren Turnbull; Arjan Arenja; and Jeannette Chau. Welcome.

Mrs. Lisa Gretzky: It is my pleasure to welcome everyone that's up here from the basic income network and also those from the Ontario Agencies Supporting Individuals with Special Needs, also known as OASIS. I look forward to meeting with them later and speaking at both of their receptions.

Hon. Lisa MacLeod: In the gallery today is a great friend of this House, Cheri DiNovo. She and I years ago brought in the Trans Day of Remembrance as a piece of legislation.

We're joined today by a delegation: Susan Gapka, Melissa Hudson, Kendra Fry, Jacob Wenzel, Emma Wakelin, Judi Bonner, Bishop Kevin Robertson, James Holzbauer, Andrew Fraser, Joy Gawa, Jill Dilts, our good friend Stella Skinner, Darwin Skinner, Jessica Skinner,

Davina Havier, Michelle Haley, Wendy Snowdon and Dorothy Snowdon.

Welcome to Queen's Park on the Trans Day of Remembrance.

Mr. Kevin Yarde: I'd also like to introduce, from the Ontario Good Roads Association, Amin Mneina, as well as Aakash Desai.

Mrs. Robin Martin: I'd like to welcome two groups of guests. One is a number of guests in the gallery from Wounds Canada: Celine Bryenton, Crystal McCallum, Giuliana Quinto, Katie Bassett, Mariam Botros, Marina Yassa and Adelaide North. They will be hosting a reception, as mentioned, in room 228 after question period.

I'd also like to welcome the Catholic school trustee in my area, Maria Rizzo. Thank you. Have a great time.

Hon. Lisa M. Thompson: I'd like to welcome two amazing people from the Kincardine area: a provincial director with OASIS, Andy Swan, and I'd also like to echo the welcome to Arjan Arenja with PEO.

Mr. Norman Miller: I'd like to welcome Liam Broad. He is in the public gallery, west side. He was very helpful in the past provincial campaign for me. Welcome, Liam, to the Legislature.

Ms. Lindsey Park: We're joined in the east members' gallery by members of the Durham chapter of Advocis. I'd like to welcome Chris Hudson, Brent Holmes and Brittany Hudson. Welcome to Queen's Park.

Mr. Michael Parsa: I'd like to welcome Jordan Angus, a great volunteer in my campaign and a strong voice for our youth in Aurora–Oak Ridges–Richmond Hill. I'd like to welcome him to Queen's Park as it is his first time visiting us.

Hon. Ross Romano: I'd like to welcome some very special friends of mine from my home of Sault Ste. Marie and from the Sault Ste. Marie chapter of Advocis: Eric Barton, Anthony Deluco, Denton Middaugh and Gord Rymal, sitting to my right here.

Mrs. Daisy Wai: I'd like to welcome Mr. Charlie Lyons, sitting in the public gallery. Welcome to Queen's Park.

Mr. Mike Harris: If my eyes don't deceive me, I believe we have a former member of Parliament up in the gallery. Jay Aspin, I think, is here today.

COMMITTEE SITTINGS

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): The government House leader has informed me he has a point of order that he would like to raise. I recognize him.

Hon. Paul Calandra: Mr. Speaker, I'm seeking unanimous consent to move a motion without notice regarding the Standing Committee on Estimates.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): The government House leader is seeking unanimous consent of the House to move a motion without notice regarding the Standing Committee on Estimates. Agreed? Agreed.

Again, the government House leader.

Hon. Paul Calandra: I move that the Standing Committee on Estimates be authorized to sit until 6:30 p.m. on

Wednesday, November 20, 2019. This is to allow the Minister of Francophone Affairs to speak in the House to the NDP opposition day motion.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Mr. Calandra has moved that the Standing Committee on Estimates be authorized to sit until 6:30 p.m. on Wednesday, November 20, 2019. Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? Carried.

Motion agreed to.

ORAL QUESTIONS

GOVERNMENT CONTRACTS

Ms. Andrea Horwath: My first question is to the Premier. Yesterday, we learned that at a time when the entire world is moving toward renewable energy, the Ford government is wasting at least \$231 million—and quite possibly more—tearing down clean energy projects and paying wind energy producers not to build renewable energy.

Why did the government claim that there would be no cost to Ontarians when, in fact, ripping up these wind energy contracts is costing at least \$231 million?

Hon. Paul Calandra: To the Minister of Energy.

Hon. Greg Rickford: One of our first actions as government was to wind down over 750 contracts, to the tune of a net present value of \$790 million—almost a billion dollars—that communities didn't want and the grid didn't need. We repealed the Green Energy Act to ensure that expensive contracts and energy projects that would be forced on unwilling communities would not be a burden on our system.

This is not a cost that the ratepayer will bear. They appreciate the fact that we've taken significant steps in an effort to reduce it for the ratepayer. Every single time the NDP had an opportunity to work with us and reduce those rates, they voted against it.

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

Ms. Andrea Horwath: Well, it all comes out of the same pocket, Speaker, and the families of Ontario deserve more affordability with electricity, not less, which is what this government is providing them: less affordability.

Government sources say that the costs of scrapping these renewable energy projects could exceed \$231 million. In fact, the full cost of tearing down the White Pines wind project still has not yet been finalized. Media reports indicate the cost of cancelling that project alone will run as high as \$141 million.

I can remember when the Liberals sat where the Ford government sits now and lowballed the cost of the gas plants scandal. Can the government guarantee that their \$231-million number will not climb any higher?

Hon. Greg Rickford: Mr. Speaker, isn't it interesting to hear the chairman of that party talk about where money comes from? I think this party here has done a lot to take care of the taxpayers' dollars and make sure that they get

the best value from government services and programs. But if, in fact, she was here—let's rattle off some interesting statistics: November 1, 2009, a 5.5% increase; November 1, 2010, a 6.25% increase; November 1, 2011, an 8.7% increase to the ratepayer.

It actually goes on and on right up until, oh, about 2018, when a government took over and took swift action to take projects off that were structurally causing this system to be complex and unaffordable for ratepayers; that's senior citizens, small businesses, families and major industries that employ thousands of people.

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

Ms. Andrea Horwath: The minister responsible is conveniently forgetting that his Ford government promised a 12% decrease in electricity rates, not a 2% increase in electricity rates.

But do you know what? It has been more than a year since the Premier proudly announced that he would start tearing down clean energy projects, even while the rest of the world was rushing to build them. A year later, the government still claims that they don't know the full cost of this move.

When will the public get an answer? Can the government maybe set a date today as to when people will expect to know exactly how much the ripping up of contracts by this government is going to cost?

Hon. Greg Rickford: Mr. Speaker, we will not be deterred from our efforts to continue to ensure that our energy system is simpler, less complex and more affordable.

We've heard it from just about every major industry and small business you can think of. Our constituents are showing us these peak demand costs of the price per kilowatt hour. Isn't that interesting? That is borne by the increases that I just rattled off—and I can rattle off more.

Here's what I know about it: The NDP supported the ideologically driven previous government every step of the way. We already have a green energy system here in Ontario; 92% of our energy system is GHG-free. It employs thousands of workers in Pickering and Oshawa across the GTA. We have an extraordinary opportunity to build that out, Mr. Speaker, and continue to remain committed to green energy that's affordable and competitive with other jurisdictions in Canada and North America.

1050

GOVERNMENT CONTRACTS

Ms. Andrea Horwath: The next question is also for the Premier. When the previous Liberal government cancelled two gas plants, they had the same \$230-million opening estimate as the Ford government now has. But thanks to the Auditor General, all Ontarians learned that \$230 million under the Liberals was actually over \$1 billion. At that time, Conservative members, including many who now sit in the Conservative government's cabinet, considered the auditor's numbers to be definitive.

Any member of the Ford government cabinet has the power to ask the auditor to review these expenses. Will the Ford government take action today to ensure transparency

and ask the Auditor General to conduct a complete review of the total cost of these cancelled contracts?

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): The Minister of Energy, Northern Development and Mines.

Hon. Greg Rickford: It's interesting that the member opposite would introduce the Auditor General's role in all of this. It was, in fact, the Auditor General who said that these increases that I mentioned earlier—and as I said, there are more. There are 8.9%, 8.2%, 22%—it's incredible. That was in 2014.

The thing is, nobody knew about it. Nobody knew the secret plan that was hatched over there to build in expensive projects that would make our energy system more complex and way more expensive.

The 750 projects had not reached their milestones, to the tune of almost \$1 billion in net present value, which doesn't include any inflationary costs against that price and the structural support that that kind of energy would need to continue to make our system the most complex and the most expensive in North America. Those are facts, Mr. Speaker.

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

Ms. Andrea Horwath: At a time when we should be investing in renewable energy and renewable projects, this government is not only tearing them down, they're squandering hundreds and hundreds of millions of taxpayer dollars that could have built new hospitals and long-term-care beds or taken lead out of the water in schools and daycare centres. The least the government should do now is give the people of Ontario an honest accounting of their boondoggle.

Will the Ford government call in the auditor? And, if not, why not?

Hon. Greg Rickford: Mr. Speaker, the auditor was called in, and she made some pretty impressive observations about the previous plan that was supported by the anti-nuclear democratic party every step of the way.

The fact of the matter is that we have an energy system that employs tens of thousands of highly trained and highly skilled workers at a competitive cost—somewhere in the seven-cents-per-kilowatt-hour price. That's competitive with Quebec, where I was yesterday, which is in full-blown competition with us in the mining sector.

It's difficult to compete when the NDP and the Liberal Party, the former government, were in cahoots together to build the most expensive system in North America. That system, Mr. Speaker, it has been told to us over and over again, is the most complex and the most expensive.

I see that the NDP are conveniently still on that fact-free diet that they started last December. Let's be clear: People wanted a pathway—

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

Ms. Andrea Horwath: Speaker, it looks like the government side doesn't want to talk about their boondoggle, although they talk a lot about the Liberal boondoggle. But I'm actually talking about the Conservative boondoggle that is unfolding right before our eyes, as we sit in this chamber.

The Conservatives used to be upset about the gas plant contracts that were torn up by the Liberals. They shouted about the scandals. They shouted from the rooftops about—
Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Stop the clock. Okay, that's it. I'm going to start calling out members by name and then I'm going to start warning them. And we know that that leads to the next step.

I apologize to the Leader of the Opposition.

TRANS DAY OF REMEMBRANCE

Hon. Paul Calandra: Point of order, Speaker.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Point of order, the government House leader.

Hon. Paul Calandra: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker—

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): The clock is stopped. I'm going to listen to this.

Hon. Paul Calandra: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Inadvertently—and I apologize. Today, we were supposed to be observing a moment of silence for Trans Day of Remembrance before question period, and inadvertently that did not happen. I seek unanimous consent in order for us to do it right now, to stop the clock so that we might do that and continue with question period.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): We normally don't listen to points of order but I recognized or sensed that there might be something serious that was going to be raised. But I think it would be most appropriate that we deal with that point of order after question period and observe then, if the House agrees, a moment of silence at the end of question period.

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Okay, I'll listen to the government House leader again.

Hon. Paul Calandra: Speaker, I appreciate that this is not normal, and I apologize to the entire House for the mix-up today. I assume responsibility for that. I know that this is completely not a normal course of action, but it has been raised to me that the community will not be here towards the end of question period and that there perhaps is a legislative requirement that it be done before question period, so I beg the forgiveness of the House for this intrusion. Question period will continue for the full length of time, if you're in agreement, Mr. Speaker, but I ask for this unusual—given the importance of this, and again, I apologize to the House and I apologize to the community for this. But I again seek just a moment, if we could do that.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): The government House leader is seeking unanimous consent of the House to observe a moment of silence. Agreed?

Ms. Andrea Horwath: Speaker, can I just ask that when we have this moment of silence, then, in the middle of question period that I'll begin from the beginning of my question—

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Of course. Not a problem. I assure you of that.

Agreed.

I would ask the members to rise to observe the moment of silence.

The House observed a moment's silence.

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

GOVERNMENT CONTRACTS

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): We're going to recognize the Leader of the Opposition's final supplementary, and you can start at the beginning of your question.

Ms. Andrea Horwath: Speaker, what I asked is that I could start my questions from the beginning. I was in a bit of a discussion here about what this government is doing and that was interrupted by, by the way, the moment of silence for the Trans Day of Remembrance—so that people are aware of why we had a moment of silence—but it is not appropriate to break my question period questions by a moment of silence. It's completely—

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): I am going to recognize the Leader of the Opposition, the first supplementary of her second question. Start the clock. I recognize the Leader of the Opposition.

1100

Ms. Andrea Horwath: At a time when we should be investing in renewable energy projects, this government is not only tearing them down, they're squandering hundreds of millions of taxpayer dollars that could have built new hospitals, long-term-care beds or taken the lead out of the water in schools and child care centres. The least that this government could do now is to give the people of Ontario an honest accounting of this boondoggle. Will the Ford government call in the auditor? And, if not, why not?

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): The Minister of Energy.

Hon. Greg Rickford: The government of Ontario continues to make significant investments in green energy. That's why we have some of the largest infrastructure projects in the history, certainly, of this province, and of Canada for sure, in refurbishing our nuclear facilities, ensuring that we have a green source of energy that's competitive and that comes in at around seven or seven and a half cents per kilowatt—not the 17 cents to 50 cents that was embedded in these contracts for wind and solar power that made our system more complex, Mr. Speaker, and was recognized, for all the wrong reasons, as being the most expensive energy system in North America.

Those are facts. Ask ratepayers that question. They now understand it. They're paying closer attention to their bills because the subsidy—which we now know was debt—that the Auditor General asked us to put clearly on the bill so that the people of Ontario could understand it better, Mr. Speaker, is there for all to see.

We're going to continue to take the right steps to reduce costs and find efficiencies in our system to reduce the rates that families and businesses pay, Mr. Speaker.

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

Ms. Andrea Horwath: Well, Speaker, my question is actually about the previous Liberal boondoggle on tearing up energy contracts and its striking resemblance to the current Conservative boondoggle of tearing up energy contracts. The Conservatives used to be upset about the gas plant contracts that were ripped up by the Liberals. They shouted from the rooftops about that scandal. But now the tables have turned and they're doing the exact same thing: ripping up contracts for renewable energy for Ontarians and not only leaving families to pay the bills, but refusing to tell them how much this is going to cost them.

The Ford government is now paying companies millions of dollars not to produce clean energy. Will they, at the very least, allow the Auditor General to tell us how much we're all going to be paying for their energy boondoggle?

Hon. Greg Rickford: It's not every day that I get an opportunity, over the course of my career, to speak to the boondoggle of a previous government that that party supported. So I will. I'll speak to it with certainty. Let's just continue with the statistics here; they're compelling. I think I stopped at 2012.

In 2013, on November 1, there was an 8.9% increase; on November 1, 2014, an 8.2% increase; November 1, 2015—you're sitting down, Mr. Speaker; wait for it—a 22% increase in what ratepayers pay.

We took appropriate, responsible action to deal with more than 750 projects that communities didn't want and that the grid didn't need. They were costing us anywhere from 17 cents to 50 cents per kilowatt hour, Mr. Speaker. We won't stand for that. Ratepayers certainly won't stand for that. We stand by those changes and will continue to do the right—

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

EDUCATION FUNDING

Ms. Marit Stiles: My question is to the Acting Premier. When it comes to bargaining, this government has a lot to say, but there's not been a lot of action. In the last 24 hours, teachers have expressed extraordinary frustration at the government, who seem determined to pick a fight. They also have plunged our bargaining into chaos, just like they've plunged our classrooms into chaos.

Scoring points at press conferences is not going to undo the damage that this government has caused to our schools, and it certainly isn't going to get a deal at the bargaining table. Why is this government so determined to pick a fight?

Hon. Christine Elliott: Minister of Education.

Hon. Stephen Lecce: This government is determined to get a good deal for our students, for our teachers and for the parents of this province. That is why, Mr. Speaker, yesterday I asked our teachers' union partners to consider seriously mediation as a mechanism to get a deal. I think what is important is that we turn to the same approach as with CUPE, our education workers, just a month ago. It worked.

At the end of the day, the Premier and this government are absolutely committed to a resolution that keeps kids in class and improves education for every student in this province.

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

Ms. Marit Stiles: The minister doesn't seem to know where we're at in the bargaining process.

Again to the Acting Premier: The minister has already delayed bargaining because he'd rather see himself on television than kids in the classroom. It is no surprise that this government is going out of their way to make things worse at the bargaining table. They're the ones who made things worse in our classrooms to begin with. Teachers are saying, "Your actions have thrown negotiations"—

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Stop the clock. Order. I apologize to the member for Davenport.

Start the clock. She can place her question.

Ms. Marit Stiles: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I think I hit a nerve there.

As I was saying, teachers are saying that this government's actions "have thrown negotiations into complete chaos."

We are days away from potential work action. Families are wondering what they're going to do and how they're going to make ends meet. There's no one else for the government to blame but themselves.

Again, when are you going to do the right thing, reverse these reckless cuts and stop the attack on our schools?

Hon. Stephen Lecce: The government is going to continue to be a reasonable, student-centric force at the tables. That is why we were able to achieve a deal with CUPE just one month ago, which kept kids in the classrooms of this province.

Mr. Speaker, while we do those initiatives, while we take reasonable actions at the table, we're seeing an escalation by teachers' unions. That is regrettable for families to observe, because their children should not have to pay the price for disagreement at the table. My hope is that, through mediation, we can actually provide a credible pathway to getting a good deal for our parents, for our teachers and, most importantly, for the students of this province.

REAL ESTATE INDUSTRY

Mrs. Gila Martow: I have a question for the Minister of Government and Consumer Services. Yesterday, the minister introduced the Trust in Real Estate Services Act. This bill, if passed by the Legislature, would bring a much-needed update to the Real Estate and Business Brokers Act, 2002, strengthening consumer protection and modernizing rules for registered real estate brokerages, brokers and salespersons.

Making sure that real estate professionals and brokerages across the province are trusted and ethical is important in giving consumers confidence in an open marketplace.

Can the minister elaborate on the proposed changes to the Real Estate and Business Brokers Act?

Hon. Lisa M. Thompson: Thank you to the member from Thornhill for the great question. I appreciate it very much, because we have heard loud and clear from consumers and from professionals alike that it was time to review the aged legislation, if you will.

I'm very excited to highlight our government's Trust in Real Estate Services Act, which focuses on five key areas, the main one being enhancing consumer protection. This means ensuring that consumers have access to better information, such as getting the right disclosures from real estate professionals as well as brokerages.

Number two: We're increasing professionalism among real estate professionals and brokerages by ensuring that they have a clear set of rules and ethical requirements to follow.

We're also ensuring efficient and effective regulation in the real estate sector. After it was ignored for too long by the previous Liberal administration, we have listened, we're being bold and we're taking action.

I'd also like to add, Mr. Speaker, that we're going to be reducing the burden on businesses and we're going to be building a stronger business environment by laying the foundation for real estate professionals to incorporate.

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

Mrs. Gila Martow: I want to thank the minister for her answer. I was the caucus team advisory chair that heard this bill and the discussion. I want to thank the minister for all of her hard work and dedication in introducing a bill that was developed—and I want to thank the minister for all of the consultation that was done on this bill.

1110

In fact, I was able to see first-hand the extent to which the minister and this government are dedicated to listening to the people of Ontario. This is a commitment that our government and our Premier take very seriously, especially when it comes to legislation that impacts one of the most important decisions Ontarians make in their lives: purchasing a home. I know that many Ontarians will be glad to hear of the proposed actions the minister is taking to modernize laws governing real estate brokerage professionals in this province.

Can the minister tell this House how the Trust in Real Estate Services Act will enhance consumer protection?

Hon. Lisa M. Thompson: To the member from Thornhill, I say thank you for your kind remarks, but we have to share all of the credit with the caucus and the members opposite, because in this House for years we've been hearing the need to review the legislation that had been outdated.

I'm really pleased to share with everyone today that our proposed changes would not only enhance consumer protection, but increase consumer confidence in the real estate sector through better information and disclosures, which lead to choice in purchase and a better sales process. These changes will allow consumers in Ontario to have confidence that the real estate industry and its professionals are operating with accountability.

If the bill is passed, Ontario's government remains committed to continue to consult with consumers and with stakeholders to develop proposed regulations. This is good legislation. These changes will help consumers make more informed decisions and also reduce the burden on our real estate professionals.

GOVERNMENT CONTRACTS

Ms. Sandy Shaw: My question this morning is to the Minister of Finance. Ontario families are anxious about other contracts that the Premier has pledged to rip up. We now know Ontario is paying clean energy providers \$231 million not to build green power. The government's political interventions with Hydro One have already led to a cancelled contract and a \$103-million penalty, and the government has lost court battle after court battle, with probably more to come. Earlier this year, the Premier passed legislation to tear up the province's 10-year contract with the Beer Store. Industry sources estimate that this reckless move could cost Ontarians up to \$1 billion.

Can the minister please give us an update on the plan to rip up the contract with the Beer Store, and how much that will cost taxpayers?

Hon. Rod Phillips: I thank the member for her interest and her question. We are modernizing alcohol and the legislation around alcohol, as the member will know. In the FES bill, there are several very progressive amendments contained, amendments that all stakeholders, whether it's the wine industry or the cider industry or members of the beer industry, have indicated they support—the idea of decoupling the issues of the regulator versus the LCBO, so there is a great deal of progress in that regard.

We've also made it clear that we want to increase convenience for Ontarians, and we are in discussions with all stakeholders, including the brewers, in that regard. When we have news to report on those discussions, I'll be happy to bring them to this Legislature.

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

Ms. Sandy Shaw: Thank you for that answer, Minister, but I would say that the people of Ontario are more interested in what this is going to cost them, not how often they can get a buck-a-beer in Ontario.

This government is now notorious for ripping up contracts without consideration for the costs. To quote one observer, "governments can also make bone-headed, ideological decisions that close businesses, kill jobs and drive away investment"—which is exactly what the Ford government is doing.

It has been months—months—since the government passed legislation giving themselves the power to rip up the Beer Store contract, a cancellation that we know could cost hundred of millions of dollars for taxpayers.

Will the minister please tell families how much public money will be spent on ripping up these contracts, and why is this money being diverted from our schools and underfunded hospitals?

Hon. Rod Phillips: I appreciate the member's interest in this priority. We have many priorities, and, as I laid out in our fall economic statement two weeks ago, critical among those are making sure we put money back into the pocket of Ontarians—\$3 billion in 2020, making sure that we invest in critical public services. That's why we have record spending in the Ministry of Health, \$1.9 billion more than last year, and \$1.2 billion more in education, ensuring that we put Ontario back on a sound financial footing. That's why we'll balance the budget in 2023.

All of this underpins our commitment to the economy: 254,000 net new jobs. Those are the things that are our priorities. As I said: On other issues, we'll report back on those priorities when we have new information.

AFFORDABLE HOUSING

Mr. Mike Schreiner: My question is for the Acting Premier. Ontario is in the midst of a housing affordability crisis. A minimum wage worker in Toronto must work 79 hours per week just to afford a basic one-bedroom apartment.

In Hamilton, Ottawa, Kitchener, my riding of Guelph and most other cities across the province, zero per cent of rental housing is affordable to someone working full-time on minimum wage. The lack of affordable rental housing is hurting the students who are visiting Queen's Park today, seniors, and young families, yet there is nothing in the fall economic statement about affordable rental housing. As a matter of fact, the ministry's budget is being cut.

Through you, Mr. Speaker, to the Acting Premier: Will the government commit today to make investments in affordable, purpose-built rental housing be part of the fall economic statement, so we can address the housing affordability crisis in Ontario?

Hon. Christine Elliott: Minister of Labour.

Hon. Monte McNaughton: We believe as a government that everyone in Ontario deserves a place to call home. That's why our government has made housing a top priority since we came to government 16 months ago. I know that the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing has worked hard and has had many, many conversations across this province with people. That's why we introduced our Housing Supply Action Plan.

Mr. Speaker, our plan is responsible and sustainable. It's going to help reduce red tape to increase the supply of housing. But in 16 months, we have also worked really, really hard to create more than a quarter of a million new jobs in the province of Ontario. Wages are going up in the province and, as I said earlier this week, one of the greatest initiatives that the Premier has brought forward in Ontario is that those making \$30,000 or under this year will pay zero provincial income tax.

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

Mr. Mike Schreiner: With all due respect to the minister, most of those low-wage workers can't even afford to rent a basic one-bedroom apartment. As a matter of fact, over the last 30 years in Ontario, only 9% of our housing stock was purpose-built rental housing.

The lack of affordable options is driving people out of our communities. It's increasing levels of poverty. We're seeing more and more people sleeping in unsheltered situations in ridings like mine, in Guelph, and others across the province. Yet nothing in the fall economic statement talks about building more purpose-built affordable rental housing in Ontario. As a matter of fact, the ministry's budget has been reduced in the fall economic statement.

I go back to the minister: Will the government commit today to making investments in purpose-built affordable rental housing so people with modest and middle incomes can afford a rental unit in this province?

Hon. Monte McNaughton: Again, this has obviously been a top priority of our government. That's why the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing brought forward the Housing Supply Action Plan.

We are investing in a community housing system that was neglected for years by the previous Liberal government. They had 15 years to make this a priority. In fact, in 2019-20 alone, our government is providing more than \$1 billion to sustain, repair and grow community housing right across this province.

It is important that we continue to grow Ontario's economy so we can make these investments. Under the previous government, supported by the official opposition, we lost 300,000 well-paying manufacturing jobs. Because of the former government and the official opposition, hydro rates tripled in the province of Ontario. In 16 months, we are turning this province around. We've created over 250,000 well-paying jobs. Unemployment is at a three-decade low—

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Thank you very much. The member for Markham–Thornhill.

1120

SENIORS' DENTAL CARE

Mr. Logan Kanapathi: My question is for the Minister for Seniors and Accessibility. This morning the minister, alongside the Premier and the Minister of Health, announced that eligible, low-income seniors will now be able to access our seniors' dental program and would now be able to access high-quality, routine, free dental care.

Many low-income seniors face challenges accessing regular dental care due to the financial implication and other obstacles. That's why our government has brought forward this program. Our seniors deserve a program that will help relieve the burden and stress they can feel about their dental care.

Can the minister tell this House how eligible seniors can apply to this program?

Hon. Raymond Sung Joon Cho: Thank you to the member from Markham–Thornhill for raising such an important question. I would also like to thank the member for being a passionate advocate for seniors' well-being, not only in your riding but all across Ontario.

Mr. Speaker, I am very proud to say that the publicly funded Ontario Seniors Dental Care Program is now officially available online and in person for seniors to

apply for the program. The portal can be accessed at ontario.ca/seniorsdental. Seniors can also pick up hard-copy application forms at local public health units.

Mr. Speaker, the well-being of all Ontario seniors is a top priority for our government—

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

Mr. Logan Kanapathi: Thank you, Minister, for that great answer, and thank you for your hard work for the seniors. I know that you came to the Markham–Thornhill riding for the seniors round table as well.

Speaker, the seniors' dental program is another great step that our government is taking to address hallway health care. Our government has been working hard to implement our comprehensive plan to end hallway health care. This will, of course, involve building new beds, but it will also involve changing how care is delivered to make our system more efficient.

We are investing in health care promotion, enabling new models of care for 911 patients, and mental health and addictions services.

Now we have fulfilled our promises to seniors and announced our new dental care program for low-income seniors. Can the minister tell the House how our seniors' dental program fits into our government's plan to end the hallway health care system?

Hon. Raymond Sung Joon Cho: I would like to refer that question to the Minister of Health.

Hon. Christine Elliott: Speaker, I am very proud that our government has officially launched the Ontario Seniors Dental Care Program, which will provide free, high-quality routine dental care for eligible low-income seniors.

Preventable dental issues lead to more than 60,000 emergency room visits every year. Preventable dental issues can be solved by the dental care that we would be providing. A significant number of these visits are by seniors who do not have dental coverage and have difficulty accessing care. The Ontario Seniors Dental Care Program will help eligible seniors receive the high-quality dental care that they deserve. By keeping seniors healthy, we can also help them avoid emergency visits to the hospital and help avoid chronic diseases.

This new program will help our government continue on our path of ending hallway health care and increasing the quality of life for all seniors across our province.

AUTISM TREATMENT

Miss Monique Taylor: My question is for the Acting Premier. Today is Universal Children's Day, a day to reflect on how we're serving the children of this province. And quite frankly, Speaker, this government continues to fail our most vulnerable children.

Last night, the Star had yet another story of families waiting in the dark for their funding. No one will give them the information that they need. Families are beyond disappointed. Life is getting harder and harder for them, and the stress continues to grow. They need action now.

When will all of these families languishing on wait-lists finally get the funding that their children need?

Hon. Christine Elliott: To the Minister of Children, Community and Social Services.

Hon. Todd Smith: Thanks to the member opposite for the question. I understand the urgency from the member opposite; we get that too. We were given the Ontario autism expert panel's recommendations three weeks ago today, as a matter of fact. As the member knows, it was a rather hefty piece of recommendations, 63 pages in all. My officials are looking at that, and we are looking at how we can start to roll funding out the door to these families.

I can tell you that we are continuing to roll out childhood budgets while we are awaiting further news on the Ontario autism panel to be released in the coming days, weeks and months. But we understand the urgency. We understand that these families are having difficult times. We know that this is an imperfect situation, and I've mentioned that when I've spoken about this in the past. However, we are promising that we are going to bring in a needs-based program for autism families to ensure that they're getting the help that they need.

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

Miss Monique Taylor: This minister promised that the program would be out by April. This is the second program that this government has put forward. If they can't get, with the first program, money in parents' pockets in nine months, how are they possibly going to do the next program in less than four months? It doesn't make sense.

With us today is Stacy. Today is day 846 that her child has been on the wait-list. She has met with her Conservative MPP. She has met with the minister and his parliamentary assistants. This government knows the challenges that Stacy's family and thousands of families like hers are facing, but nothing has changed. Families need money in their pockets to be able to purchase services. Families across this province are in crisis.

When can Stacy and families like hers expect the supports that their children need?

Hon. Todd Smith: I thank the member opposite for the question. I know there are many families out there who are in a similar situation. The member opposite talked about 845 days, which means that that family has been waiting back into the Liberal government's previous program and they were not getting the services that they need. But that's why, Mr. Speaker—

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Order.

Hon. Todd Smith: Mr. Speaker, I think the opposite members need to understand that. That's why we have taken the time to meet with the expert panel over the summer. They have brought forward recommendations. This is a new Ontario Autism Program designed by the autism community, one that we are going to roll out, because families shouldn't be waiting for 850 days to receive services. That's why we're taking the time to ensure we get this right so that we don't have to have these families coming to Queen's Park every day, waiting to get services. They

will have an Ontario Autism Program that is the best in the country. With the help of those families and with the help of that expert panel, we're going to get there.

SERVICES EN FRANÇAIS

M^{me} Natalia Kusendova: Ma question est pour la ministre des Affaires francophones. Dans mon comté de Mississauga-Centre, comme ailleurs en Ontario, je rencontre de nouveaux Canadiens et Canadiennes qui, comme moi et ma famille, ont choisi le Canada comme nouvelle patrie. Beaucoup parmi eux sont venus bâtir leur vie en Ontario parce que notre province et notre pays sont riches de deux cultures fondatrices et parce qu'on y offre des services en anglais et en français. Ces gens viennent souvent des divers pays qui forment la Francophonie. La cohabitation de deux grandes langues et de deux patrimoines culturels reconnus au sein d'un même État est la marque d'un pays de paix et de prospérité.

Est-ce que la ministre des Affaires francophones peut nous exposer sa vision de la défense et de la promotion de la langue française en Ontario?

L'hon. Caroline Mulroney: Je remercie la députée de Mississauga-Centre de sa question. Notre gouvernement travaille avec la communauté francophone afin de promouvoir les intérêts et de défendre les droits et les acquis des Franco-Ontariennes et des Franco-Ontariens.

1130

Plus tôt cette semaine, j'ai eu la chance de rencontrer les gens de l'Assemblée de la francophonie de l'Ontario, l'AFO, qui m'ont exprimé leur bonheur de voir les actions concrètes de notre gouvernement, les actions que nous avons prises pour la mise en oeuvre de l'Université de l'Ontario français, qui représente un très grand levier pour le développement économique et pour la prospérité de la communauté francophone ici en Ontario.

Pour ce qui est de la modernisation de la Loi sur les services en français, qui se rapporte directement à la question de la députée, notre gouvernement comprend que l'accès aux services en français est un enjeu fondamental pour la communauté francophone. C'est pourquoi j'ai mandaté les membres de mon conseil consultatif à me conseiller sur un processus pour moderniser cette loi.

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

M^{me} Natalia Kusendova: Je remercie la ministre des Affaires francophones pour sa réponse et pour son travail pour promouvoir les intérêts et les droits de tous les Franco-Ontariens et Franco-Ontariennes. Comme elle, j'ai eu le plaisir de rencontrer les chefs de l'AFO cette semaine et aussi d'assister à leur congrès annuel le mois dernier à Sudbury.

Évidemment, comme la révision de la Loi sur les services en français est un dossier important, il va sans dire que notre gouvernement veut prendre le temps nécessaire pour effectuer une révision minutieuse et ne saurait recevoir des leçons à ce sujet de la part de l'opposition qui, ayant peu l'habitude de gouverner, a peu de compréhension de l'avancement méthodique et ordonné d'un projet de loi du gouvernement. Cela dit, est-ce que la ministre, bien qu'elle

doive procéder avec précaution et méthode dans ce dossier, peut nous en dire plus au sujet de ses orientations quant à la Loi sur les services en français?

L'hon. Caroline Mulroney: Ce que je peux dire à ce stade préliminaire, c'est que le gouvernement de l'Ontario prend au sérieux les recommandations et les demandes de la communauté francophone en ce qui relève de la modernisation de la Loi sur les services en français. Bien que les francophones ici en Ontario peuvent actuellement bénéficier de services en français, nous voulons moderniser la loi. Plus que simplement réviser la loi, on veut moderniser la loi pour qu'elle reflète la réalité actuelle et les besoins des francophones ici en Ontario aujourd'hui.

Les libéraux avaient 15 ans pour faire ce travail important pour la communauté francophone, et ils ne l'ont pas fait. Quant à nous, nous sommes sérieux et nous voulons réaliser cette tâche importante avant la fin de notre premier mandat, comme je l'ai dit ici dans cette Chambre à plusieurs reprises. En tant que ministre des Affaires francophones, je vais travailler de très près avec mes collègues en vue de faire progresser les dossiers des affaires francophones, et je veux m'assurer que la voix de la communauté francophone en Ontario est entendue.

SOCIAL ASSISTANCE

Ms. Rima Berns-McGown: My question is for the Acting Premier. It's Universal Children's Day, and children's aid workers are here today with a dire warning for this government. The cuts to child welfare services under the Liberals were bad, but they've gotten worse under the Ford government. One CAS worker from Woodstock called it "death by a thousand cuts." Year over year, cuts to these agencies have resulted in front-line job losses and service cuts, but it's the kids in care who ultimately suffer. They can't wait and hope that maybe the Premier will raise money for them through a cash-for-access dinner.

Will the Premier reverse the cuts to children's aid that began under the Liberals and that continue under the Conservatives?

Hon. Christine Elliott: To the Associate Minister of Children and Women's Issues.

Hon. Jill Dunlop: I would like to thank the member for your question.

Our vision is for an Ontario where every child and youth who is receiving services through the child welfare system has the best supports possible. Children and youth receiving services in Ontario's child welfare system deserve the best care and support that we can provide for them. Their safety and well-being is our top priority. And I can assure you, as the minister and as a mother, children and youth are our top priority.

I want to talk about our modernization system that's taking place—and looking at prevention, I want to congratulate the Toronto's Children's Aid Society today on launching their Journey to Zero Program. We know that the system is broken and that we can be doing better. In August, I announced that we would be opening the modernization program, where we are engaging youth and

families, caregivers, Indigenous partners, front-line workers, family law professionals, and child development sector leaders on their experiences and ideas on how we can strengthen the child welfare system.

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

Ms. Rima Berns-McGown: Modernization should not be a euphemism for cuts.

This question is back to the Acting Premier. When this government cut a planned increase to social assistance by half, they made life more precarious for recipients of Ontario Works and the Ontario Disability Support Program. Poverty costs all of us between \$27 billion and \$33 billion a year. The government is apparently stuck in the discredited notion of trickle-down economics, but what trickles down from an economy that benefits the Premier's friends is not opportunity but food insecurity, unstable housing, uncertain access to better education, and more homelessness, all of which leave people further behind and without hope. Will the Premier clearly state that he will reverse the deep cuts he has made to OW and ODSP?

Hon. Jill Dunlop: Minister of Children, Community and Social Services.

Hon. Todd Smith: Our government is focused on a broader plan to ensure that we lift people up who are on social assistance.

Just an interesting stat for you: During the 15 years the previous government was in power, we saw the number of individuals receiving social assistance increase by 55%. We can do better than that, and that's why we're working to ensure that those who are on social assistance have received an increase in their funding by 1.5%.

I think the one thing that's probably the most staggering about the Ontario Works stats is that there are almost half a million people on Ontario Works, and half of those individuals are under the age of 24. We need to be doing more to ensure that those individuals, when they can, are entering into the workforce. That's why, working with my colleague the Minister of Labour, Training and Skills Development, we're preparing those individuals to join the workforce so they can stand on their own, raise a family, own a home. That's what we're doing. The best social program—

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

SENIORS' DENTAL CARE

Mrs. Gila Martow: My question is to the Minister of Health. This morning, our government announced a great new program that will make an immediate difference in the lives of our seniors.

Many working Ontarians have dental insurance through their employer or through private insurance. However, our government recognizes that seniors living on low incomes were being left behind. That's why, today, we followed through on our promise to seniors and announced a great new program that will expand access to preventive care for Ontario seniors. Can the Minister of Health tell this House

about the kind of difference our investment in this seniors' dental program will make?

Hon. Christine Elliott: Thank you to the member from Thornhill for her question. Our government's announcement this morning is a much-needed initiative to help low-income seniors. Currently, two thirds of low-income seniors do not have access to dental insurance. That's two thirds of low-income seniors who are required to pay out of pocket for dental services, and they can't afford it.

Our government's investment of \$90 million towards this annual seniors' dental program will help approximately 100,000 seniors per year. Seniors can apply to the program today online or at their local public health unit.

Ontarians aged 65 or older with an annual income of \$19,300 or less, or couples with a combined annual income of \$32,300 or less, who do not have dental benefits will qualify.

This is an important piece of our plan to end hallway health care and to help our seniors, and our government will continue to support Ontario's seniors by improving access to the quality health care that they deserve.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Supplementary.

Mrs. Gila Martow: I want to thank the minister for her response. Our government is busy keeping its promises to the people of Ontario. We are creating jobs, we are investing on the front lines of the public health care system and now we are implementing publicly funded dental care for low-income seniors, and I want to applaud that.

We'll now have 100,000 seniors who can enjoy a higher quality of life and thousands fewer unnecessary hospital visits. These are the kinds of results Ontarians expect us to achieve. Can the minister tell the House more about how this investment will fund dental care for our low-income seniors?

1140

Hon. Christine Elliott: This is an important investment in the front lines of our public health care system. Until our government made this new investment, many low-income seniors were unable to access the dental care they needed. We promised to bring change for seniors, and today we announced a \$90-million investment to make that happen.

Our government is bringing forward a significant increase in funding for dental services in public health units, community health centres and aboriginal health access centres. This investment will also fund new options for care in underserved areas and in mobile dental buses to ensure there are no gaps in coverage. Our new program will help seniors improve their health and prevent them from having to make preventable trips to the hospital. Our government remains committed to creating a connected system of care, where every Ontarian is connected every step along the way of their health care journey.

SERVICES FOR PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES

Mrs. Lisa Gretzky: My question is to the Acting Premier. Today we are joined by members of OASIS. They represent agencies that provide supports and services to

65,000 Ontarians, many with developmental disabilities. For over 10 years under the Liberals, the need for services increased dramatically. Agency budgets stagnated, and we reached a crisis point.

After a year and a half of deep cuts under this Conservative government, things are steadily getting worse. The crisis is even more dire. Recently we learned that the Ford government planned to hire a million-dollar consultant to help make these cuts to developmental services. That's absolutely disgraceful, Speaker.

OASIS president Darren Connolly said, "You can't cut millions of dollars from services for adults with developmental disabilities and their families without hurting the most vulnerable people in the province."

I want to remind the minister and the Acting Premier that they're government now; it's their responsibility. Will the Acting Premier commit today to abandon her plan for cuts to developmental services? Yes or no?

Hon. Christine Elliott: To the Minister of Children, Community and Social Services, please.

Hon. Todd Smith: Thank you very much to the member opposite for the question. As I did at the start of question period, I welcome all of the members from OASIS who are here today. They are our partners when it comes to providing services to those with developmental disabilities, and this is something that we take extremely seriously.

I had the opportunity a couple of weeks ago—it was actually Halloween that I was out by the airport, at a hotel where the provincial network was having their conference, and met with members of OASIS. Mr. Connolly was one of the members, and we talked about the fact that we had hired or were hiring a second set of eyes to take a look at this sector. The previous government did nothing to try and find efficiencies in this sector, and they actually made no investments in this sector, either, but we're taking this very seriously.

There were members from Christian Horizons who were there as well. There were also members from Community Living Ontario and Toronto. We are going to work with those service providers, and the families as well, to ensure that we're doing everything we can to provide services and modernize this—

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Thank you very much. Supplementary question? The member for Ottawa Centre.

Mr. Joel Harden: My question is for the Acting Premier. The Conservatives' plan to hire a million-dollar consultant to tell them how to make deep cuts to developmental services, while explicitly telling this consultant to ignore families and agencies, is a huge concern for this sector. I think of Jaqueline, a mom back in Ottawa Centre, and her daughter Bronwyn, who are looking for supportive housing. This government has done nothing for Jacqueline and Bronwyn.

OASIS believes that reforms must be driven by better outcomes, not budget demands, and Speaker, I couldn't agree more. These agencies still don't have their annualized budgets, seven months after the start of the fiscal year. This government has been in charge. They're scared, and

they won't find out how much has been gutted until it's too late.

Speaker, I have a very clear question for this government, if they care to actually answer it: Will the Acting Premier listen to OASIS and their members and back down on this consultant deal and their planned cuts?

Hon. Todd Smith: Mr. Speaker, the answer is no. We are actually working with the sector. We're working with OASIS. We have had conversations with OASIS over the last week. We've had conversations with OASIS since I became the minister five months ago. That's the difference: We're actually talking to our partners in this sector and working with them.

The consultant—

Interjections.

Hon. Todd Smith: I know the member opposite is interested, Mr. Speaker; maybe you can't hear him. But the member opposite is interested in knowing whether or not we are going to be working with families and those who are in the sector. I can assure you that we are, Mr. Speaker.

The consultant, as the member opposite asked, has been hired to look at best practices in other jurisdictions where they're actually building the homes that we need in this sector, where they have proven track records in this sector.

The government, the minister and my staff are meeting with the service providers at OASIS. We've had very healthy discussions with them so far and we will have healthy discussions with them going forward.

AGGREGATE EXTRACTION

Mrs. Robin Martin: My question is for the Minister of Natural Resources and Forestry. Minister, most people have a general idea of what aggregates are, but their importance and the critical role they play in our daily lives are often overlooked.

Aggregates are used to build the foundations of our homes, the schools in which our children learn and the offices and factories in which we make a living. They're also essential to building the roads that connect us and the transit systems that get us moving.

Can the minister explain to the House the purpose of the proposed changes to the Aggregate Resources Act and the potential benefits to my constituents of Eglinton–Lawrence, as well as Ontarians across the province?

Hon. John Yakabuski: I'd like to thank the hard-working member from Eglinton–Lawrence for her question.

As the population of the greater Golden Horseshoe is expected to grow by four million people by 2041, there is an increasing need for aggregates not only to maintain our infrastructure, but to support the growth of our communities. In order to build the homes, schools, roads and transit systems that future residents will depend on, we require a continued supply of aggregates.

That's the principal driver behind our government's proposed changes to the way aggregates are managed here in Ontario. These proposed changes to the Aggregate Resources Act aim to reduce administrative duplication

and delays, creating opportunities for growth while maintaining a steadfast commitment to protecting the environment and managing the impacts to communities, and I'll have more to say in the supplementary.

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

Mrs. Robin Martin: I want to thank the minister for that informative answer. It seems clear that the aggregate industry is an important driver of our economy and important to our quality of life. Without aggregates, the infrastructure we all depend on could not be built, and our communities could not grow. However, some of my constituents have expressed concerns over the environmental impact of aggregate extraction on drinking water, on farmland and on the greenbelt.

As the policies of provincial land use plans and the provincial policy statement recognize the importance of both aggregate resources and prime agricultural areas to the people of Ontario, I ask the minister to explain how these proposed changes will strengthen protections for the environment while helping vital infrastructure get built faster.

Hon. John Yakabuski: Thanks again to the member for her question.

As I said in my earlier answer, our government has a steadfast commitment to protecting the environment, and my ministry will continue to work and consult with industry, municipalities and other stakeholders on proposed changes to aggregate management. In fact, a key part of our proposal is to strengthen the protection of water resources through a more rigorous application process for requests from existing sites to extract aggregates below the water table.

We recognize the importance of protecting prime agricultural land and the greenbelt. Impacts to these areas must be considered during the approval process for aggregate extraction. This will not change. Our government will always support development that is beneficial to our communities while maintaining our commitment to managing potential impacts to our environment from aggregate extraction.

WATER EXTRACTION

Mr. Ian Arthur: My question is to the Acting Premier. Yesterday, we learned that this government, at the eleventh hour, is extending the moratorium on water-taking for bottled water in this province. The moratorium was put in place to further study the impact that commercial water bottling has on local water supply and our water security in the context of climate change.

The Ministry of the Environment, Conservation and Parks says they have finished their review of the science. Well, I'd really like to have a chance to read that review.

Will the minister commit today to making that review public? Yes or no?

Hon. Christine Elliott: To the Minister of the Environment, Conservation and Parks.

Hon. Jeff Yurek: Thanks very much to the member opposite. It was good to see him yesterday at the GreenPAC breakfast, which is a breakfast that's based on

being non-partisan and moving forward with the environment file.

I hope the opposition takes this to heart: We want to move forward on the environment file in a non-partisan manner. I've reached out and spoken to Mike Schreiner of the Green Party a few times, and we've taken his advice on numerous items, and we're going to continue to listen and consult with him.

The member opposite talked about the moratorium, which we've proposed to extend for another eight months as we continue to review the data, continue to speak to municipalities, continue to speak to Indigenous communities, continue to speak to businesses, to ensure that we're making the right decision based on the science that has been put forward. We're verifying the science right now, and once we move forward, that data will be made public.

NOTICE OF REASONED AMENDMENT

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): I beg to inform the House that, pursuant to standing order 71(b), the member for Timmins has notified the Clerk of his intention to file notice of a reasoned amendment to the motion for second reading of Bill 145, An Act to amend the Real Estate and Business Brokers Act, 2002. The order for second reading of Bill 145 may therefore not be called today.

This House stands in recess until 3 p.m.

The House recessed from 1151 to 1500.

INTRODUCTION OF VISITORS

Mr. Jeremy Roberts: I am delighted to welcome a crew visiting us from the Ministry of Children, Community and Social Services. We have Jacqui, Maailah, Jenna, Aron and, last but not least, my EA to the PA, Mike Pew. Thank you for joining us in the chamber this afternoon.

Ms. Suze Morrison: I'd like to welcome my very good friend and Toronto Centre resident Susan Gapka back to the chamber this afternoon—a long-time activist for the trans community here in Toronto. Welcome.

Mr. Ian Arthur: It's my pleasure to welcome a few constituents from my riding who are here today for the basic income lobby day: Jennifer O'Neil, who I have known for many, many years, and Aric McBay, Jamie Swift and Tara Kainer. Thank you. Welcome to the Legislature.

Mr. Terence Kernaghan: It gives me great pleasure to welcome the former MPP for Parkdale–High Park, the Rev. Dr. Cheri DiNovo, as well as members of the Toronto Trans Coalition. Welcome to the people's House.

Ms. Donna Skelly: I'd just like to welcome Jim Whelan, a constituent and a long-time friend. He's also here with OHHA.

M^{me} Gila Martow: Je veux dire bienvenue à tous les visiteurs pour la « opposition day » motion cet après-midi au sujet des services francophones ici. Alors, bienvenue à tout le monde.

Mr. Dave Smith: Point of order.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Is it an introduction of a visitor?

Mr. Dave Smith: Kind of.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): I'll listen to your point of order.

Mr. Dave Smith: This morning during introductions at question period, I introduced a resident of my riding, Linda Gratton. I was incorrect about her title. She's actually the chair of the government PAC for Advocis, not simply a member.

MEMBERS' STATEMENTS

SOCIAL ASSISTANCE

Mr. Ian Arthur: It's my pleasure today to welcome members of the Ontario Basic Income Network to the Legislature for their first basic income lobby day.

At its core, basic income is the right to self-determination beyond circumstance, and that is a powerful idea.

The challenges we face, be they climate, be they automation, require solutions that match their nature and scale.

Ontario pilot recipients embraced the agency making choices that addressed specific needs. A report by Basic Income Canada Network stated: "Overall, results show that given genuine choices, recipients made the most of them. Their decisions were based on unique personal circumstances. Recipients paid down debt, got teeth fixed, others went back to school, enrolled their children in recreational programs, or put some money aside for a future need. Almost everyone ate better."

Stockton, California, is eight months into an 18-month project, and participants are mostly using it to pay for food, clothes and utility bills.

The Mincome experiment in Manitoba saw a statistically significant decline in hospitalizations among recipients, compared to a control group.

It gives agency to people who have very little otherwise. It does not make people settle; it makes families safe to reach for a better future.

The results from every pilot indicate its promise. Speaker, basic income is an idea whose time has come. The challenges we face cannot allow us to think any smaller.

SKILLED TRADES

Mr. Randy Pettapiece: Ontario faces a growing problem: a shortage of skilled workers. One in five new jobs in Ontario over the next five years is expected to be in the trades. Businesses from one end of my riding to the other are in desperate need of skilled workers. We must do more to encourage young people to join this growing profession.

The Technical Training Group in my riding of Perth-Wellington is doing just that. This past Wednesday, I had the pleasure of attending the Real Deal on Skilled Trades

at the Stratford Rotary Complex. This is an event organized by the Technical Training Group to encourage young women to join the trades. I want to thank Mark Roth and Mark Flanagan for all they do in promoting the skilled trades.

Only 4% of tradespeople in Ontario are female. The Real Deal on Skilled Trades is a networking event for female students in grades 8 to 12, from across Perth and Huron counties, to learn about potential careers in the skilled trades. They had the opportunity to meet with women already in the skilled trades or apprenticeship programs. They met with engineers, carpenters, ironworkers and welders, to just name a few. Through information booths and interactive experiences, students learned more about the wide range of trades that exist in Ontario.

Mr. Speaker, the skilled trades offer an exciting, rewarding and profitable career—one with opportunities for all Ontarians. Together, we can ensure that more young people, especially women, choose a career in the skilled trades. I am pleased that Associate Minister Dunlop is promoting the skilled trades to our young women.

IMPAIRED DRIVERS

Mr. Wayne Gates: Today I'd like to talk about an event that happened in our family 13 years ago and forever changed our lives. My wife was hit head-on by a drunk driver.

I think it's important for us, particularly during the holiday season, to remember how much damage someone can cause when they decide to drink and drive—especially when we have a government that continues to prioritize increased access to alcohol.

In the last two days, drunk driving accidents have killed two people in Niagara and St. Catharines.

Last week, my wife, for the first time since the accident, wrote about it. This is what she said:

"Thirteen years ago today, I was hit head-on by a drunk driver on my way home from work. It forever changed my life. Although I prefer to focus on all of the positives in my life, I have both physical challenges and emotional scars that I live with every day. I have never posted anything about my accident, but something is eating away at me. Every week or two, the Niagara Regional Police post a list of people charged with impaired driving.

"The number of people varies; however, there are usually at least half a dozen. This was a recent headline: Eighteen People Charged with Impaired Driving Between Oct. 21 and Nov. 3. And let's face it, these are only those who get caught! Drunk driving can kill. I am fortunate to be alive, but am living a different life from the one I would have led without having the accident. When are people going to realize the devastation such a poor choice can cause?"

Accidents like my wife's are preventable.

The Ford government needs to stop making it easier for people to get alcohol 24/7. Let's work together instead to keep people safe and our roads safe.

NEPEAN SAILING CLUB

Mr. Jeremy Roberts: This past weekend, the Nepean Sailing Club in Ottawa West–Nepean hosted its annual awards night honouring top racers from the past year. With 2,000 members and 800 boats, it is the largest sailing club in Canada by trips and anchored boats.

The club also helps developmentally disabled young adults through their Able Sail program, which includes training, regular sail, and participating in racing. Our government was proud to support their good work with a \$70,500 Trillium grant, which helps with the cost of boats and programming.

Volunteerism is a key component of the Nepean Sailing Club. Nominations for their Volunteer Achievement Award close on November 30. If you know anyone who has been an outstanding volunteer, please be sure to nominate them.

HOMELESSNESS

Mr. Chris Glover: Last night, I attended a meeting of the Toronto Alliance to End Homelessness. It's a partnership of social service agencies and businesses, and their goal is to bring an absolute end to homelessness.

We are in a homeless crisis both in this province and in this city. In the city of Toronto, homelessness has more than doubled over the last five years, from 4,000 people to more than 9,000 people. We heard from people last night talking about hidden homelessness—people who are couch-surfing for months on end because they don't have adequate housing.

The group is taking some important steps, but they can't do it alone.

This government has cut funding to end homelessness. They've cancelled the basic minimum income pilot. They've reduced the proposed increase in Ontario Works, which was supposed to go, for an individual, from \$725 to \$745 a month. They decided that \$745 a month was too exorbitant, so they capped it at \$735 a month. You cannot rent a room in this city or anywhere in most parts of Ontario for \$735, let alone the housing allowance of that.

1510

We need to take a different approach. I salute the businesses and the community groups that are organizing the Toronto Alliance to End Homelessness. We need this government to change course and actually address homelessness and having a home as a basic human right.

HAMILTON TIGER-CATS

Ms. Donna Skelly: I am absolutely thrilled to be able to rise today to brag a bit about my hometown Hamilton Tiger-Cats, who are advancing to the 107th Grey Cup this coming weekend. The Ticats absolutely dominated the Edmonton Eskimos, 36-16, in Sunday's East Division final and their victory was in front of a record sold-out crowd, all wearing black, of more than 25,000 fans at Tim

Hortons Field, thrilled by a flyover by the legendary Lancaster bomber.

The Ticats will face the Winnipeg Blue Bombers in this Sunday's Grey Cup championship game. The team, by the way, finished atop the East Division with a CFL-best 15-3 record. This was also the Ticats' strongest season in team history.

Grey Cup excitement, Mr. Speaker, in Hamilton is absolutely exploding. The Ticats last hoisted the Grey Cup in the 1999 championship game. The club's success is even more incredible given that—and you might remember this—back in the late 1980s owner Harold Ballard threatened to fold the team in face of steadily declining attendance.

Well, guess what? Ticats fans are rabid in their support. Excitement is building. Football will continue to be crazy in Hamilton as we prepare to host the 2021 Grey Cup.

So join me in wishing my hometown team the best of luck this Sunday. What do we say? Oskee Wee Wee.

MULTIPLE SCLEROSIS

M^{me} France Gélinas: Today, I would like to talk to equity of access to care for people who have multiple sclerosis. Northern Ontario has the highest rate of people living with multiple sclerosis. If you look at the standard of care for people with MS, usually you will see your family physician and your neurologist and be referred to a specialized MS clinic. That's a clinic that will be made up of an interdisciplinary team where you will have neurologists working with physiotherapists, occupational therapists, speech-language pathologists and social workers. They work as a team. You see them. They support the patient; they support their family; they support their caregiver. This is how you get the best care.

Unfortunately, although we have the highest rate, we have no such specialized clinic. There are many, many people whose outcomes, whose possibilities for life, are really, really curtailed because of this. Very few people living with multiple sclerosis are able to make the long journey down south on treacherous Highway 69, with the snow and everything, to get the care they need, so they go without.

I would like the government to understand that when health services are available to the people of Ontario, they have a responsibility to make sure that they are equitably available to all, and that means bringing one of those specialized MS neurological clinics to Sudbury, which is the hub for northeastern Ontario when we talk about health care. I hope their request will be listened to and acted upon.

AGRICULTURE INDUSTRY

Mr. David Piccini: I'm pleased to rise today to highlight agriculture and agricultural funding in my riding. Mr. Speaker, agriculture plays such an important role in Northumberland–Peterborough South. It's the number one

employer. I think of the rolling hills in Northumberland right up to Otonabee-South Monaghan and over to Asphodel-Norwood. Agriculture is key to Northumberland–Peterborough South and our broader economy.

I'd like to highlight Crosswind Farms in my riding. It's a small farm. Cindy and Kevin run it. It started in 2007. It's a goat farm. They received over \$71,000 in cost-sharing funding that will improve their operation so that they can grow their business, boost the province's economy and bring more safe, high-quality Ontario agri-food products to local and international markets.

The funds will go towards purchasing and installing new automated pasteurization equipment to automate current manual processes, to allow production of new and more products to enter into market.

Agri-food businesses will receive more than \$6.8 million in cost-sharing funding as part of this announcement and will contribute to over 100 projects around Ontario.

I'm really proud of the work of Crosswind Farms and the broader agricultural sector in my community. I'd like to congratulate both Cindy and Kevin for the hard work that they're doing, the remarkable work that they're doing. I can't wait to get up to Crosswind Farms to try some of the new cheddar.

ANTI-BULLYING INITIATIVES

Mr. Kaleed Rasheed: Today I rise in the House, during Bullying Awareness and Prevention Week, to talk about an issue that is dear to me: cyberbullying.

Mr. Speaker, our province has seen an increase in the number of cases of cyberbullying. Sometimes the effects of cyberbullying can cost a life. As a father and parliamentarian, I want my children and everyone in this great province to be protected and empowered against all forms of bullying, especially cyberbullying.

Cyberbullying consists of electronic communication that directly or indirectly causes or is likely to cause harm to another individual's physical and mental health or well-being. It can include intimidation, threats and harassment, and can have significant and lifelong negative effects on children and adults.

One out of every five teenagers has been the target of cyberbullying, and one out of every six has been a cyberbully at some point in their lifetime. There is so much work that needs to be done on this issue, especially at the grassroots level.

This past year I have had the opportunity to speak to many stakeholders, including members of the Peel Regional Police, who all agree that more needs to be done to stop cyberbullying. Mr. Speaker, together we can stop cyberbullying in Ontario with more education on the dangers, not just for our youth but for all.

Lastly, I want to thank the minister and our government for working hard to protect Ontarians and our future generations.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): That concludes our members' statements for this afternoon.

REPORTS BY COMMITTEES

STANDING COMMITTEE ON REGULATIONS AND PRIVATE BILLS

Mrs. Gila Martow: I beg leave to present a report from the Standing Committee on Regulations and Private Bills and move its adoption.

The Clerk-at-the-Table (Ms. Tonia Grannum): Your committee begs to report the following bills without amendment:

Bill Pr11, An Act to revive 598968 Ontario Limited.

Bill Pr12, An Act to revive 2345260 Ontario Ltd.

Bill Pr15, An Act to revive Haggart Belting Canada Ltd.

Your committee begs to report the following bill, as amended:

Bill Pr13, An Act to revive A&One Fashion Jewellery Wholesale Ltd.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Shall the report be received and adopted? Agreed? Agreed.

Report adopted.

INTRODUCTION OF BILLS

STOP CYBERBULLYING IN ONTARIO DAY ACT, 2019

LOI DE 2019 SUR LA JOURNÉE POUR L'ÉLIMINATION DE LA CYBERINTIMIDATION EN ONTARIO

Mr. Rasheed moved first reading of the following bill:
Bill 146, An Act to proclaim Stop Cyberbullying in Ontario Day / Projet de loi 146, Loi proclamant la Journée pour l'élimination de la cyberintimidation en Ontario.

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

First reading agreed to.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Would the member for Mississauga East–Cooksville care to explain his bill?

Mr. Kaleed Rasheed: The bill proclaims the first Friday of June in each year as Stop Cyberbullying in Ontario Day.

1520

PUBLIC SAFETY RELATED TO DOGS STATUTE LAW AMENDMENT ACT, 2019

LOI DE 2019 MODIFIANT DES LOIS EN CE QUI A TRAIT À LA SÉCURITÉ PUBLIQUE LIÉE AUX CHIENS

Mr. Nicholls moved first reading of the following bill:
Bill 147, An Act to amend the Animals for Research Act and the Dog Owners' Liability Act / Projet de loi 147, Loi modifiant la Loi sur les animaux destinés à la

recherche et la Loi sur la responsabilité des propriétaires de chiens.

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

First reading agreed to.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Would the member for Chatham-Kent–Leamington wish to explain his bill?

Mr. Rick Nicholls: Thank you very much, Speaker, but I will reserve my comments for debate tomorrow afternoon right here in the Ontario Legislature.

STATEMENTS BY THE MINISTRY AND RESPONSES

TRANS DAY OF REMEMBRANCE

Hon. Jill Dunlop: I'm honoured to stand and speak about Trans Day of Remembrance. In 1998, Rita Hester, a transgender woman, was found dead in her apartment. She was stabbed 20 times. The following year, the transgender community came together to advocate for a national day to commemorate and mourn those who have lost their lives as a result of transphobic violence and prejudice. Twenty years later, we know transgender and gender-diverse people are still subjected to violence and prejudice, and that each year hundreds of transgender and gender-diverse people lose their lives due to anti-trans bigotry. The sad truth is that this year alone, over 300 transgender and gender-diverse people have been killed around the world.

On November 20 and every other day, we remember the victims of transphobia, and those affected by their deaths.

I was honoured to participate in the Trans Day of Remembrance flag-raising this afternoon with many colleagues from this House as well as the Toronto Trans Coalition and trail-blazing advocates for transgender people.

Thank you to Rev. Dr. Cheri DiNovo, the former member from Parkdale–High Park, for bringing this bill forward, and to my colleague the member for Nepean for her support.

We are fortunate to live in a province that embraces diversity, acceptance and equality, where everyone is treated with respect and dignity regardless of gender, race, religion, sexual orientation or gender expression, where hatred and bigotry have no place. In 2012, the Legislature passed Toby's Act which received support from all parties and enshrined the right to be free from discrimination and harassment because of gender identity into the Human Rights Code.

I'd like to take this opportunity to quote my colleague the member from Burlington, who had this to say in support of the bill at that time: "Trans Ontarians are like us in every way that truly matters. They are strengthened by family, united by community, inspired by hope, restored by faith. They love and are loved. They are not less than us; they are part of us. Yet trans people are not

like you or I in one significant way: They are not regarded as being equal under the law....

"May it be said of us here today that we were able to recognize an imbalance that we admitted could no longer be denied. Equality must live as more than just a theory if it is to live at all. And may it be said that we took this moment to rise to our best ideas, that we valued our rights and freedoms enough that we extended them to all Ontarians. Call it the golden rule if you like; call it moral courage if you must. When you get right down to it, this is a decision about whether or not to deny our fellow Ontarians the full scope of freedoms, rights and protections that others enjoy as a birthright. It is a chance to affirm that human equality is a fundamental right, not a privilege to be enjoyed by the fortunate."

I highlight that passage, Speaker, because it was seven years ago today that the rights of trans people were not guaranteed. Far too many Ontarians have experienced—and not survived—the difficult road to get to a place where trans people are seen as equals. We still have a long way to go.

It is unacceptable that transgender people continue to be victims of bullying and intolerance. With this week being Bullying Awareness and Prevention Week, which my colleague the Minister of Education will speak to shortly, it is imperative that we stand up to all kinds of bullying, no matter the topic and that we must do more to address homophobic and transphobic bullying in the classrooms. We must also commit to playing our part in ending the stigma that contributes to anti-transgender discrimination.

I look forward to working with the LGBTQ+ community and all of my colleagues in this Legislature to ensure that all Ontarians are empowered to freely express themselves without fear.

ADOPTION AWARENESS MONTH

Hon. Jill Dunlop: November is Adoption Awareness Month. On behalf of the government, I want to take this opportunity to acknowledge and thank all the families who have opened their hearts and their homes in order to provide children with love, safety and security through adoption. We celebrate them. Our government is committed to supporting every forever family and hopefully creating many, many more of them.

I believe every child deserves a loving family and a permanent, safe home—every child. As part of this, our government is committed to helping Ontarians who want to grow their families through adoption. We are proud to fund adoption programs, such as AdoptOntario and Wendy's Wonderful Kids, that help match families with children and youth for whom adoption is a suitable option. We also support adoptive families through Adopt4Life and the Adoption Council of Ontario.

Earlier this month, I had the pleasure of meeting three Wendy's Wonderful Kids adoption recruiters at the Durham Children's Aid Society. They work tirelessly to

provide children and youth with permanent placement in loving homes.

During this month, we also need to remember that children and youth for whom adoption is an appropriate permanency plan are not being matched with their forever families as frequently as possible. Our government also knows that it has been historically challenging to find families to adopt older children and children with special needs. That's why we are working to both improve outcomes for these children and youth and simplify the process for prospective adoptive parents.

A key priority of our work to modernize the child welfare system is to increase opportunities for permanency and family-based care for children and youth in care. By hearing the experiences and ideas for youth, families, caregivers, front-line workers, child welfare sector leaders and other stakeholders, we hope to find ways to strengthen the system. This includes hearing from adoptive parents, prospective adoptive parents and leaders in the adoption sector.

Engaging with and listening to Indigenous partners about gaps and barriers that exist is also a priority. We must support better outcomes for Indigenous children, youth and families.

I have asked my colleague and parliamentary assistant, Jeremy Roberts, the MPP for Ottawa West–Nepean, to spearhead these round tables about what improvements can be made in the adoption space. Each of my colleagues in the House has been invited to host their own round tables within their communities about adoption. I look forward to hearing the feedback and insights received from families, prospective adoptive parents and the adoption sector through these round tables. I know that the information gathered through the round tables will help us in our work to better support children in care and families wanting to adopt.

1530

In August, we began engaging with youth, families and those who have experience working within the system about their experiences and ideas to strengthen child welfare and residential services. Through these engagements, youth, families, caregivers and front-line workers actively participated in discussions and through an online survey.

I am very excited by the great response we have had. Hearing directly from those who have been involved with the system will help us to better understand their needs and build programs that protect and improve the futures of children and youth. I am confident that the feedback and suggestions that we receive from all the engagement activities will help us to achieve our goal of a better child welfare system.

Speaker, all of these steps support our government's vision for an Ontario where every child and youth who needs protection has the supports they need to succeed and to thrive, and where every child has a loving family and a permanent, safe home. Together, we can and we will make this vision a reality.

I would like to share my time with my colleague the member from Sault Ste. Marie, someone who has opened

his heart and his family, to share his personal family experience with adoption.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): I recognize the Minister of Colleges and Universities.

Hon. Ross Romano: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I want to thank the associate minister for all of her great work and advocacy in this area.

I spoke with the associate minister about this, and I hope to have a few moments. I'll start off by telling a brief story.

There was a lady walking down the beach one day. She spotted, off in the distance, a young boy. This boy was walking amongst what appeared to be thousands of starfish strewn about the sand. Every once in a while, she'd see the young man pick up a starfish and throw it back into the sea.

She stopped him and said, "Child, what are you doing?" He said, "Well, you see, ma'am, these starfish were brought in with the tide and they got caught on the beach. When the sun comes up, these starfish will die, and so I'm trying to save some of them." She looked at him and said, "But child, there are thousands of starfish here. You can't possibly make a difference."

He bent down and picked up a starfish and threw it back into the sea. He said, "I made a difference to that one."

I've heard that story many times since my wife and I became adoptive parents ourselves. It's a story that I often will say to people. When we advocate on behalf of adoption, we always focus on the benefits that we're providing to those children. My wife and I have heard it time and time again, but I will often and always say that the benefits to the parents are so significant that you can't possibly quantify them.

As a parent who went through a very difficult process—my wife and I encountered a lot of personal struggles in our lives before we made the decision to adopt. It is a very scary prospect. I can say openly, as a father, that it was very difficult for me to accept the idea of adoption when it was first suggested by my wife. The benefits that it has brought me and my family—my wife and I are two exceptionally proud parents.

It was on November 13, 2014, that we adopted our first two boys. Their little brother had been born the day before we saw them. We adopted our youngest boy, Jarrett, later that next year, in July 2015, six months later. We're now the proud parents of three boys, who have now recently, in the last few months, celebrated their fifth, sixth and seventh birthdays. They are an absolute treasure to have.

While we do great things as adoptive parents for those children, I can tell you with absolute certainty that the benefits they provided to us as parents have been the most fulfilling and rewarding experiences of our lives. It's just such an amazing experience.

To any parent out there who is thinking about adoption, I would say: Don't worry about anything you hear and anything you think about that seems at all negative. Do it. It's the most incredible experience you'll ever have.

Those boys are our children. It feels the same. I guess I can't speak for the other experience, but it certainly feels incredible. It's such a great, rewarding experience.

Lastly, again: We're not only benefiting the children, but we're benefiting the parents as well. I always love the opportunity to speak during Adoption Awareness Month to really try to raise that point to everyone out there, so thank you very much for the opportunity.

BULLYING AWARENESS AND PREVENTION WEEK

Hon. Stephen Lecce: Today, I rise for a young woman named Mary who was bullied because she is new to this country. I rise today for a young man named Kyle who was bullied because he's gay, a student named Ahsan bullied because of the colour of his skin, a student named Emily bullied and targeted because of her faith—and for each and every one of these stories, there is a victim with a saddened heart and a grieving spirit. But these kids deserve better. All kids deserve better in this province.

Today, I rise in solidarity with all members of this Legislature, on behalf of Ontario's two million students, to recognize Bullying Awareness and Prevention Week, which is this week of November 17 to 23. We know that a safe and inclusive school environment is essential for student achievement and well-being. We also know that bullying is never acceptable. Yet in every reach of this province, too many kids face this darkness.

Bullying can take different forms, including physical, verbal, social and electronic, also known as cyberbullying. We must oppose it in all of its forms because, irrespective of faith, of sexual orientation, of colour of skin, of gender, of country of birth or of socio-economic status—we must denounce it in all of its forms.

Ontario is leading the way with legislation, policies and new resources to help ensure that safe and inclusive learning environments exist in every school in this province. On World Mental Health Day just a month ago, I joined members of this Legislature and announced an investment, a doubling of mental health funding to over \$40 million. This is to advance mental health and resilience, in partnership with so many education partners. We also announced that we're permanently funding approximately 180 front-line mental health workers in secondary schools to assist those who face victimization in their schools and on their playgrounds.

When my colleagues and I made the announcement, we were joined by a mental health advocate and a friend of Jane McKenna, the member of provincial Parliament from Burlington. This lady's name was Natalie Pierre. Natalie chose to speak out about mental health after her son, Mike, tragically took his own life. She said that that event changed her life and her family, Mike's friends and her community in ways she would never have imagined. Her words made an impact on me, and they've stayed with me ever since.

We know that one death is just simply too many. That's why we're also empowering students. The new health and physical education curriculum really provides children with the tools they need to recognize these behaviours and to stop and denounce—name and shame—these behaviours as they manifest before them. We're trying to change

the culture in our schools to a culture of inclusion, of respect and of pride.

Furthermore, as part of our government's ongoing commitment to mental health and combatting bullying, we're investing in cyberbullying prevention development for our school leaders, for our teachers on the front lines of education. Our government is also investing in other important initiatives to provide mentoring and counselling services to students, as well as victim supports for those who face violence and bullying. We continue to provide support to school leaders, who make a difference at the classroom level, and we're grateful for what they do every day.

Every school in Ontario has a safe schools team that is responsible for fostering safe and inclusive school environments. Each team is made up of parent representatives—we express our gratitude for the partnership we have with parents across this province, who are part of this solution.

School boards are required to conduct school climate surveys of students, school staff and parents at least once every two years. They play a really important role in contributing to a positive school climate.

An anonymous school climate survey conducted on a regular basis can help our schools:

- assess perceptions of safety;
- make informed planning decisions;
- determine the effectiveness of our programs; and
- build and sustain a positive school environment.

1540

A positive school climate exists when all members of the school community feel safe, included and actively promote—the ministry provides resources to ensure that every school is safe.

The resources that we help provide are going to be bolstered should a private member's bill from the member from Mississauga East–Cooksville be adopted by this chamber, the Stop Cyberbullying in Ontario Day Act. I look forward to supporting this day and championing its cause next June, should it be passed.

It's up to all of us—government, educators, parents and students—to work together to keep our students safe in schools. By participating in this week and promoting safe and inclusive environments throughout the year, we help create that positive culture that every student deserves. We share a moral imperative to stand up to bullying, to possess the strength of conviction to end it. Together, we have the ability to be part of the solution, to be an ally for the cause. By coming together, we make a difference in the lives of Ontario's students. So I ask that we all work together in our hearts to ensure the safety of our kids.

We often speak about the strength that we possess from our diversity, and I want to extend that principle. I think we possess unity from our shared diversity—the idea that in this country, in a pluralistic, liberal democracy, every single person should and can, under the law, feel respected and included.

Our hope is that every child entering schools today can know with clarity that this government and all parliamentarians stand together to end bullying in all of its forms.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): Responses?

TRANS DAY OF REMEMBRANCE

Mr. Terence Kernaghan: Today is a difficult day. On the Trans Day of Remembrance, we remember and mourn members of the trans community lost to us as a result of transphobic violence. It is a day for us to honour their memory.

I want to recognize former MPP Cheri DiNovo and tireless trans activists like Susan Gapka for making it possible to recognize this day in Ontario's Legislature.

It's often said that the queer liberation movement was started by two trans women of colour at the Stonewall riots, and yet trans women of colour are disproportionately the targets of transphobic bigotry. Transphobia rarely operates in isolation. It intersects with racism, misogyny and other hateful ideologies that push trans women of colour to the margins where violence can occur.

We also need to think of how transphobia manifests itself in less direct but still meaningful ways. Transphobia drives the trans community into unemployment, homelessness and poverty. We need to be wary of how decisions made in this House, such as cutting social assistance rates and refusing to invest in affordable housing, contribute to trans poverty.

I also want to be clear that a person's gender identity or gender expression should never be open for debate. Trans Ontarians should never feel unsafe in their workplaces, their schools, hospitals or communities.

We all have a commitment to fight for trans Ontarians, and that commitment does not end today. Trans Ontarians deserve to live in a province free from harassment and free from transphobic violence. Today is a day of remembrance; tomorrow must be a day of action.

ADOPTION AWARENESS MONTH

Miss Monique Taylor: I'm pleased to rise today, on behalf of the NDP, to recognize November as Adoption Awareness Month.

Every child deserves a forever family. Every child deserves to be cared for, nurtured and supported in a permanent and stable home.

Right now, there are thousands of children and youth in care in Ontario. These are children waiting to be adopted and finally have the peace of mind of living in their forever home. Many of these children have loving and stable foster parents, but many are forced to move around from home to home, never having the peace of mind that permanency brings. It's for these children that we work to improve adoption services in Ontario.

Choosing to adopt a child is a big decision, and the process can sometimes be lengthy and onerous—and to some extent, it must be. We need to make sure that homes are safe and appropriate. But we also need to make sure that whatever we can do to make that process work better for families and children is the right thing to do—

including investing in more post-adoption supports for the family, as well as for the child, recognizing the unique difficulties and needs of those who experienced the child welfare system.

Adoption Awareness Month is a reminder that there are kids out there who still need the basics, like a stable home, and that we must do better for them.

BULLYING AWARENESS AND PREVENTION WEEK

Ms. Marit Stiles: Bullying Awareness and Prevention Week is a time when students, education workers and, indeed, parents like myself reflect on the impact of bullying. It's also a time for all of us in this House to reflect on what we are doing to promote a positive learning environment for our kids, to foster safe spaces where all people are free from fear and able to express themselves without prejudice, and to ensure early intervention to prevent harassment, violence and oppression—because ending bullying cannot happen if we are only ever reacting. For victims, whether they are bullied because of their race, gender, sex orientation, disability or economic class, by the time we react, it can be too late.

I want to acknowledge the work of many of my colleagues here today who have spoken up for the victims and survivors of bullying. In particular, I want to mention the member from Toronto—St. Paul's, who recently raised in this House the terrible, tragic story of 12-year-old Arka Mukherjee. There are no words to end the suffering of families like Arka's.

But there are things we can do—and every single policy or idea or action is only as strong as the caring adults and the resources we have in our schools ready to deliver those supports. With the loss of 10,000 teachers and thousands more education workers in this province, the government's words are just that—words on paper, without the power or the commitment to make a difference. We can—we must—do better. I urge the government to reverse their cuts and invest in our schools, and help truly put an end to bullying so our kids can have the best possible opportunity for a bright and healthy future.

PETITIONS

MULTIPLE SCLEROSIS

Mr. Jamie West: I have a petition here that's titled "MS Specialized Clinic in Sudbury.

"To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas northeastern Ontario has one of the highest rates of ... (MS) in Ontario; and

"Whereas specialized MS clinics provide essential health care services to those living with multiple sclerosis, their caregiver and their family; and

"Whereas the city of Greater Sudbury is recognized as a hub for health care in northeastern Ontario;

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

"Immediately set up a specialized MS clinic in the Sudbury area that is staffed by a neurologist who specializes in the treatment of multiple sclerosis, a physiotherapist and a social worker at a minimum."

I wholeheartedly endorse this petition, I will sign it and give it to Daniel. I sign it on behalf of my uncle who passed from MS.

DOG OWNERSHIP

Mr. David Piccini: I rise today to table a petition entitled "Petition in Support of Repealing Breed-Specific Language in the Dog Owner's Liability Act and for the Animals for Research Act.

"To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas all animals are capable of aggressive behaviour; and

"Aggressive behaviour can be found among many breeds or crossbreeds of dogs; and

"Evidence shows that DNA is never a predictor of aggressive behaviour in dogs; and

"Breed-specific legislation (the banning of specific breeds) is not an effective or cost-efficient solution to reduce aggressive behaviour of dogs; and

"The solution to preventing dog-related incidents is best addressed through comprehensive training and education programs, breed-neutral legislation promoting responsible ownership;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to support a bill repealing breed-specific language from the Dog Owners' Liability Act and Animals for Research Act and instead implement a comprehensive educational prevention strategy that encourages responsible dog ownership of all breeds."

I proudly affix my name to this petition of over a thousand names and will submit it to the Clerk.

EDUCATION FUNDING

Mr. Tom Rakocevic: My petition is entitled "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;

1550

"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 certainly support this petition, and I will be signing it and giving it to page Suhani.

ACCESS TO PERSONAL HEALTH RECORDS

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): Further petitions? The member from Thornhill.

Mrs. Gila Martow: Thank you so much, Mr. Speaker, for your dramatic introduction. I have a petition.

"To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas the Personal Health Information Protection Act, 2004, currently allows health information custodians to charge a fee that does not exceed the prescribed amount or the amount of reasonable cost recovery, where no amount is prescribed; and

"Whereas given no amount has been prescribed, the amount of 'reasonable cost recovery' has been left to the discretion of health information custodians; and

"Whereas in 2006 the Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care proposed a regulation for fee enforcement under subsection 54(11) of the act; and

"Whereas in 2008 the Information and Privacy Commissioner of Ontario (the IPCO) submitted a recommendation for amendment of the act to include enactment of a fee regulation that is substantially similar to the regulation drafted by the ministry in 2006; and

"Whereas the IPCO's recommendation is based on the numerous complaints from members of the public about fees charged by health information custodians for access to personal health records; and

"Whereas health information custodians continue to charge exorbitant fees for access to personal health records, against the recommendation of the IPCO; and

"Whereas the Center for Patient Protection recently cited this as one of the most common public complaints; and

"Whereas inaccessible fees continue to (1) be a widespread barrier to access of personal health records; (2) cause undue hardship and stress to the public; and (3), inundate a tribunal that could otherwise allocate its resources to other matters.

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

"That the government of Ontario enact the ministry's 2006 fee regulation so as to enable hassle-free access to personal health records, as well as transparency and accountability at health care institutions."

Of course, I affix my signature and give it to page Leela.

DOCUMENTS GOUVERNEMENTAUX

M^{me} France Gélinas: J'aimerais remercier M^{me} Isabelle Ratté, ainsi que ses quatre enfants, pour la pétition.

« Alors qu'il est important d'avoir le nom exact des personnes sur les cartes émises par le gouvernement, tels la carte santé ou le permis de conduire;

« Alors que plusieurs personnes francophones ont des accents dans l'épellation de leur nom;

« Alors que le ministère des Transports et le ministère de la Santé ont » tous les deux « confirmé que le système informatique de l'Ontario ne permet pas l'enregistrement des lettres avec des accents »;

Ils pétitionnent l'Assemblée législative et elle pétitionne l'Assemblée législative de l'Ontario « pour qu'elle s'assure que les accents de la langue française soient inclus sur tous les documents et cartes émis par le gouvernement de l'Ontario avant le 31 décembre 2020. »

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

GOVERNMENT REGULATIONS

Mr. Dave Smith: I have a petition here to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario.

“Whereas Ontario has more than 380,000 regulations across all legislation governing all aspects of life in Ontario; and

“Whereas the province in Canada with the second-most regulations is British Columbia, with approximately 170,000 regulations; and

“Whereas the role of government is to legislate and regulate to the point of integrity and not to the point of interference; and

“Whereas it has been demonstrated by other provinces in the country of Canada that it is possible to regulate to the point of integrity with significantly less regulations than are present in the province of Ontario; and

“Whereas the excessive regulatory environment in the province of Ontario has contributed to create a negative competitive environment for both business and personal growth in the province of Ontario for the 15 years prior to the election of the current Doug Ford-led government; and

“Whereas many pieces of legislation and their corresponding regulations were introduced in the province of Ontario prior to the introduction of the Internet, tearing down the Berlin Wall and the collapse of the Soviet Union” and should be modernized;

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

“Begin the process of modernizing the regulatory environment in Ontario by immediately passing Bill 132, An Act to reduce burdens on people and businesses by enacting, amending and repealing various Acts and revoking various Regulations, so that:

“(1) the Line Fences Act has provisions added regarding the duty of owners of former railway land to construct, keep up and repair fences that mark the lateral

boundaries of the land if a farming business is carried out on abutting land owned by a different owner;

“(2) the Local Planning Appeal Support Centre is dissolved and the accompanying Local Planning Appeal Support Centre Act is repealed;

“(3) section 12 (respecting the provision of security by certain board members), section 31 (authorizing agricultural societies to pass bylaws prohibiting certain activities on or near exhibition grounds), section 39 (respecting the affiliation of horticultural societies with the Ontario Horticultural Association), section 40 (authorizing horticultural societies to pass bylaws respecting awarding prizes) of the Agricultural and Horticultural Organizations Act be repealed;

“(4) amend the Agricultural Products Insurance Act, 1996 with respect to the manner in which Agricorp offers contracts of insurance, the jurisdiction of the Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs Appeal Tribunal, and the manner in which an appeal to the tribunal is commenced;

“(5) by repealing and substantively re-enacting subsections 67(2), 67(3), 67(4) and sections 72, 73 and 74 of the Animal Health Act, 2009;

“(6) amend the Beef Cattle Marketing Act to confer on the Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs the power to make regulations that is currently conferred on the Lieutenant Governor in Council and amend the act to remove reference to the Lieutenant Governor in Council fixing the remuneration and allowance for expenses of inspectors and price reporters appointed for the purposes of the act;

“(7) repeal the Farm Products Grades and Sales Act and make a consequential amendment to the Farm Products Payments Act;

“(8) make a number of amendments to the Farm Registration and Farm Organizations Funding Act, 1993, related to the administration of the act, including providing for the appointment of a crown agency to administer the act, the framework for issuing farming business registration numbers and the procedures for applications, hearings and reviews under the act, including those relating to the accreditation of farm organizations;

“(9) amend the Fish Inspection Act to allow certain inspectors designated for the purposes of the Safe Food for Canadians Act (Canada) to be declared inspectors for the purposes of the act;

“(10) amend the Livestock and Livestock Products Act to provide that regulations made under the act that establish any grade name, standard or grade may do so by incorporating a document by reference in such a way as to reflect future changes to that document;

“(11) amend the Livestock Medicines Act to repeal provisions relating to the Livestock Medicines Advisory Committee;

“(12) amend the Milk Act to provide that regulations made under the act that establish grades or standards, grade names or marks or various technical requirements for packaging may do so by incorporating a document by reference in such a way as to reflect future changes to that document;

“(13) amend several provisions with respect to part VII of the Mining Act so that if a proponent submits an amendment to a closure plan in respect of advanced exploration or mine production, the director is required to make a decision about filing the amendment no later than 45 days after the submission;

“(14) repeal part II of the Northern Services Boards Act;

“(15) amend the Environmental Protection Act respecting administrative penalties;

“(16) repeal various provisions of the act respecting environmental penalties, provisions used to govern emissions from motor vehicles, and the provision that provides for a process to be followed, including the involvement of the minister and a board of negotiation, when a person complains that a contaminant is causing or has caused injury or damage to livestock or to crops, trees or other vegetation which may result in economic loss to the person;

“(17) amend the Ontario Water Resources Act in respect of administrative penalties and repeal provisions of the act respecting environmental penalties;

1600

“(18) amend section 34 of the Ontario Water Resources Act which prohibit the taking of water in specified circumstances except in accordance with a permit issued under the act subject to certain exceptions, and add an exception for the taking of water for the purpose of constructing or operating a dam within the meaning of the Lakes and Rivers Improvement Act if the dam is associated with the production of electricity, as well as give authority to the minister to make regulations deeming a permit or all permits in a specified class to be revoked on a specified date, where the permit or permits in the class relate to water takings that are exempted from subsection 34(1) of the Ontario Water Resources Act.”

I fully endorse this petition, have signed my name to it and will give it to page Ally.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): Before we continue with petitions, I just want to encourage and remind all members that despite how long your petition might be, you do have the option of paraphrasing and making it considerably shorter. I just thought I would share that with both sides.

PUBLIC SECTOR COMPENSATION

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): Now I'm going over to the member from Brampton South for further petitions.

Ms. Sara Singh: Thank you, Speaker. It's Brampton Centre.

I am proud to present this petition to the Legislative Assembly entitled, “Communities, Not Cuts.” I'd like to thank all the CUPE members that signed the petition and brought it over to my office.

“To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“Whereas the Ford Conservatives' cuts represent an all-out attack on municipalities, health care, schools, universities and social services; and

“Whereas the Ford Conservatives' cuts are harming families, children and the most vulnerable across Ontario, making the services we all rely on less accessible and accountable; and

“Whereas Bill 124 will strip workers of their charter-protected right to free collective bargaining; and

“Whereas Bill 124 will force front-line public sector workers to accept contracts below inflation, compounding cuts that make the delivery of services more difficult;

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

“That the government of Ontario stop dismantling our social infrastructure, properly fund our public services, withdraw Bill 124, and support communities, not cuts.”

I am proud to sign my name to this and send it off with page Leela.

OPPOSITION DAY

SERVICES EN FRANÇAIS

FRENCH-LANGUAGE SERVICES

M^{me} Andrea Horwath: Je propose qu'il soit permis de déposer la motion suivante :

L'Assemblée législative demande au gouvernement Ford de moderniser la Loi sur les services en français comme suit : en y incluant des mesures qui garantissent que des consultations effectives et substantielles avec la communauté francophone auront lieu avant que ne soient apportées des modifications à des politiques, à des programmes, à des services ou à des activités affectant la communauté francophone, de même qu'avant le développement de nouveaux programmes, politiques, services ou activités qui affecteraient la communauté francophone; en adoptant, en tant que partie intégrante de la nouvelle loi, une définition inclusive du terme « francophone »; en rendant obligatoire, dans la nouvelle loi, pour toutes les agences gouvernementales et pour toutes les institutions publiques telles que définies dans la loi, de fournir une offre active de services en français comme en anglais; et en rétablissant le Commissariat aux services en français.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): Ms. Horwath has moved opposition day motion number 2. Ms. Horwath.

M^{me} Andrea Horwath: Je suis honorée de parler en faveur de cette motion.

Monsieur le Président, à travers de vous, je veux m'adresser aux plus de 620 000 Franco-Ontariens et Franco-Ontariennes.

La communauté franco-ontarienne représente la plus importante population francophone en Amérique du Nord à l'extérieur du Québec, et plus de 10 % des Ontariens et Ontariennes sont maintenant bilingues—à savoir, près de 1,5 million de personnes, un chiffre qui est en voie d'augmenter.

Avec elles, avec eux, je partage une vision pour une province qui respecte les droits de la communauté diverse

qu'est la communauté franco-ontarienne. J'attache une grande importance à leur contribution à la vie économique et culturelle de l'Ontario, maintenant et pour l'avenir.

Nous voulons que les Franco-Ontariens et les Franco-Ontariennes puissent avoir accès en français à tous les services dont ils ont besoin, y compris des services de santé, des services gouvernementaux et, bien sûr, une éducation de niveau international.

Nous voulons que l'éducation francophone commence avant la maternelle et qu'elle se poursuive jusqu'à l'éducation postsecondaire, comprenant les collèges, les universités et la formation aux métiers.

Nous voulons une province qui appuie la reconnaissance, la protection et la promotion de la culture, de l'identité et de l'histoire franco-ontariennes.

Les libéraux ont disposé de 15 longues années pour améliorer l'accès aux services en français pour les Franco-Ontariens et les Franco-Ontariennes, mais ils n'ont pas agi. Ils n'ont pas bâti l'Université de l'Ontario français. Ils n'ont pas renforcé la Loi sur les services en français. Ils n'ont pas mis en œuvre la recommandation du commissariat quant à une définition inclusive du terme « francophone ». Et ils n'ont pas amélioré les consultations ni l'accès aux services.

Unfortunately, with the Conservatives and this Premier in charge, the francophone community, and our whole province, is being dragged backwards. Things are going from bad to worse.

This Ford government eliminated the Office of the French Language Services Commissioner. The question remains: How can Franco-Ontarians be expected to protect and promote their rights without having an advocate? How can they fight for their rights if this government continues to plow ahead with cuts, cancellations and changes without even consulting them, without allowing the Franco-Ontarian community to have a voice in what happens to the Franco-Ontarian community? How can the community be expected to fight for their rights without the support of a modern French Language Services Act, a law that not only guarantees their constitutional rights but expands and ensures the vitality of the Franco-Ontarian community?

Mes amis, les Franco-Ontariens et les Franco-Ontariennes ne devraient pas avoir à se contenter de miettes. Les Franco-Ontariens et les Franco-Ontariennes ne doivent plus être traités comme des Ontariens de deuxième classe. Nous-mêmes, dans cette Assemblée législative, ne devrions jamais les prendre pour acquis ni permettre que cette province les prenne pour acquis.

Whether it's modernizing the French Language Services Act, or restoring the independent Office of the French Language Services Commissioner to be a champion for the Francophone community, New Democrats will continue, as we have done for many years, to fight for the constitutional rights of Franco-Ontarians to be recognized and respected here in the province of Ontario. The Franco-Ontarian community is a part of the foundations of this great province. The official opposition New Democrats will keep fighting for children, seniors and all Franco-Ontarians to have quality education, justice and health care services in French.

1610

J'espère que ce jour marquera le début du renversement tant attendu des coupures dévastatrices imposées par ce gouvernement, pour que ce jour soit un pas dans la bonne direction. J'en appelle à tous les membres de cette Assemblée en leur demandant d'accorder leur appui à cette motion.

Merci, monsieur le Président. C'est avec grand intérêt que je vais assister à la suite du débat.

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

M^{me} Gila Martow: Merci beaucoup, monsieur le Président. Chers collègues, chers amis, je veux dire que c'est vraiment une semaine de la francophonie ici à Queen's Park. On a passé de belles journées avec l'Assemblée de la francophonie de l'Ontario et tous nos amis. Aussi, aujourd'hui, on a une motion, une discussion sur la Loi sur les services en français. Et à la fin de semaine, ce vendredi soir, on commence avec le Cinéfranco, où on a des cinémas en français avec sous-titres en anglais, et vous pouvez acheter vos billets.

La Loi sur les services en français a été adoptée à l'unanimité en 1986. À l'époque, les enjeux et les défis étaient différents. Au cours des années, la francophonie ontarienne s'est transformée. Il nous faut aujourd'hui tenir compte de nouvelles réalités sociales, démographiques et même technologiques afin de nous assurer de bien mener à terme le projet de modernisation. Par exemple, de nouvelles questions devront être posées :

—Comment tenir compte des changements technologiques pour l'offre des services en français?

—Comment mieux tenir compte des besoins des nouveaux arrivants francophones afin de mieux répondre aux aspirations d'une communauté diversifiée et plurielle?

—Comment faire en sorte que davantage d'organismes qui le veulent obtiennent une désignation et puissent livrer davantage de services en français?

Autant de questions qui méritent d'être abordées et approfondies afin d'identifier la meilleure approche possible pour un résultat optimal.

Et, comme l'a déjà relevé une de mes collègues, autant de questions qui requerront une consultation publique structurée.

Voilà notre engagement : écouter, consulter, apprendre, afin de mieux saisir les enjeux et mieux y répondre.

Comme la ministre des Affaires francophones a expliqué cette semaine, le gouvernement désire s'engager dans une modernisation de la loi avant la fin de son mandat actuel. En fait, nous avons tous à cœur de contribuer au renouveau de la francophonie ontarienne sur des bases solides et durables. Nous voulons bien faire les choses dans l'intérêt de la communauté et de l'ensemble des Ontariennes et Ontariens. Et, comme les propos de mes collègues l'ont bien démontré cette semaine, cet engagement est concret et tangible.

Je rappelle deux avancées significatives mentionnées cette semaine qui démontrent cet engagement et notre volonté ferme d'assurer le développement à long terme de la francophonie ontarienne. Le projet de l'Université de

l'Ontario français a été relancé sur des bases encore plus solides, et la conclusion avec succès des négociations avec le gouvernement fédéral a permis la signature d'une entente relative à l'enseignement dans la langue de la minorité et l'enseignement de la langue seconde.

Je saisis maintenant l'occasion pour démontrer la portée significative d'autres efforts récents et porteurs du gouvernement visant l'essor économique, culturel et communautaire de la francophonie ontarienne.

Le 24 juin dernier, la ministre des Affaires francophones—elle est aussi la députée pour York-Centre—a confirmé son appui envers la croissance et la vitalité des communautés francophones de la province en investissant un million de dollars dans le cadre du Programme d'appui à la francophonie ontarienne. Le gouvernement de l'Ontario a ainsi signalé clairement son appui continu envers la croissance des communautés francophones en ajoutant notamment une composante de développement économique à ce programme d'appui. Ce nouveau volet aidera des entrepreneurs et entreprises francophones à améliorer leurs services de première ligne et à mieux servir leurs clientèles et partenaires francophones.

Comme l'avait alors indiqué la ministre cette semaine, cet investissement consolide la promesse de notre gouvernement d'améliorer les services de première ligne offerts aux francophones et fait partie de notre plan visant à soutenir et à faire fructifier les forces économiques de la francophonie ontarienne. La vitalité économique de la communauté joue un rôle de premier plan pour en assurer l'avenir.

La relance du Programme d'appui à la francophonie ontarienne s'inscrit dans le cadre d'une démarche qui a pour but d'accentuer le rôle que joue la communauté francophone de l'Ontario dans le développement économique de l'ensemble de la province.

Dans cette optique, la communauté francophone de l'Ontario constitue un actif culturel, social et économique, ainsi qu'une composante au potentiel indéniable qui, plus que jamais, mérite d'être mise à profit.

Alors que la province souhaite encourager l'entrepreneuriat et la création d'emplois spécialisés, réduire le fardeau administratif et maximiser les gains en efficacité, il est essentiel de favoriser le développement de la communauté francophone de l'Ontario en s'assurant qu'elle participe pleinement à l'essor économique de la province.

Les francophones de l'Ontario constituent un avantage indéniable pour la province, dont l'économie repose en grande partie sur le dynamisme de l'entrepreneuriat, la qualité de la formation et ses échanges commerciaux avec des partenaires au Canada et dans le monde entier.

La communauté francophone de l'Ontario, de plus en plus diversifiée, gagne en importance partout dans la province et dans différents secteurs qui méritent d'être appuyés.

En matière d'immigration, d'éducation, de formation, de reconnaissance de diplômes, d'expansion des affaires et d'aide aux entreprises, la communauté francophone

recèle un potentiel inexploité que le gouvernement de l'Ontario entend mettre à profit à l'avantage de tous les francophones de la province, bien sûr, mais aussi de toutes les Ontariennes et tous les Ontariens.

Dans le cadre de ce projet important, la ministre des Affaires francophones a entamé une série de tables rondes économiques dans le but de rencontrer des membres de chambres de commerce bilingues et des dirigeants d'entreprises francophones afin de déterminer les défis que doivent surmonter les entrepreneurs pour développer et faire croître leurs entreprises.

La ministre est allée à la rencontre d'entrepreneurs à Kapuskasing, Sudbury, North Bay, Embrun et Welland. Et, tout prochainement, elle rencontrera des gens d'affaires à Toronto pour poursuivre cette conversation.

La tournée économique de la ministre a pour but de promouvoir la culture entrepreneuriale dans la communauté francophone et d'identifier des pistes de solutions pour créer un plus grand bassin de travailleurs bilingues pour contrer la pénurie de main-d'oeuvre bilingue.

1620

Le gouvernement reconnaît que la francophonie ontarienne et, plus généralement, la connaissance du français sont des atouts économiques d'importance et que davantage d'efforts doivent être faits pour maximiser leur potentiel. Pour y parvenir, le gouvernement de l'Ontario et ma collègue la ministre des Affaires francophones ont récemment annoncé la nomination de M. Glenn O'Farrell en tant que conseiller spécial au développement économique francophone. M. O'Farrell nous aidera à identifier des pistes de développement économique, notamment dans le domaine de l'économie numérique, ce qui nous permettra d'accentuer encore davantage l'impact de nos initiatives existantes et nous donnera l'occasion d'explorer de nouvelles initiatives pour nous aider à concrétiser notre vision d'un Ontario ouvert aux affaires.

Cette approche visant le développement économique de la francophonie ontarienne s'inscrit parfaitement dans la vision du gouvernement pour un Ontario ouvert aux affaires et est axée sur le renouvellement et la simplification, de manière à mettre au point de nouvelles façons de stimuler le développement économique dans un contexte moins contraignant et plus propice aux entreprises. En définitive, comme vous pouvez le constater, tant dans le dossier de l'Université de l'Ontario français que dans celui du développement économique, le gouvernement adopte une approche reposant sur la concertation avec l'ensemble des intervenants clés de la communauté francophone ontarienne afin d'assurer de mettre en place des mesures soutenant la vitalité de la communauté à long terme.

Cette approche est aussi celle que privilégie le gouvernement pour la modernisation de la Loi sur les services en français. Le gouvernement prendra le temps d'étudier attentivement les options qui lui seront présentées et se tournera vers un nombre important d'acteurs clés pour engager des discussions liées à cette importante initiative. Aujourd'hui, j'ajoute donc ma voix

à celles de mes collègues et rappelle qu'il est primordial de travailler avec l'ensemble de la population de manière transparente. Autrement dit, il s'agit d'un travail d'équipe au service de la population francophone de l'Ontario.

La portée de la Loi sur les services en français est significative et elle s'avère fondamentale pour les francophones de l'Ontario. Sa révision aura des impacts à long terme pour les décennies à venir. Il aura fallu plus de 30 ans entre son adoption et cette mise à niveau essentielle. Prenons le temps de bien faire les choses. Il convient donc de procéder étape par étape afin de réussir cette modernisation de la Loi sur les services en français, et ce pour les générations de francophones à venir, de la province et d'ailleurs.

En conclusion, la ministre et ma collègue et moi rappelons qu'il faut associer la communauté à ce processus dans une démarche participative et transparente. La collaboration fera la force de cette initiative, et ce n'est qu'après avoir consulté la communauté avec ouverture d'esprit que nous pourrons nous prononcer officiellement au sujet des prochaines étapes. Il est de notre devoir de faire de ce projet celui des francophones de l'Ontario et non seulement celui de cette Assemblée. À tous mes collègues, je tends donc la main afin que, tous ensemble, nous travaillions au service de la francophonie ontarienne et de tous les Ontariens et Ontariennes afin de répondre à leurs attentes et leurs aspirations.

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

M. Guy Bourgoin: En tant que membre de la communauté franco-ontarienne, je veux remercier la chef de l'opposition officielle pour avoir déposé cette motion. Je vais donc vous dire pourquoi j'appuie la motion de la chef de l'opposition officielle.

Vous savez, la communauté franco-ontarienne a besoin de tous ces services et encore plus. Comme je dis souvent, fini là le temps de se contenter des miettes. Nous sommes une communauté forte, unie et en plein épanouissement. Mais nous avons aussi une riche histoire dans cette province, une histoire qui commence il y a plus de 400 ans avec Étienne Brûlé, et qui continue aujourd'hui. Même si notre histoire a été remplie d'embûches, nous étions toujours capables de les surmonter grâce à notre courage et notre amour inconditionnel pour notre langue, notre identité, notre culture et notre savoir-faire, ici dans notre place.

La communauté francophone ne peut plus vivre des vaines promesses. Nous avons patienté pendant 40 ans pour avoir la création d'une université par et pour les francophones. Les libéraux ont attendu jusqu'au dernier moment pour établir une université de langue française. Ils ont eu 15 ans pour le faire. Les conservateurs ont d'abord coupé le financement de l'université, pour ensuite changer d'avis au moment d'une élection fédérale. Aussi, il faut bien dire que c'est la députée de Nickel Belt qui avait déposé le premier projet de loi visant à établir l'Université de l'Ontario français.

Il nous faut donc prendre le taureau par les cornes pour s'assurer que nos droits soient garantis par une loi qui s'accorde aux exigences d'aujourd'hui. Il y a plus d'un an,

le gouvernement de Doug Ford annonçait aux Franco-Ontariens qu'ils ne comptaient plus, que nous étions des citoyens de deuxième classe, malgré nos 400 ans d'histoire dans cette province. Ces compressions ne répondent sans doute pas aux promesses de la ministre, et elles ne constituent pas non plus ce que la ministre définit comme, et je cite la ministre, des « efforts nécessaires pour ... améliorer l'accès aux services en français en Ontario ». Évidemment, nous ne pouvons pas renforcer et moderniser l'accès aux services en français avec des coupures et des promesses vaines.

Il y a quelques semaines, j'ai eu l'honneur de déposer un projet de loi visant à remplacer la Loi sur les services en français, qui a maintenant 33 ans. Ça devrait être évident pour tout le monde, mais on ne peut pas offrir des services d'éducation, de justice et de santé avec une loi datant de 1986. La communauté franco-ontarienne mérite une loi à la hauteur des besoins présents, une loi qui reconnaît le dynamisme de la francophonie du 21^e siècle, y compris son évolution identitaire, sa diversité, ses accents et son caractère rassembleur, inclusif and positif. Nous parlons donc d'une francophonie nette et clairement plurielle.

Le projet de loi que j'ai déposé inclut une définition inclusive du terme « francophone », une définition inclusive concernant la langue maternelle, mais aussi la langue encore comprise et parlée et la langue parlée à la maison, qu'elle soit parlée régulièrement ou la plus souvent utilisée. Cette définition inclusive représente donc la réalité de la communauté franco-ontarienne, de la diversité culturelle, sociale et linguistique en ce qui concerne l'identité de notre communauté franco-ontarienne—un genre de boussole identitaire pour nous tous.

Nous ne pouvons certainement pas ouvrir la Loi sur les services en français sans exiger le rétablissement du Commissariat aux services en français indépendant. Il nous faut absolument un commissaire avec un mandat indépendant et proactif en ce qui concerne la promotion et la protection de nos droits linguistiques. D'ailleurs, la ministre des Affaires francophones a déclaré à plusieurs reprises que des consultations se déroulent avec des intervenants de la communauté. Je vous dis, madame la Ministre : Si vous écoutiez les membres de la communauté, vous ne diriez alors pas qu'un commissaire placé sous le leadership de l'ombudsman fonctionne bien.

Permettez-moi de conclure ce discours en soulignant l'appui de la communauté franco-ontarienne. Par exemple, M^{me} Lucie Huot, la directrice exécutive du Centre d'emploi et de ressources francophones de la région de Niagara. Elle nous dit : « Premièrement, je suis entièrement d'accord avec votre proposition telle que présentée. J'oeuvre à tous les jours à promouvoir tous les aspects positifs d'être bilingue, de faire respecter les droits associés à la francophonie et de faire comprendre à nos concitoyens l'importance (et l'atout) de travailler ensemble pour le bien-être de nos communautés.

1630

« En tant que Franco-Ontarienne et pour les plus de 600 000 Franco-Ontariens, il est impératif de maintenir

tous les services existants en français (rien de moins et non négociable) et de travailler pour en ajouter davantage. » Merci, madame Huot.

Nous continuerons de ne ménager aucun effort afin de faire respecter et renforcer les droits des francophones de l'Ontario de nous exprimer, de nous instruire et de vivre en français. La modernisation de l'ancienne Loi sur les services en français est la pierre angulaire de cette lutte. Vous pouvez compter sur le NPD pour défendre vos droits.

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

L'hon. Caroline Mulroney: Chers collègues, monsieur le Président, je saisis l'occasion qui m'est donnée aujourd'hui pour aborder la question de la modernisation de la Loi sur les services en français, un sujet qui revêt une grande importance pour la communauté francophone et pour la province. Permettez-moi, en guise de réponse à la motion déposée par le Nouveau Parti démocratique, de partager avec l'ensemble des membres de cette Assemblée mes commentaires et ma réflexion au sujet du projet de modernisation de la Loi sur les services en français.

Dans un premier temps, le gouvernement de l'Ontario reconnaît la portée et le rôle prépondérant de la Loi sur les services en français dans le développement et la vitalité de la communauté franco-ontarienne. L'accès aux services en français est un enjeu fondamental pour la communauté francophone ontarienne, car il est intimement lié à tous les aspects de la vie de nos concitoyennes et concitoyens francophones, à leur qualité de vie et à leur identité.

La Loi sur les services en français régit et détermine la prestation des services gouvernementaux offerts à la population. Par le fait même, elle favorise le développement global de la francophonie ontarienne et de ses institutions. Cette loi, qui a maintenant plus de 30 ans, a été adoptée à l'unanimité en 1986. Elle doit être revue afin de mieux correspondre au quotidien des francophones et aux réalités d'aujourd'hui.

Dans cette perspective, j'aimerais tracer un bref portrait de la communauté francophone actuelle. Selon la définition inclusive de « francophone », on compte 622 000 francophones en Ontario, et les francophones représentent 4,7 % de la population ontarienne. Deux tiers des francophones vivent dans l'est de l'Ontario. Et, élément important, il y a une plus grande proportion d'aînés chez les francophones que dans la population totale : 20 % d'aînés chez les francophones; 16 % de la population totale. L'âge médian de la population francophone est de 44,6 ans, et 24,5 % des francophones de l'Ontario détiennent un grade universitaire.

Cinquante-neuf pour cent des francophones, soit la majorité, sont nés en Ontario, alors que 16,4 % d'entre eux sont nés à l'extérieur du pays. Selon le recensement de 2016, la majorité des immigrants et immigrantes francophones sont nés en Europe et en Afrique. Plus du tiers des immigrants francophones proviennent de l'Afrique—35 %—et un quart vient de l'Europe—28 %.

Il faut également souligner qu'en plus de ces chiffres, il y a 1,5 million de personnes qui parlent français ici en

Ontario. Alors, c'est dans ce contexte démographique, avec la réalité francophone telle qu'elle se vit aujourd'hui en Ontario, que doit être considéré le projet prioritaire de la modernisation de la Loi sur les services en français. C'est pourquoi le gouvernement de l'Ontario accueille favorablement toutes les initiatives de la communauté francophone visant à enrichir le débat. Nous saluons d'ailleurs le travail de l'AFO et attendons de voir les résultats de leurs consultations auprès des francophones.

Toutefois, il faut d'abord saisir tous les tenants et aboutissants de ce grand projet. Il s'agit de ne pas précipiter dans une proposition trop hâtive, imprudente et incomplète telle que celle déposée ce matin par l'opposition. Le gouvernement n'offre pas son appui à cette motion, alors qu'il est conscient que la communauté est intéressée par certains éléments spécifiques qui seront avantageux pour les francophones et qui feront l'objet d'un examen en temps opportun dans le cadre du processus législatif.

Ce que l'on doit dire à ce stade préliminaire, à nouveau, c'est que c'est un dossier important et que nous voulons prendre le temps nécessaire pour effectuer une révision minutieuse. Ce travail important, que les libéraux n'ont pas réalisé en 15 ans, nous allons l'accomplir avant la fin de notre premier mandat. Le gouvernement croit fermement au développement de la communauté francophone en Ontario. On ne doit pas oublier que celle-ci contribue à l'essor de l'Ontario depuis plus de 400 ans. C'est pourquoi nous sommes déterminés à poser des gestes concrets pour créer les conditions propices à son épanouissement et assurer sa participation pleine et entière au développement social, culturel et économique de la province.

Notre engagement est guidé par une approche à long terme, comme le démontrent tous les efforts que nous avons déployés afin de relancer le dossier de l'Université de l'Ontario français sur des bases encore plus solides afin que les Franco-Ontariennes et les Franco-Ontariens puissent bénéficier d'une université gouvernée par et pour les francophones en Ontario. Voilà un exemple probant d'une avancée significative qui aura un impact majeur pour le développement futur de la province tout entière.

N'oublions pas, je le répète, qu'un projet de loi exige de prendre le temps de bien faire les choses. Dans le cadre de la modernisation de la Loi sur les services en français, il est important de prendre le temps de consulter la communauté francophone et l'ensemble des intervenants clés afin de bien comprendre leurs attentes et leur vision. Il ne s'agit pas d'un projet simple et expéditif puisque la portée de la Loi sur les services en français est significative. Le gouvernement désire que cet exercice soit ouvert et transparent et qu'il tienne compte de la voix de la communauté francophone.

Mais avant d'aller plus loin, il est important de bien comprendre le contexte historique et actuel dans lequel s'inscrit cette modernisation. En effet, au cours des dernières années, la loi actuelle a favorisé le renforcement significatif du statut du français dans la province grâce à ses dispositions législatives. Cet effet de levier a aussi été

accentué grâce à la croissance démographique, aux mécanismes de gouvernance complémentaires qui ont été mis en oeuvre et aussi grâce à l'apport et la contribution d'associations et d'organisations oeuvrant en faveur de la langue française et de la francophonie dans son ensemble.

De plus, au cours des années, la communauté francophone a largement contribué au développement culturel de la province. Son dynamisme est ancré dans ses diverses activités et se manifeste dans tous les aspects de la société, tels la culture, la santé, la justice, l'économie et l'éducation ainsi que dans ses institutions et ses organismes. Élément fondamental, la Loi sur les services en français garantit le droit d'employer le français dans les institutions de l'Assemblée législative, du gouvernement et de l'administration de l'Ontario.

1640

Elle rappelle que la langue française a joué en Ontario un rôle historique et que la constitution canadienne lui reconnaît le statut de langue officielle au Canada. Elle souligne également que la langue française jouit en Ontario du statut de langue officielle devant les tribunaux et en éducation, et que l'Assemblée législative reconnaît l'apport du patrimoine culturel de la population francophone et désire le sauvegarder pour les générations à venir.

En définitive, la Loi sur les services en français est le principal instrument législatif régissant la prestation des services en français dans la province. La Loi sur les services en français est un aboutissement législatif qui s'est échelonné sur plusieurs années. Elle est le résultat d'un processus de consultations où les attentes et les revendications des francophones ont pu être présentées et entendues. C'est ce travail qui a mené à la reconnaissance officielle du statut de la langue française en Ontario.

La pierre angulaire de la Loi sur les services en français est la désignation. Celle-ci garantit aux francophones qui vivent dans une région désignée leur droit de recevoir des services en français de la part des ministères et des agences du gouvernement de l'Ontario.

Aujourd'hui, environ 80 % des francophones vivent dans les 26 régions désignées qui comprennent les grands centres urbains, tels que Toronto, Ottawa et Sudbury, mais aussi dans les comtés répartis à travers la province, tels que Prescott, Simcoe et Thunder Bay.

Le processus de désignation d'une région est d'ailleurs un exemple probant du dynamisme qui anime les collectivités francophones en Ontario, comme on peut d'ailleurs le constater dans le cadre de la plus récente demande de désignation, chapeautée par la communauté francophone de Sarnia.

Il faut également savoir que dans les régions désignées, en vertu de la Loi sur les services en français, les organismes qui reçoivent des fonds de la province pour la prestation de services publics obligatoires doivent se conformer aux dispositions de la loi relative à ces services.

Notre gouvernement prend donc très au sérieux ce projet de modernisation de la Loi sur les services en français afin de livrer les services auxquels ont droit de s'attendre tous les citoyens de la province. Et si les

citoyennes et citoyens ne reçoivent pas les services auxquels ils ont droit, ils peuvent compter sur le commissaire aux services en français au Bureau de l'ombudsman pour traiter de leur plainte.

Nous avons, toutes et tous, hâte de travailler avec le nouveau ou la nouvelle commissaire dont le poste et le rôle, y compris son mandat de surveillance et de rapport sur la prestation des services en français, sont demeurés inchangés sous l'autorité de l'ombudsman. Et comme l'ombudsman se rapporte à la législature, son bureau agit de façon indépendante.

Présentement, le Bureau de l'ombudsman procède à un processus de recrutement rigoureux pour trouver le prochain ou la prochaine commissaire aux services en français. Un panel a été assemblé pour examiner les candidatures reçues dans le but d'identifier le prochain commissaire ou la prochaine commissaire, qui devra protéger les droits linguistiques des résidents francophones de l'Ontario, notamment leur droit de recevoir les services en français, comme le stipule la Loi sur les services en français. Son rôle comprendra l'examen et l'analyse des plaintes en plus de la publication de rapports d'enquêtes sur le respect de la loi.

Notre gouvernement a pleinement confiance en la capacité de l'ombudsman et de son bureau d'assurer le respect de la Loi sur les services en français et l'accès à des services gouvernementaux de qualité en français pour les francophones.

En parallèle, le ministère des Affaires francophones continuera de travailler en étroite collaboration avec le Bureau de l'ombudsman et les ministères provinciaux pour s'assurer à ce que les Franco-Ontariennes et les Franco-Ontariens aient accès à des services de qualité dans la langue de leur choix.

Voici un autre exemple probant qui démontre à quel point un ensemble de facteurs et d'acteurs clés doivent être considérés dans le cadre du processus de la modernisation de la loi.

La modernisation de la loi doit être un exercice rigoureux, guidé par une réflexion permettant de bien identifier les besoins en matière de services en français en fonction des réalités démographiques et technologiques actuelles.

Sachez que le gouvernement est à l'écoute de la communauté franco-ontarienne sur ses besoins en matière des services en français. À ce chapitre, nous voulons amorcer un dialogue constructif avec la communauté et les organismes francophones. Le gouvernement considère, comme vous, qu'il est primordial de créer des conditions favorisant une discussion riche sur les besoins des francophones et les services en français. J'ai demandé à mon comité consultatif aux affaires francophones de réfléchir spécifiquement sur les modalités de cette modernisation, et de me conseiller sur la marche à suivre et à privilégier.

Donc, comme vous êtes en mesure de le constater, le travail est amorcé, et je compte sur la collaboration des membres de cette Assemblée afin que nous puissions mener à terme, ensemble et de façon concertée, ce projet

prioritaire. C'est un projet qui permettra de démontrer notre engagement de tous les instants à assurer que les francophones de l'Ontario puissent s'épanouir pleinement dans notre province et s'y bâtir un avenir des plus prometteurs.

Monsieur le Président et chers collègues, je vous remercie pour votre attention et votre intérêt envers ce dossier prioritaire.

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

M^{me} Marit Stiles: Chers collègues, c'est un grand plaisir de parler aujourd'hui en support de cette motion de moderniser les services en français.

Dans ma circonscription de Davenport, il y a plus de 11 000 francophones. En effet, 19 % des francophones de l'Ontario vivent à Toronto. C'est une communauté fière, une communauté grandissante, mais aussi une communauté à laquelle les services en français manquent.

Les néo-démocrates défendent depuis longtemps et avec fierté les droits des francophones en Ontario, ayant lutté pour la création de l'Université de l'Ontario français, comme pour la mise en place d'un Commissariat aux services en français indépendant.

Je tiens à remercier la chef de l'opposition officielle et mes collègues d'avoir présenté cette motion importante afin que nous puissions demander des comptes au gouvernement et faire pression pour la modernisation des services offerts aux francophones de la province.

Monsieur le Président, je veux parler pour quelques moments à propos de l'éducation francophone dans notre province. Avec ses 454 écoles—qui comprennent l'École secondaire catholique Saint-Frère-André, l'École secondaire Toronto Ouest et l'École élémentaire Charles-Sauriol, situées dans ma circonscription de Davenport—et avec ses 110 000 élèves, l'éducation francophone fait partie intégrante du système d'éducation d'envergure internationale de l'Ontario.

Il s'agit de maintenir et de renforcer la puissance de ce secteur. Il s'agit de le rendre plus solide, plus durable, et cela prendra du travail.

Nous devons renouveler nos investissements dans le système d'éducation pour nous assurer que les élèves ont toutes les chances de réussir et pour nous assurer que l'économie de l'Ontario pourra continuer à bénéficier d'une nouvelle génération de diplômés bilingues.

Mais les travailleurs de l'éducation et les parents de toute la province s'inquiètent. Ils s'inquiètent des coupes catastrophiques du gouvernement en matière d'éducation. Ils s'inquiètent de la manière dont ils attireront les enseignants francophones lorsque les classes se développeront et que les ressources diminueront. Et ils se demandent si les écoles seront fermées, si le gouvernement recommence à fermer des écoles.

En investissant dans l'éducation francophone, nous investissons aussi dans la culture franco-ontarienne—cette culture riche, cette culture fondatrice de l'Ontario, cette culture dont nous devons tous être fiers.

1650

La chef de l'opposition officielle l'a bien dit : vous pouvez compter sur nous. Nous serons une voix forte pour

la francophonie ontarienne. Nous défendrons l'éducation francophone. Nous défendrons la culture franco-ontarienne. Nous défendrons les droits constitutionnels des Franco-Ontariens et des Franco-Ontariennes, ici à l'Assemblée législative et au-delà.

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

M^{me} Natalia Kusendova: Monsieur le Président, madame la Ministre, madame Horwath, chers collègues et amis : je suis honorée de prendre la parole aujourd'hui dans le cadre du dépôt de cette motion.

Comme l'ont exprimé avec conviction mes collègues, la ministre des Affaires francophones et son adjointe parlementaire, le projet de modernisation de la Loi sur les services en français mérite toute notre attention. Il est donc important qu'il se concrétise dans le cadre d'un processus ouvert, en étroite collaboration avec la communauté francophone.

D'emblée, j'aimerais aussi saisir l'occasion du dépôt de cette motion pour rappeler que notre gouvernement est sérieux dans sa démarche et engagé à assurer le plein épanouissement des francophones de l'Ontario, comme en témoignent l'ensemble des avancées significatives récentes en matière d'affaires francophones.

En très peu de temps, nous avons déployé des efforts considérables qui ont permis de rehausser le profil de la francophonie ontarienne, tout en répondant à des enjeux touchant divers aspects de la vie quotidienne des citoyens francophones de notre province. Au niveau de l'éducation, notre gouvernement demeure déterminé à faire en sorte que tous les Ontariens et Ontariennes aient la possibilité d'être éduqués dans la langue de leur choix.

C'est avec fierté que je rappelle aux membres de cette Assemblée que le gouvernement a récemment signé un protocole d'entente avec le gouvernement fédéral visant la mise en oeuvre de l'Université de l'Ontario français, un véritable projet de société qui aura un effet de levier considérable à la fois pour les francophones de la province, mais aussi pour toutes les Ontariennes et tous les Ontariens.

Cette université, gouvernée par et pour les francophones, en Ontario permettra aux étudiantes et aux étudiants francophones de bénéficier d'un système d'éducation postsecondaire de qualité et d'ainsi pleinement réaliser leurs aspirations professionnelles et personnelles. En soutenant cette université, notre gouvernement veille à ce que les étudiants francophones puissent compter sur un système d'éducation postsecondaire qui répond aux besoins du marché de travail.

Le gouvernement est heureux d'avoir pu relancer le projet de l'Université de l'Ontario français sur des bases bien plus solides. Ce projet historique viendra assurer le développement de l'éducation postsecondaire en langue française et fera partie intégrante de l'approche économique du gouvernement de l'Ontario visant à contrer la pénurie actuelle de main-d'oeuvre bilingue.

Au niveau collégial, je rappelle à mes collègues que nous avons annoncé, en octobre 2018, le financement du nouveau campus du Collège Boréal à Toronto à la hauteur

de 15 millions de dollars. J'ai eu l'occasion de faire connaissance du président du Collège Boréal, M. Daniel Giroux, pendant mon séjour à Sudbury. Encore, on s'est parlé hier pendant la soirée de l'AFO. J'ai hâte de faire visite à ce nouveau campus. Les installations sont prévues dans le quartier de la Distillerie et viendront soutenir les services d'employabilité et d'immigration offerts par le collège.

Aux niveaux élémentaire et secondaire, l'Ontario a également conclu, avec succès, des négociations avec le gouvernement fédéral sur une entente relative à l'enseignement dans la langue de la minorité et à l'enseignement de la langue seconde. Cette entente profite dès à présent aux 622 000 Franco-Ontariens et Franco-Ontariennes de la province, aux 110 000 élèves des écoles de langue française et à plus d'un million d'élèves des écoles de langue anglaise. Ces avancées récentes ont pour but de renforcer un système d'éducation bien établi et solide puisque l'Ontario compte 12 conseils scolaires francophones, 470 écoles de langue française et plus de 110 000 élèves de la maternelle et du jardin à la 12^e année.

De façon globale, le gouvernement de l'Ontario investit de façon importante en éducation de langue française. En 2019-2020, ces investissements totaliseront 1,8 milliard de dollars.

Et qui est de plus, l'éducation en langue française en Ontario est un succès. Le nombre d'inscriptions a augmenté, avec maintenant plus de 110 000 élèves fréquentant les écoles de langue française. Le taux d'obtention du diplôme d'études secondaires a atteint un sommet historique puisque 90 % des étudiants obtiennent leur diplôme sur quatre ans et 92 % des étudiants sur cinq ans.

L'élément important à souligner : le gouvernement reconnaît et respecte également les réalités et les défis particuliers du système scolaire francophone en milieu minoritaire. À cet égard, il est important de rappeler que la politique d'aménagement linguistique est le principe sur lequel reposent toutes les activités éducatives en français au niveau primaire et au niveau secondaire. Cette politique a pour objectif d'accroître les habiletés de communication orale des élèves pour améliorer leur apprentissage et construire leur identité francophone et d'accroître également la capacité du personnel scolaire à travailler en milieu minoritaire. La politique d'aménagement linguistique vise aussi à aider les conseils scolaires de langue française à accroître et maintenir les effectifs scolaires afin de contribuer à la vitalité des écoles et des communautés francophones en Ontario.

L'éducation de langue française en Ontario constitue un univers en soi qui se juxtapose à la Loi sur les services en français, un élément central dont il faudra tenir compte dans la réflexion liée à la modernisation de la Loi sur les services en français.

Dans un autre domaine important dont il faudra tenir compte, celui de la justice, nous avons tiré profit du succès du projet pilote du palais de justice de la ville d'Ottawa en transposant cette nouvelle approche au palais de justice de Sudbury. Au mois de mars 2019, le gouvernement a

annoncé qu'il travaillait en partenariat avec la Cour supérieure de justice et la Cour de justice de l'Ontario afin d'améliorer l'accès à la justice en offrant davantage de services et de soutiens judiciaires en français pour les francophones du nord de l'Ontario.

Dans le domaine culturel, où le dynamisme de la communauté est bien en évidence, je souligne le financement qui a été accordé pour la construction de la Place des Arts de Sudbury. Ce centre artistique multidisciplinaire sera le foyer culturel des francophones de la région.

Dans le secteur de la santé, mon secteur favori, le gouvernement de l'Ontario a annoncé en août dernier un investissement maximal de 75 millions de dollars pour le projet du Carrefour santé d'Orléans en soulignant le début des travaux de construction. Le nouveau bâtiment d'un étage regroupera les services bilingues de trois hôpitaux et de quatre fournisseurs de services communautaires sous un seul toit afin de favoriser la prestation de soins mieux coordonnés pour les patients et les familles et de, en fin de compte, réduire les temps d'attente. Les patientes et les patients bénéficieront de services qui incluront notamment des services de soutien aux aînés, des programmes de santé mentale et de mieux-être et des services de réadaptation. Des cliniques spécialisées offrant des services d'imagerie diagnostique, comme la radiographie et l'échographie, seront également logées au Carrefour, et tout ça en français, bien sûr. Cette annonce s'inscrit dans la volonté du gouvernement de mettre fin aux soins de santé dans les couloirs et d'améliorer l'expérience de soins pour les Ontariens, y compris les Ontariens francophones.

D'ailleurs, la Loi de 2019 sur les soins de santé pour la population contient des dispositions précises qui reconnaissent et respectent le rôle des populations francophones de l'Ontario dans la planification et la prestation des soins dans leurs collectivités. Le préambule de la loi renforce ce principe, reconnaissant que le système de santé publique devrait « tenir compte de la diversité des collectivités de l'Ontario et respecter les exigences de la Loi sur les services en français » pour servir « la collectivité ontarienne de langue française ». Ce principe est également renforcé par l'inclusion d'exigences d'engagement en français pour la ministre de la Santé et l'agence Santé Ontario.

1700

De plus, le ministère de la Santé s'est engagé à travailler avec la communauté francophone et les intervenants francophones. Pour ce faire, le ministère collabore régulièrement avec un large éventail de partenaires et d'intervenants francophones, dont le ministère des Affaires francophones, le Conseil consultatif des services de santé en français et les entités de planification des services de santé en français. Lors de l'énoncé économique du 6 novembre dernier, notre gouvernement confirmait son engagement envers les soins de santé en français en identifiant la communauté francophone comme étant prioritaire dans la livraison de services liés à la santé mentale.

Un autre dossier fondamental pour notre gouvernement est celui de l'immigration francophone. À cet égard, il est

important de rappeler que nous avons porté la part des nouveaux arrivants francophones dans le cadre du Programme ontarien des candidats à l'immigration à plus de 7%—c'est-à-dire le plus haut niveau jamais atteint dans le cadre de ce programme.

Comme vous pouvez le constater, la prestation des services en français à l'ensemble des Ontariennes et Ontariens touche aux domaines de l'éducation, de la justice, de la santé, de la culture, de l'immigration et bien d'autres encore. Et si la responsabilité de la prestation des services en français relève de l'ensemble des ministères, elle incombe aussi aux organismes désignés de l'Ontario.

C'est pourquoi nous venons tout récemment de mettre en place un projet pilote qui mènerait, s'il est concluant, à un processus simplifié menant à la désignation des organismes offrant des services publics en vertu de la Loi sur les services en français. La révision du cadre de traitement des demandes permettrait éventuellement au ministère d'identifier les enjeux dès le début du processus de désignation, de traiter plus rapidement les demandes, de coordonner les efforts entre les ministères et les niveaux d'approbation et d'optimiser la communication entre les parties concernées.

Dans le cadre de cette simplification du processus de désignation, le ministère conserverait les principes fondamentaux de la désignation, soit la permanence de service, l'imputabilité des organismes désignés, la gestion adéquate des ressources humaines ainsi que les obligations liées à l'affichage et aux communications. Afin d'assurer le succès de cette initiative, le gouvernement a tenu des rencontres avec plusieurs intervenants internes et externes qui incluent des entités de planification, des réseaux locaux d'intégration des services de santé, des centres de soins de santé communautaire, des hôpitaux et des intervenants de l'éducation et des services sociaux.

Autrement dit, le gouvernement s'est assuré d'être à l'écoute de la communauté, tout comme il se propose de le faire dans le cadre de la modernisation de la Loi sur les services en français. Le gouvernement prend donc le temps de bien faire les choses. Vous le voyez, le gouvernement de l'Ontario déploie des efforts considérables afin de répondre aux besoins des francophones de notre belle province.

C'est pourquoi nous avons l'intention de travailler avec la communauté francophone afin de moderniser la Loi sur les services en français dans le cadre d'un projet rassembleur auquel tous les membres de cette Assemblée devront contribuer. La loi modernisée devra refléter le monde dans lequel nous vivons aujourd'hui, qui est marqué par une évolution technologique sans précédent ainsi que par des changements démographiques importants.

Nos citoyennes et citoyens, et nous tous et toutes, utilisons à présent les médias sociaux et l'Internet en général pour s'informer et communiquer avec de nombreuses institutions. La modernisation de la loi devra absolument en tenir compte, ce qui exigera une bonne compréhension de l'impact de la technologie sur l'accès et

la prestation des services gouvernementaux en utilisant une lentille francophone.

De plus, depuis l'adoption de la loi, en 1986, notre société a changé et notre communauté francophone s'est transformée. Aujourd'hui, l'Ontario a la très grande chance de posséder une francophonie vibrante, inclusive et ouverte sur le monde, à l'image de la population de notre province, une francophonie plurielle aux multiples talents qui contribue grandement à faire de l'Ontario une province prospère et riche sur tous les plans.

Aujourd'hui, plus de 16 % des francophones de l'Ontario font partie de ce qu'on appelle les minorités visibles. Ce chiffre augmente même à près de 30 % dans la région du centre de l'Ontario.

De nos jours, les francophones de l'Ontario sont presque tous bilingues, dynamiques, entrepreneurs et éduqués, et interviennent dans tous les secteurs de l'économie. Tous ces hommes et ces femmes constituent une main-d'oeuvre bilingue qui contribue activement à la prospérité de notre économie ontarienne et participe pleinement à faire de l'Ontario une province attrayante. Les communautés francophones sont présentes à travers toute la province : de Sudbury à Windsor, d'Ottawa à Welland, en passant évidemment par la région du grand Toronto, et Mississauga aussi, bien sûr.

Je rappelle à cet égard que la région du Centre-Sud-Ouest, qui comprend le grand Toronto, sera probablement d'ici à 10 ans la région qui comptera le plus grand nombre de francophones en Ontario. En définitive, tout ceci confirme que notre francophonie évolue très rapidement et qu'elle constitue un atout incroyable sur lequel il nous faut capitaliser. Il faudra, certes, en tenir compte dans le cadre du travail de modernisation de la loi afin qu'elle puisse tenir compte de l'évolution du profil de la communauté francophone de l'Ontario.

Madame la Présidente et chers collègues, comme vous le voyez, il faudra considérer un ensemble de facteurs démographiques, sociaux et technologiques pour que la modernisation de la loi s'effectue de manière rigoureuse.

Au nom de la ministre des Affaires francophones et du gouvernement de l'Ontario, j'invite donc toutes les Ontariennes et tous les Ontariens ainsi que tous les députés de cette Assemblée à participer à la réflexion liée à cette importante initiative que représente la modernisation de la Loi sur les services en français.

Pour conclure, je voudrais juste dire que je suis ravie—quand j'ai immigré ici au Canada, je ne parlais pas anglais, mais je parlais français. Alors mes parents m'ont inscrite à une école d'immersion. J'ai eu la chance de pouvoir communiquer avec mes collègues et mes amis en français d'abord, et j'ai appris l'anglais en même temps. Puis, j'ai aussi fait mes études à l'Université de Toronto, avec une mineure en langue française. Je pense que cela est une belle image de notre province et de notre pays, qu'on a le choix de nous éduquer en français ainsi qu'en anglais.

C'est la même chose avec les services, par exemple, de santé. Récemment, j'ai renouvelé mon inscription au collège des infirmières de l'Ontario, et une des questions était si je pouvais offrir les services de santé en anglais et

en français. Heureusement, moi je peux dire oui, mais je pense qu'on a un peu de travail à faire pour que d'autres infirmières puissent offrir les services en français aussi. Mais c'est bon qu'on a quand même le système pour qu'on sache combien d'infirmières en Ontario peuvent offrir les services dans les deux langues officielles.

Alors, merci beaucoup. Je suis très fière de pouvoir parler en français aujourd'hui au sujet de la motion. J'invite tous les collègues et tous les membres de cette Assemblée à travailler collaborativement pour moderniser la Loi sur les services en français.

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

M^{me} France Gélinas: J'aimerais vous donner un exemple plutôt concret de pourquoi la motion que ma chef a présentée aujourd'hui est importante pour tout le monde. Je vais vous parler d'Angèle Brûlé; de Cécile Deschênes; d'Étienne et de François Gélinas, mon oncle et mon cousin; d'Hélène, d'Irène, de Josée, de Kalima et de Léonie, des infirmières extraordinaires; de Marièle Noël—il n'y a pas juste Christian Noël, il y a Marièle également—d'Onésime Parisée Quévillon, la grande famille Quévillon de Nickel Belt; de Réal, qui est pas mal tanné de se faire appeler « Real »; de Séraphin, qui ne vient pas des Pays d'en haut; de Térèse; d'Ulisse; de Valérie; de Waël; de Xavière; de Yélina et de Zoé.

Pourquoi je veux vous présenter tous ces gens-là? Bien, c'est parce que pour tous ces gens-là, il y a des erreurs sur les cartes d'identité émises par le gouvernement de l'Ontario. Sur notre carte santé, sur notre permis de conduire, notre nom, y incluant le mien, est écrit sans accents.

1710

Ça fait quand même 30 ans qu'on a la Loi sur les services en français. Ça fait 30 ans qu'on dit que la loi a besoin d'avoir plus de mordant, que la loi a besoin d'être mise à jour, que le gouvernement a besoin de faire une écoute active de la population francophone pour changer ça.

Qu'est-ce que ça veut dire, d'avoir une erreur sur les cartes d'identité que le gouvernement te donne? Ça veut dire que, à tous les lundis matin et à tous les jeudis soir que je viens à Toronto et que je retourne chez nous, mon billet d'avion n'a pas le même nom que ma carte d'identité. Ça veut dire que, à tous les lundis matin et à tous les jeudis après-midi, l'ordinateur ne reconnaît pas que je suis France Gélinas, parce que ma carte, mon permis de conduire, m'appelle France Gelin. Les Gelin, ils sont de l'autre bord de la track. Moi, c'est une Gélinas avec un « é », mais pour tous les gens que j'ai nommés et tous les autres, ça ne se passe pas.

Comment se fait-il que, en 30 ans—on sait qu'il y a eu des mises à jour des systèmes informatiques. On l'a vu. Cela a été annoncé plusieurs fois. Et pas une seule fois est-ce qu'on a pensé que, pendant la mise à jour, on devrait s'assurer que les accents de langue française soient disponibles? Parce que, regardez, on a tous ces gens-là qui ont des cartes d'identité fautives.

Je suis retournée, lorsqu'on a eu un nouveau gouvernement, voir la ministre de la Santé, voir le

ministre, qui est devenu la ministre, des Transports, et on est toujours au point zéro. Les changements que l'on demande, que ma chef a présentés, s'assureraient que les francophones auraient une voix, et je vous garantis que le jour qu'on va avoir une voix dans les politiques du ministère, on va s'assurer que nos noms vont être écrits comme il faut. Parce que là, si tu—tu fais face aux choix, bien, tu as le choix d'enlever l'accent sur ton nom parce que ça, ça va te causer bien moins d'ennuis. Il n'y a rien de plus le fun que de se faire retenir à l'aéroport parce que ta carte d'identité n'est pas pareille à ta carte d'accès à bord. Je peux vous le dire : c'est vraiment pas le fun.

Donc, tu as le choix : je peux enlever mon accent aigu. Demandez à M^{me} Isabelle Ratté de Sudbury de quoi ça a l'air, d'inscrire tes enfants dans un registre. Ratté, ça a un « é » à la fin. Elle va vous raconter avec assez d'humour une histoire—mais vraiment, ce n'était pas drôle du tout.

Qu'est-ce que ça veut dire? Bien, les francophones—est-ce qu'on devrait donner des noms francophones avec des accents? Si mon accent disparaît—bon, j'ai un accent quand je parle en anglais. Ça, j'ai l'impression qu'il ne disparaîtra pas. Mais si l'accent disparaît sur mon nom, est-ce que ça veut dire qu'on ne sera plus là, qu'on ne sera plus visibles, qu'il y a un manque de bonne foi, qu'on veut nous faire disparaître, qu'on veut nous faire parler l'anglais, qu'on veut que nos noms se conforment aux règlements de l'anglais? Moi, ça ne me tente pas de disparaître, et ça ne me tente pas que mes oncles, mes tantes, ma mère et tous ceux qui restent qui ont tous des accents, des cédilles et des trémas dans leur nom, disparaissent.

On est en 2019, madame la Présidente. Comment ça se fait? Ça, c'est le genre de chose que la motion qu'on a présentée s'assurerait : que ça ne continuerait pas comme ça, qu'il y aurait une paire d'yeux francophone, une communication qui se fait dès le début et à toutes les étapes pour s'assurer non seulement que le gouvernement prenne une décision éclairée qui prenne en compte la réalité des Franco-Ontariens et Franco-Ontariennes, mais qu'également, dans la mise en oeuvre de tout ça au niveau régional et au niveau local, que tout ça y aille.

Quand j'entends la ministre nous dire qu'on a commencé des consultations, c'est bizarre, parce que peu importe à qui on parle—qu'on parle aux gens du RÉFO, de la FARFO, de l'AFO, de l'ACFO Régionale—il n'y a personne encore qui a été consulté. De nous dire : « On va le faire avant notre mandat, mais on veut bien le faire », quand est-ce que ça va commencer? De nous dire qu'ils ont fait un protocole d'entente avec le gouvernement fédéral—un protocole d'entente? Ils ont accepté que le gouvernement fédéral paie 100 % de l'université francophone pour cinq ans. Je suis supposée de dire merci d'avoir accepté que le gouvernement fédéral paie 100 % de l'université? Vraiment, je suis obligée de dire merci à ça? Tu sais, ça commence à être difficile. Le gouvernement investit zéro dans tout ça. Où est-ce qu'elle est, la bonne volonté, après le 15 novembre noir que l'on a vécu avec notre commissaire?

La même chose s'applique quand la ministre nous dit : « Non, le commissaire aux services en français est encore

là. » Le nom du commissaire est encore là, mais les fonctions ne sont plus là.

L'expérience de l'homme de Hearst qui a appelé le service 911 et qui se fait dire : « Non, tu ne peux pas faire une plainte avec le commissaire aux services en français de l'ombudsman avant d'avoir fait une plainte. On est un bureau de dernier recours. » François Boileau n'était pas un bureau de dernier recours; il était le premier en ligne pour défendre les francophones. On a besoin de passer cette motion-là.

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

M. Joel Harden: Je me lève en Chambre aujourd'hui pour appuyer le projet de loi.

Ce projet de loi vise non seulement à rétablir le commissaire aux services en français comme bureau de l'Assemblée législative mais aussi à prendre d'autres étapes pour défendre les droits des francophones. Notamment, mon collègue propose de créer un conseil consultatif sur la communauté ontarienne et un réseau de coordinateurs aux services en français à travers la fonction publique.

En prenant la parole pour appuyer ce projet de loi, je pense surtout aux milliers de gens dans ma ville d'Ottawa et dans l'est ontarien qui vivent en français à tous les jours. Pour ces gens-là, les droits linguistiques—ce n'est pas une question abstraite; c'est un enjeu très réel. Quand le gouvernement a éliminé le commissaire aux services en français en tant que bureau indépendant, les gens de ma région ont ressenti de réelles inquiétudes. Ils ont peut-être pensé à un grand-parent qui doit être confiant de pouvoir communiquer avec son médecin. Pour plusieurs aînés à Ottawa, le financement de la programmation aux centres communautaires francophones fait la différence entre l'isolement social et la participation dans la communauté.

Plus tôt cet automne, j'ai eu l'honneur d'assister à l'assemblée générale annuelle de Montfort Renaissance, un organisme francophone qui mène plusieurs programmes et services pour les aînés et les personnes handicapées à Ottawa. Grâce au financement du fonds Trillium, Montfort Renaissance a été en mesure de réhabiliter un édifice historique du marché By—le centre Guigues—et de le mettre au service de ses clients francophones.

Par contre, ils ont récemment perdu le financement du ministère des Services aux aînés et de l'Accessibilité qui leur permettait d'offrir le programme Mon Centre à distance. Ce programme offre aux personnes âgées francophones l'occasion de participer à des rencontres sociales par téléphone et donc d'éviter l'isolement s'ils ont une mobilité limitée.

Maintenant ce service nous manque—et c'est à cause de ce gouvernement ici—pour les personnes vulnérables, pour nos aînés. C'est honteux, madame la Présidente.

Mais nous avons besoin du commissaire aux services en français pour que le gouvernement prenne note de ces genres de lacunes-là—des lacunes réelles qui peuvent contribuer, par exemple, à l'isolement social des aînés dans la communauté franco-ontarienne. Je pense que l'idée d'un réseau de coordinateurs des services en

français, tel que proposé dans ce projet de loi, aurait également beaucoup de valeur dans ce même sens.

Il faut également se rendre compte que la francophonie ontarienne n'est pas statique. Je ne pense pas seulement à nos aînés qui ont bâti la communauté en militant pour leurs droits depuis plusieurs décennies; je pense aussi aux nouveaux arrivants francophones, dont il y a plusieurs à Ottawa. Dans mon bureau de circonscription, mes adjoints travaillent souvent en français avec des gens qui ont besoin d'appui dans des cas d'assurance-maladie, d'assistance sociale, de logement et d'autres domaines. Il faut que les services gouvernementaux soient facilement disponibles pour ces gens-là dans la langue officielle de leur choix. Les immigrants francophones font des contributions importantes à la vie collective dans notre ville.

Il y a un an, le gouvernement a tourné le dos aux Franco-Ontariens. Il a l'occasion maintenant d'admettre son erreur et d'affirmer son appui pour les droits de la communauté. J'espère que mes collègues de l'autre côté de la Chambre feront la bonne décision. Mais, au NPD, nous savons de quel bord nous sommes.

1720

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

M. John Vanthof: C'est toujours un honneur de me lever ici et prendre la parole aujourd'hui en support de la motion présentée par notre chef. Puis, j'ai eu la bonne chance de grandir dans une région qui est très française. Puis maintenant j'ai l'honneur de les représenter ici. Je sais, chaque jour, le travail qu'ils doivent faire pour maintenir leur culture, leur langue. Le français, ce n'est pas seulement une langue. C'est une des cultures fondatrices de notre bonne province, de notre bon pays.

It's a shame that we're here today, having to do this, trying to force this government, and talking about the failures of the past government. I'm proud to be a francophile, and I'm sad that we're here today. But the NDP will fight. We continue to fight so that francophones have the same rights, that they benefit the same from this country that they helped found.

Les autochtones, les francophones, puis les anglophones—même un petit Hollandais comme moi.

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

Ms. Jill Andrew: Merci beaucoup. As the official opposition's critic for culture, je vais vous parler de l'impact néfaste des coupes du gouvernement Ford au milieu culturel franco-ontarien.

We have the example of the Nouvelle Scène Gilles Desjardins in Ottawa. This is a multidisciplinary hub for francophone arts and culture in the Ottawa region. This is a theatre that works with great success. They offer theatre, music, dance and performance shows in French, by and for people coming from every corner of the province, and yet this government chose to cut the funding that had been promised by the former Liberal government to engage in major renovations.

Thousands of children visit the Nouvelle Scène each year to watch plays in français. The Nouvelle Scène is also

a meeting place for Franco-Ontarians and artists in Ottawa. It is a building block of the Franco-Ontarian identity.

Of course, the Liberals were not up to the challenge, having made a promise that of course they would not fulfill. But the Conservatives simply took us all away from any place of hope. We have seen this act before with this government's slashing of the Indigenous Culture Fund.

Speaker, the arts are a vital element in the history and the existence of the collective imagination of a society. Franco-Ontarian culture is a critical aspect of what we consider the Francophonie in the 21st century. Ontario is home to the second-largest francophone population in North America, and the expression, transmission and protection of francophone language, identity and culture through the arts is imperative.

Moreover, Ontario's francophone population is culturally and racially diverse, and Ontario's growing francophone population also takes into account immigration from French-speaking countries like Haiti, Congo, Cameroon and Mauritius. Therefore, supporting francophone culture and heritage also means promoting cultural diversity across this province.

It is in this recognition that art funders such as the Ontario Arts Council and the Canada Council for the Arts have French-language programs specifically for francophone artists and arts organizations, because they recognize, in the arts and in other spaces, that public funding is necessary for cultural preservation.

Francophone culture is imperative to the cultural heritage of Ontario. It makes for a more inclusive province, and it makes for a more accessible province. French-speaking newcomers to Ontario have increased supports and resources through French-language protections. They see themselves reflected in this new country and are able to better navigate and to have a better life as such.

It also boosts our economic revenue—let's not forget that—and it amplifies our tourism sector.

Speaker, we cannot stand by idle and watch francophone communities' and culture's demise. The NDP official opposition will not.

These cuts must be reversed, and we must demand support for the French-language services motion. I certainly am proud to support the motion, and I thank our leader of the official opposition, Andrea Horwath, for putting this forth.

Les coupes à la Nouvelle Scène sont un affront à la communauté franco-ontarienne. Merci.

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

Mr. Jeff Burch: My riding, Niagara Centre, is fortunate to have one of the most vibrant French-speaking communities in Ontario, in Welland. Welland is officially designated as a bilingual city and is home to the third-largest French-speaking population per capita in Ontario.

In response to the news of the cuts last year, the francophone community mobilized. I received many letters, and they all followed the same theme: We cannot take a step back. Services are already difficult to access,

and the loss of the commissioner, in particular, was deeply concerning.

People were deeply concerned that, before the cuts, we were already falling behind. The French Language Services Act has never been thoroughly modernized since it passed more than 30 years ago. The modernization of the FLSA has been demanded multiple times over 12 years. Despite calls for improvements, this government has rolled back supports for francophones in Ontario.

My colleague from Mushkegowuk—James Bay tabled Bill 137, the Franco-Ontarian Community Act, 2019. This bill would address these concerns.

Marcel Castonguay, the executive director for Centre de santé communautaire Hamilton/Niagara, an organization that provides services, particularly health services, to French-speaking populations in the region, says, "One of the most archaic concepts still in existence in the present legislation is the one dealing with designated regions. If we are going to attempt to modernize this legislation then it is time that we remove barriers to service once and for all. At present, the designated regions of the province cover approx. 80% of the province's French-language population and the province spends more money and time working around designated areas than just ensuring services everywhere."

Speaker, I also heard from Lucie Huot from CERF Niagara, a francophone employment and resource centre in my riding. She stated: "First, I fully agree with your proposal as presented. As a Franco-Ontarian and for the more than 600,000 Franco-Ontarians, it is imperative to maintain all existing services in French and work to add more."

Time and time again, what I've been hearing from the francophone community in my riding is about an ongoing lack of respect. There is no consultation. Where there is consultation, it certainly isn't meaningful, and people are understandably frustrated by the lack of concrete action on this file.

My office spoke with Susan from Bonjour Niagara, a group that assists francophones in accessing services in their language. She outlined the importance of engaging communities who are impacted by this legislation.

Francophones from my riding are loud and clear: It's time to ensure that the government is accountable and ensure services are delivered equally. Welland is fortunate to have more resources for francophones than many communities, and the result is clear: When people can access services in their language, the community thrives.

These sentiments are echoed across the province. Today we have an opportunity to recommit to francophones and show real, concrete guarantees that policies, programs and services that are offered in English will also be offered in French.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Jeremy Roberts): I recognize the government House leader.

L'hon. Paul Calandra: C'est un honneur de me lever aujourd'hui et de prendre la parole sur ce sujet. Je m'excuse en avance, monsieur le Président et tous mes

collègues : mon français, c'est un peu d'italien, un peu d'anglais et du français tout en même temps.

Comme vous savez, la communauté francophone est une communauté très importante pour le gouvernement de l'Ontario, non seulement pour ce gouvernement, mais, toujours, c'est une communauté très importante pour cette province.

La ministre, dans son discours, a parlé des choses que ce gouvernement a trouvées très importantes pour la communauté. Est-ce que nous avons changé le rôle du commissaire? Oui. Pour moi, je dis que nous avons augmenté les services pour la communauté francophone.

1730

Mais, en même temps, la ministre a dit que ce gouvernement veut se concentrer sur l'économie. Nous savons que l'économie pour la communauté francophone, c'est très important, parce que, monsieur le Président, une des choses qui est différente pour l'Ontario, pour cette province, c'est que nous avons une communauté francophone très forte. Quand nous commençons notre démarche pour nos entreprises, cette communauté va être très importante pour augmenter l'économie de l'Ontario. Alors, c'est une communauté très importante, comme j'ai dit.

Dans ma circonscription, il n'y a pas une grande communauté francophone; c'est une communauté vraiment très petite, mais une communauté très forte. Dans ma circonscription, il y a beaucoup de nouvelles écoles—je sais le mot, mais c'est comme je dis—I was going to say, we have many schools, French immersion. Je m'excuse, monsieur le Président. Nous avons beaucoup d'écoles pour « French immersion ».

Look, Mr. Speaker: I appreciate the opportunity that the opposition has given us to talk about the many good things that we are doing, and how important this community is. I apologize to the translation; I imagine they had a very difficult time trying to translate my French. But this is a very, very important community. The minister has really brought us into a phase where it's not just about the services that we can provide but it's also looking at how the community can help the province of Ontario grow and build jobs. Jobs: It's about focusing on the economy. It's about looking at how our community, how the francophone community—how we can unleash their potential to help us grow and build jobs in those communities around the world that also speak French. That's something that sets Ontario apart from many other jurisdictions around the world.

I think that we've made some incredible improvements. The minister and the government have worked collaboratively with our friends in Ottawa to bring about a French university, which is something that has been long overdue. We've been able to do that by working together with our federal counterparts.

I acknowledge the fact that Ontario—we might not all be as fluently bilingual as we would like to be. When you hear the debate—and I know some people have received a couple of texts about why we are having a discussion about French-language services when we're speaking

English. Well, the fact is that we're trying. Many of us are trying. It is important—whether we can speak it or not, it is important that we have the debate. I think that speaks volumes for us on both sides of the House, Mr. Speaker.

With that, I will yield the floor to the opposition—only just to conclude by saying again that I want to not only thank the opposition for bringing this important debate forward but thank the minister and all members who have placed such importance in this community, which has been such an amazing community that has given us the opportunity to grow and build since before we were united as a country.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): Thank you very much. Further debate? The member from Sudbury.

M. Jamie West: La ville du grand Sudbury a une communauté francophone forte et dynamique. La langue française est centrale à l'identité et à la culture de Sudbury. Il y a 17 000 francophones et 14 écoles de langue française dans ma circonscription.

Sudbury est un important centre culturel pour la communauté franco-ontarienne. Gaétan Gervais, un professeur à l'Université Laurentienne, a créé le drapeau franco-ontarien à Sudbury.

Pendant les années 1970, un groupe d'étudiants se sont réunis pour fonder la Coopérative des artistes du Nouvel-Ontario, ou CANO. Ce collectif de jeunes artistes a lancé de nombreuses initiatives, notamment le Théâtre du Nouvel-Ontario, la maison d'édition Prise de parole et la Galerie du Nouvel-Ontario. Ces institutions existent encore aujourd'hui.

Les centres d'éducation francophone—l'Université Laurentienne, le Collège Boréal et le Carrefour francophone—jouent un rôle actif dans la préparation de la prochaine génération de francophones.

Pour soutenir notre communauté francophone et pour assurer qu'elle a accès aux services essentiels dans leur langue maternelle, notre hôpital Horizon Santé-Nord, notre administration municipale et de nombreux autres organismes offrent leurs services en français.

L'appui aux organismes communautaires francophones est essentiel à la vitalité et au développement de la communauté franco-ontarienne à Sudbury. C'est pourquoi l'annonce des coupures par ce gouvernement nous préoccupe tellement. Le comportement de ce gouvernement est un affront à la communauté francophone. Des centaines de personnes sont venues à un rassemblement devant mon bureau pour protester contre les coupures. Mon bureau a été inondé avec des courriels de gens qui étaient fâchés par ces coupures.

Un de mes électeurs le décrit comme ça : « Les coupures feront un tort énorme à notre population francophone de l'Ontario ...

« Le geste dont vous voulez imposer causera un recul impensable dans les gains de la francophonie en Ontario. »

La langue et la culture françaises sont aussi proche de mon cœur. Mon épouse et sa famille sont tous francophones. Mes trois enfants ont toujours étudié en français. Pour nous, c'était essentiel qu'ils connaissent leur identité et leur héritage français.

Ce gouvernement a toujours laissé tomber les Franco-Ontariens et a refusé le soutien dont ils ont besoin pour prospérer. Le budget du programme d'appui aux langues officielles ne s'est pas amélioré depuis plus de 10 ans. La Loi sur les services en français n'a pas été modernisée depuis son adoption il y a plus de 30 ans.

Les étudiants méritent une université francophone gouvernée par et pour les francophones. Les personnes âgées dans ma communauté ne devraient pas attendre des années pour un lit de soins de longue durée dans un établissement bilingue. Et les familles ne devraient pas avoir à franchir des obstacles pour y avoir accès aux services en français, l'une des langues officielles du Canada.

Je demande au gouvernement son appui à la motion déposée, et de soutenir les Franco-Ontariens et les Franco-Ontariennes.

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

M. Taras Natyshak: Comme toujours, c'est un plaisir de présenter ici aujourd'hui, de faire partie du débat. Évidemment, je suis d'accord avec et je supporte notre chef avec la motion ici qu'on débat aujourd'hui.

Je ne suis pas né francophone, mais mes parents, qui sont tous les deux anglophones, savaient que c'était important pour moi d'apprendre la langue française, d'être bilingue. La chance que j'ai eue dès cette journée, de l'école primaire à l'école secondaire, m'a rendue ici, je pense—d'avoir l'habileté de parler dans les deux langues et d'offrir nos services gouvernementaux en français, dans nos deux langues qui sont protégées par la loi.

Aujourd'hui, on parle d'une continuation de cette protection. C'est ce que nos francophones demandent de notre gouvernement, parce qu'ils ont peur. Ils ont peur que si on la lâche, ça se peut que ça va y aller, que ça va être perdu. Même quand ils se sont battus pour leur langue, pour notre langue, depuis le règlement 17, et quand ils se sont battus pour l'Hôpital Montfort—on a une histoire ici avec les francophones dans l'Ontario où, à chaque étape, on a besoin de se battre.

1740

Comme toujours, je suis chanceux d'avoir des amis. Je veux vous dire à propos de mon amie, M^{me} Tania Petro, une de nos meilleures amies. Elle est enseignante à Pavillon des Jeunes au niveau de septième année. Comme toujours, je regarde pour ses directions au sujet de la langue française, la protection de la langue française. Je vais lire ce qu'elle m'a écrit aujourd'hui. Encore, c'est Tania Petro :

« Nous sommes une communauté vibrante et unie.

« Et nous avons une grande présence en Ontario.

« Nous nous sommes battus pour notre langue depuis le règlement 17! Même si on n'utilise plus des épingles à chapeau nous continuons à faire vivre notre langue et notre culture malgré tous les obstacles imposés par le gouvernement. Les jeunes prennent la relève et méritent d'avoir un représentant dans ce pays officiellement bilingue.

« La francophonie n'est pas seulement une langue mais une culture qui promeut la diversité et l'égalité de tous et de toutes.

« Être francophone c'est un droit au Canada et donc les francophones ont le droit autant que les anglophones d'avoir » un commissaire indépendant « de la langue!

« Nos ancêtres depuis Jacques Cartier, Samuel de Champlain et Louis Riel ont continué cette lutte afin de préserver la langue et la culture et afin d'éviter l'assimilation. Nous sommes peut-être une minorité mais nous n'allons jamais disparaître. Nous sommes et nous serons! »

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

M. Gilles Bisson: Et je suis. Exactement.

Écoute, une partie du débat ici—l'importance pour moi, comme francophone, pour nos petits-enfants, pour nos filles et pour tous les autres en Ontario qui parlent français, c'est l'habileté d'utiliser le langage. Si tu n'utilises pas un langage, tu vas le perdre. C'est pour ça que les francophones, on milite toujours pour être capable de s'assurer qu'on a nos écoles, nos collègues, nos universités, qu'on peut se pointer à un bureau du gouvernement faisant affaire avec le système de santé, ou n'importe quel autre, et aller rechercher des services. Parce que quand tu peux vivre en français, tu gardes ton langage et tu es capable de promouvoir ta culture.

C'est pour ça que c'est très important que la loi soit modernisée. Sans des changements à la loi, ce qu'on a vu avec les années c'est que les francophones ont pris un recul. Quand le gouvernement de M. Harris était en place, par exemple, ils ont délaissé aux municipalités pleins de services provinciaux qui étaient couverts sous la Loi 8. En d'autres mots, si la personne voulait aller chercher des services faisant affaire avec un service provincial dans le temps que c'était la province, tu pouvais te faire servir en français, mais quand on a délaissé ces services, qui ont été aux municipalités, parfois, les services en français n'ont pas été transférés et la responsabilité pour les communautés, de s'assurer que les francophones peuvent aller chercher les services, n'a pas été garantie.

So, donc, c'est pour ça que c'est important qu'une telle loi—proposée premièrement par le député néo-démocrate M. Bourgouin, et dans la motion mise de l'avant par notre chef—dise qu'il faut respecter que les francophones soient capables de vivre en français ici en Ontario et que, pour ça, on a besoin d'être capable de mettre en place les services nécessaires pour qu'ils peuvent aller rechercher ces services en français.

Le gouvernement dit—je veux rien que faire sûr que j'ai bien compris leur débat—que la communauté francophone est importante pour l'Ontario. Moi, je suis d'accord. Notre chef est d'accord. Je pense qu'on est tous d'accord. Mais si c'est vrai, pourquoi, comme gouvernement, que la première affaire que vous avez faite est de vous débarrasser du commissaire aux services en français? Pourquoi est-ce que la deuxième affaire que vous avez faite était de annuler la création de l'université francophone? Vous n'avez pas démontré que la

communauté était importante en faisant ces changements-là; vous avez, franchement, dit complètement le contraire quand ça vient à ce que la francophonie veut dire à ce gouvernement.

Là, le gouvernement dit : « Bien, ce n'est pas important d'être capable de supporter cette motion parce que nous autres, on fait notre propre consultation. » Écoute, la raison que vous autres ne voulez pas supporter cette motion—de ce que je peux voir avec ces débats—c'est que vous ne voulez pas avoir un commissaire des langues officielles ici en Ontario. Vous ne voulez pas avoir un commissaire aux services en français ici en Ontario qui est indépendant, qui peut regarder les plaintes qui arrivent au bureau et faire les recommandations comme on pouvait le faire dans le passé. Vous ne voulez pas être dans une situation de prendre vos responsabilités, comme gouvernement, envers la communauté francophone.

Vous avez des belles paroles—j'ai écouté le débat des députés conservateurs qui se sont levés, et ils ont fait des bons discours, des belles paroles—mais leurs actions sont pas mal moindre quand ça vient à être capables de supporter ce qui a besoin d'être fait pour les francophones.

Moi, je peux dire, mon papa—comme on dit en bon français—lui, il est né au Québec, à Ville-Marie. Il est venu, comme petit garçon d'un an ou de deux ans, à Timmins quand ils se sont établis dans ce coin-là. Puis je suis très fier de dire que la génération d'après, moi, je parle le français; je suis francophone. Nos deux filles, Julie et Natalie, sont parfaitement bilingues, sont francophones. Justement, Natalie a étudié à l'Université de Hearst en français, et Julie a fait de même quand ça vient à ses études dans d'autres institutions. Nos petits-enfants parlent tous le français. Ce qui est important pour moi, c'est que nos deux petits-enfants que vous avez rencontrés ici hier, Nathaniel et Victoria, aillent à une école française à Whitby, Jean-Paul II. C'est important pour eux, parce qu'ils sont capables de garder leur langage quand ils ont l'habileté d'avoir les services.

So, donc, pourquoi est-ce que cette motion est importante? Elle est importante parce que les francophones de cette province ont besoin d'être capables d'accéder aux services en français et de vivre en français pour être capables de garder le langage et de faire l'épanouissement de notre culture francophone, qui est très riche et très intéressante quand ça vient à ce que ça fait pour le restant de la province de l'Ontario. Pour ça, on va voter pour la motion. Je veux remercier notre chef pour avoir amené cette motion à l'Assemblée aujourd'hui.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): I recognize the leader of the official opposition.

M^{me} Andrea Horwath: Merci, monsieur le Président. I'm rising on my right to reply.

Je suis ravie que nous ayons pu avoir ce débat aujourd'hui. Il était grand temps.

La communauté franco-ontarienne est une partie essentielle de notre histoire et de notre avenir.

Une fois de plus, le NPD a été en première ligne pour défendre la cause de tous les Franco-Ontariens et de toutes les Franco-Ontariennes.

Une fois de plus, ce gouvernement et ce premier ministre choisissent de faire la sourde oreille. Les conservateurs entendent nous faire reculer en tant que province, et ils s'entêtent à ignorer les droits des familles francophones qui vivent ici depuis des générations et qui ont pleinement contribué à faire de l'Ontario ce qu'il est aujourd'hui.

Le NPD continuera de se tenir debout pour les Franco-Ontariens et les Franco-Ontariennes. Nous parlerons haut et fort des questions qui les préoccupent. Nous défendrons leurs droits, et nous mènerons le combat contre la négligence persistante que ce gouvernement manifeste envers les communautés francophones.

Nous pouvons faire mieux, et nous devons faire mieux.

I'm really proud today, Speaker, to have had the opportunity to have this debate. It is about moving forward and making sure that Franco-Ontarians know that the Legislative Assembly of Ontario and all parties that serve here understand not only their rights, but the necessity of protecting the French language, the utilization of the French language, the French culture, because of its significance in terms of the history of this province and the history of this country.

I have to say that we are proudly going to keep pushing this government to do right by Franco-Ontarians and to make sure not only that the French Language Services Act is, in fact, modernized and a new definition is included in that law, but that we also get back to a province where Franco-Ontarians can rely upon an independent French Language Services Commissioner to advocate on their behalf and ensure that all of their services are available in French.

Thank you. Merci beaucoup.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): Thank you very much. I really do appreciate the respectful debate that was carried on in the Legislature this afternoon. Again, I thank all members for that.

Ms. Horwath has moved opposition day number 2. Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? I heard a no.

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

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

In my opinion, the ayes have it.

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

The division bells rang from 1750 to 1800.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): This is the 30-second warning for all members to take their seats, please—30-second warning.

Ms. Horwath has moved opposition day motion number 2. All those in favour will please rise one at a time and be recognized by the Clerk.

Ayes

Andrew, Jill	Gretzky, Lisa	Sattler, Peggy
Armstrong, Teresa J.	Harden, Joel	Simard, Amanda
Begum, Doly	Hassan, Faisal	Singh, Gurratan
Berns-McGown, Rima	Hatfield, Percy	Singh, Sara
Bisson, Gilles	Horwath, Andrea	Stiles, Marit
Bourgouin, Guy	Kernaghan, Terence	Tabuns, Peter

Burch, Jeff	Mamakwa, Sol	Taylor, Monique
Fraser, John	Miller, Paul	Vanthof, John
French, Jennifer K.	Monteith-Farrell, Judith	West, Jamie
Gates, Wayne	Morrison, Suze	Yarde, Kevin
Gélinas, France	Natyshak, Taras	
Glover, Chris	Rakocevic, Tom	

Coe, Lorne	Martow, Gila	Scott, Laurie
Crawford, Stephen	McDonell, Jim	Skelly, Donna
Cuzzetto, Rudy	McKenna, Jane	Smith, Dave
Downey, Doug	McNaughton, Monte	Smith, Todd
Dunlop, Jill	Miller, Norman	Surma, Kinga
Elliott, Christine	Mitas, Christina Maria	Thanigasalam, Vijay
Fullerton, Merrilee	Mulroney, Caroline	Thompson, Lisa M.
Ghamari, Goldie	Oosterhoff, Sam	Tibollo, Michael A.
Gill, Parm	Pang, Billy	Triantafilopoulos, Effie J.
Hardeman, Ernie	Park, Lindsey	Wai, Daisy
Harris, Mike	Parsa, Michael	Walker, Bill

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): All those opposed to the motion will please rise one at a time and be recognized by the Clerk.

Nays

Baber, Roman	Hogarth, Christine	Pettapiece, Randy
Babikian, Aris	Jones, Sylvia	Phillips, Rod
Bailey, Robert	Kanapathi, Logan	Piccini, David
Barrett, Toby	Karahalios, Belinda C.	Rasheed, Kaleed
Bethlenfalvy, Peter	Ke, Vincent	Rickford, Greg
Bouma, Will	Khanjin, Andrea	Roberts, Jeremy
Calandra, Paul	Kusendova, Natalia	Romano, Ross
Cho, Raymond Sung Joon	Lecce, Stephen	Sabawy, Sheref
Cho, Stan	MacLeod, Lisa	Sandhu, Amarjot
Clark, Steve	Martin, Robin	Sarkaria, Prabmeet Singh

The Clerk of the Assembly (Mr. Todd Decker): The ayes are 34; the nays are 63.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): I declare the motion lost.

Motion negatived.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): It being past 6 o'clock, this House stands adjourned until 9 a.m. tomorrow morning.

The House adjourned at 1804.

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF ONTARIO
ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE DE L'ONTARIO

Lieutenant Governor / Lieutenante-gouverneure: Hon. / L'hon. Elizabeth Dowdeswell, OC, OOnt.
Speaker / Président: Hon. / L'hon. Ted Arnott
Clerk / Greffier: Todd Decker
Deputy Clerk / Sous-greffier: Trevor Day
Clerks-at-the-Table / Greffiers parlementaires: Tonia Grannum, Valerie Quioic Lim, William Short
Sergeant-at-Arms / Sergente d'armes: Jacquelyn Gordon

Member and Party / Député(e) et parti	Constituency / Circonscription	Other responsibilities / Autres responsabilités
Anand, Deepak (PC)	Mississauga—Malton	
Andrew, Jill (NDP)	Toronto—St. Paul's	
Armstrong, Teresa J. (NDP)	London—Fanshawe	
Arnott, Hon. / L'hon. Ted (PC)	Wellington—Halton Hills	Speaker / Président de l'Assemblée législative
Arthur, Ian (NDP)	Kingston and the Islands / Kingston et les Îles	
Baber, Roman (PC)	York Centre / York-Centre	
Babikian, Aris (PC)	Scarborough—Agincourt	
Bailey, Robert (PC)	Sarnia—Lambton	
Barrett, Toby (PC)	Haldimand—Norfolk	
Begum, Doly (NDP)	Scarborough Southwest / Scarborough-Sud-Ouest	
Bell, Jessica (NDP)	University—Rosedale	
Berns-McGown, Rima (NDP)	Beaches—East York / Beaches—East York	
Bethlenfalvy, Hon. / L'hon. Peter (PC)	Pickering—Uxbridge	President of the Treasury Board / Président du Conseil du Trésor
Bisson, Gilles (NDP)	Timmins	Opposition House Leader / Leader parlementaire de l'opposition officielle
Bouma, Will (PC)	Brantford—Brant	
Bourgouin, Guy (NDP)	Mushkegowuk—James Bay / Mushkegowuk—Baie James	
Burch, Jeff (NDP)	Niagara Centre / Niagara-Centre	
Calandra, Hon. / L'hon. Paul (PC)	Markham—Stouffville	Minister Without Portfolio / Ministre sans portefeuille Government House Leader / Leader parlementaire du gouvernement
Cho, Hon. / L'hon. Raymond Sung Joon (PC)	Scarborough North / Scarborough-Nord	Minister for Seniors and Accessibility / Ministre des Services aux aînés et de l'Accessibilité
Cho, Stan (PC)	Willowdale	
Clark, Hon. / L'hon. Steve (PC)	Leeds—Grenville—Thousand Islands and Rideau Lakes / Leeds—Grenville—Thousand Islands et Rideau Lakes	Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing / Ministre des Affaires municipales et du Logement
Coe, Lorne (PC)	Whitby	
Coteau, Michael (LIB)	Don Valley East / Don Valley-Est	
Crawford, Stephen (PC)	Oakville	
Cuzzetto, Rudy (PC)	Mississauga—Lakeshore	
Downey, Hon. / L'hon. Doug (PC)	Barrie—Springwater—Oro-Medonte	Attorney General / Procureur général
Dunlop, Hon. / L'hon. Jill (PC)	Simcoe North / Simcoe-Nord	Associate Minister of Children and Women's Issues / Ministre associée déléguée au dossier de l'Enfance et à la Condition féminine Minister Without Portfolio / Ministre sans portefeuille
Elliott, Hon. / L'hon. Christine (PC)	Newmarket—Aurora	Deputy Premier / Vice-première ministre Minister of Health / Ministre de la Santé
Fedeli, Hon. / L'hon. Victor (PC)	Nipissing	Chair of Cabinet / Président du Conseil des ministres Minister of Economic Development, Job Creation and Trade / Ministre du Développement économique, de la Création d'emplois et du Commerce
Fee, Amy (PC)	Kitchener South—Hespeler / Kitchener-Sud—Hespeler	Deputy Government House Leader / Leader parlementaire adjointe du gouvernement
Fife, Catherine (NDP)	Waterloo	
Ford, Hon. / L'hon. Doug (PC)	Etobicoke North / Etobicoke-Nord	Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs / Ministre des Affaires intergouvernementales Premier / Premier ministre
Fraser, John (LIB)	Ottawa South / Ottawa-Sud	

Member and Party / Député(e) et parti	Constituency / Circonscription	Other responsibilities / Autres responsabilités
French, Jennifer K. (NDP)	Oshawa	Third Deputy Chair of the Committee of the Whole House / Troisième vice-présidente du comité plénier de l'Assemblée législative
Fullerton, Hon. / L'hon. Merrilee (PC)	Kanata—Carleton	Minister of Long-Term Care / Ministre des Soins de longue durée
Gates, Wayne (NDP)	Niagara Falls	
Gélinas, France (NDP)	Nickel Belt	
Ghamari, Goldie (PC)	Carleton	
Gill, Parm (PC)	Milton	
Glover, Chris (NDP)	Spadina—Fort York	
Gravelle, Michael (LIB)	Thunder Bay—Superior North / Thunder Bay—Supérieur-Nord	
Gretzky, Lisa (NDP)	Windsor West / Windsor-Ouest	First Deputy Chair of the Committee of the Whole House / Première vice-présidente du comité plénier de l'Assemblée
Hardeman, Hon. / L'hon. Ernie (PC)	Oxford	Minister of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs / Ministre de l'Agriculture, de l'Alimentation et des Affaires rurales
Harden, Joel (NDP)	Ottawa Centre / Ottawa-Centre	
Harris, Mike (PC)	Kitchener—Conestoga	
Hassan, Faisal (NDP)	York South—Weston / York-Sud- Weston	
Hatfield, Percy (NDP)	Windsor—Tecumseh	Second Deputy Chair of the Committee of the Whole House / Deuxième vice-président du comité plénier de l'Assemblée législative
Hillier, Randy (IND)	Lanark—Frontenac—Kingston	
Hogarth, Christine (PC)	Etobicoke—Lakeshore	
Horwath, Andrea (NDP)	Hamilton Centre / Hamilton-Centre	Leader, Official Opposition / Chef de l'opposition officielle
Hunter, Mitzie (LIB)	Scarborough—Guildwood	
Jones, Hon. / L'hon. Sylvia (PC)	Dufferin—Caledon	Solicitor General / Solliciteure générale
Kanapathi, Logan (PC)	Markham—Thornhill	
Karahalios, Belinda C. (PC)	Cambridge	
Karpoche, Bhutla (NDP)	Parkdale—High Park	
Ke, Vincent (PC)	Don Valley North / Don Valley-Nord	
Kernaghan, Terence (NDP)	London North Centre / London- Centre-Nord	
Khanjin, Andrea (PC)	Barrie—Innisfil	
Kramp, Daryl (PC)	Hastings—Lennox and Addington	
Kusendova, Natalia (PC)	Mississauga Centre / Mississauga- Centre	
Lecce, Hon. / L'hon. Stephen (PC)	King—Vaughan	Minister of Education / Ministre de l'Éducation
Lindo, Laura Mae (NDP)	Kitchener Centre / Kitchener-Centre	
MacLeod, Hon. / L'hon. Lisa (PC)	Nepean	Minister of Heritage, Sport, Tourism and Culture Industries / ministre des Industries du patrimoine, du sport, du tourisme et de la culture
Mamakwa, Sol (NDP)	Kiiwetinoong	
Mantha, Michael (NDP)	Algoma—Manitoulin	
Martin, Robin (PC)	Eglinton—Lawrence	
Martow, Gila (PC)	Thornhill	
McDonell, Jim (PC)	Stormont—Dundas—South Glengarry	
McKenna, Jane (PC)	Burlington	
McNaughton, Hon. / L'hon. Monte (PC)	Lambton—Kent—Middlesex	Minister of Labour, Training and Skills Development / Ministre du Travail, de la Formation et du Développement des compétences
Miller, Norman (PC)	Parry Sound—Muskoka	
Miller, Paul (NDP)	Hamilton East—Stoney Creek / Hamilton-Est—Stoney Creek	
Mitas, Christina Maria (PC)	Scarborough Centre / Scarborough- Centre	
Monteith-Farrell, Judith (NDP)	Thunder Bay—Atikokan	
Morrison, Suze (NDP)	Toronto Centre / Toronto-Centre	
Mulroney, Hon. / L'hon. Caroline (PC)	York—Simcoe	Minister of Francophone Affairs / Ministre des Affaires francophones Minister of Transportation / Ministre des Transports
Natyshak, Taras (NDP)	Essex	
Nicholls, Rick (PC)	Chatham-Kent—Leamington	Chair of the Committee of the Whole House / Président du comité plénier de l'Assemblée
Oosterhoff, Sam (PC)	Niagara West / Niagara-Ouest	Deputy Speaker / Vice-président

Member and Party / Député(e) et parti	Constituency / Circonscription	Other responsibilities / Autres responsabilités
Pang, Billy (PC)	Markham—Unionville	
Park, Lindsey (PC)	Durham	
Parsa, Michael (PC)	Aurora—Oak Ridges—Richmond Hill	
Pettapiece, Randy (PC)	Perth—Wellington	
Phillips, Hon. / L'hon. Rod (PC)	Ajax	Minister of Finance / Ministre des Finances
Piccini, David (PC)	Northumberland—Peterborough South / Northumberland—Peterborough-Sud	
Rakocevic, Tom (NDP)	Humber River—Black Creek	
Rasheed, Kaleed (PC)	Mississauga East—Cooksville / Mississauga-Est—Cooksville	
Rickford, Hon. / L'hon. Greg (PC)	Kenora—Rainy River	Minister of Energy, Northern Development and Mines / Ministre de l'Énergie, du Développement du Nord et des Mines Minister of Indigenous Affairs / Ministre des Affaires autochtones
Roberts, Jeremy (PC)	Ottawa West—Nepean / Ottawa- Ouest—Nepean	
Romano, Hon. / L'hon. Ross (PC)	Sault Ste. Marie	Minister of Colleges and Universities / Ministre des Collèges et Universités
Sabawy, Sheref (PC)	Mississauga—Erin Mills	
Sandhu, Amarjot (PC)	Brampton West / Brampton-Ouest	
Sarkaria, Hon. / L'hon. Prabmeet Singh (PC)	Brampton South / Brampton-Sud	Associate Minister of Small Business and Red Tape Reduction / Ministre associé délégué au dossier des Petites Entreprises et de la Réduction des formalités administratives Minister Without Portfolio / Ministre sans portefeuille
Sattler, Peggy (NDP)	London West / London-Ouest	Deputy Opposition House Leader / Leader parlementaire adjointe de l'opposition officielle
Schreiner, Mike (GRN)	Guelph	
Scott, Hon. / L'hon. Laurie (PC)	Haliburton—Kawartha Lakes—Brock	Minister of Infrastructure
Shaw, Sandy (NDP)	Hamilton West—Ancaster—Dundas / Hamilton-Ouest—Ancaster—Dundas	
Simard, Amanda (IND)	Glengarry—Prescott—Russell	
Singh, Gurratan (NDP)	Brampton East / Brampton-Est	
Singh, Sara (NDP)	Brampton Centre / Brampton-Centre	Deputy Leader, Official Opposition / Chef adjointe de l'opposition officielle
Skelly, Donna (PC)	Flamborough—Glanbrook	
Smith, Dave (PC)	Peterborough—Kawartha	
Smith, Hon. / L'hon. Todd (PC)	Bay of Quinte / Baie de Quinte	Minister of Children, Community and Social Services / Ministre des Services à l'enfance et des Services sociaux et communautaires
Stevens, Jennifer (Jennie) (NDP)	St. Catharines	
Stiles, Marit (NDP)	Davenport	
Surma, Hon. / L'hon. Kinga (PC)	Etobicoke Centre / Etobicoke-Centre	Associate Minister of Transportation (GTA) / Ministre associée des Transports (RGT) Minister Without Portfolio / Ministre sans portefeuille
Tabuns, Peter (NDP)	Toronto—Danforth	
Tangri, Nina (PC)	Mississauga—Streetsville	
Taylor, Monique (NDP)	Hamilton Mountain	
Thanigasalam, Vijay (PC)	Scarborough—Rouge Park	
Thompson, Hon. / L'hon. Lisa M. (PC)	Huron—Bruce	Minister of Government and Consumer Services / Ministre des Services gouvernementaux et des Services aux consommateurs
Tibollo, Hon. / L'hon. Michael A. (PC)	Vaughan—Woodbridge	Associate Minister of Mental Health and Addictions / Ministre associé délégué au dossier de la Santé mentale et de la Lutte contre les dépendances Minister Without Portfolio / Ministre sans portefeuille
Triantafilopoulos, Effie J. (PC)	Oakville North—Burlington / Oakville-Nord—Burlington	
Vanthof, John (NDP)	Timiskaming—Cochrane	Deputy Leader, Official Opposition / Chef adjoint de l'opposition officielle
Wai, Daisy (PC)	Richmond Hill	
Walker, Hon. / L'hon. Bill (PC)	Bruce—Grey—Owen Sound	Associate Minister of Energy / Ministre associé de l'Énergie Minister Without Portfolio / Ministre sans portefeuille
West, Jamie (NDP)	Sudbury	
Wilson, Jim (IND)	Simcoe—Grey	
Wynne, Kathleen O. (LIB)	Don Valley West / Don Valley-Ouest	

Member and Party / Député(e) et parti	Constituency / Circonscription	Other responsibilities / Autres responsabilités
Yakabuski, Hon. / L'hon. John (PC)	Renfrew—Nipissing—Pembroke	Minister of Natural Resources and Forestry / Ministre des Richesses naturelles et des Forêts
Yarde, Kevin (NDP)	Brampton North / Brampton-Nord	
Yurek, Hon. / L'hon. Jeff (PC)	Elgin—Middlesex—London	Minister of the Environment, Conservation and Parks / Ministre de l'Environnement, de la Protection de la nature et des Parcs
Vacant	Orléans	
Vacant	Ottawa—Vanier	

**STANDING COMMITTEES OF THE LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY
COMITÉS PERMANENTS DE L'ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE**

Standing Committee on Estimates / Comité permanent des budgets des dépenses

Chair / Président: Peter Tabuns
Vice-Chair / Vice-président: Wayne Gates
Stan Cho, Wayne Gates
Randy Hillier, Andrea Khanjin
Jane McKenna, Judith Monteith-Farrell
Lindsey Park, Michael Parsa
Randy Pettapiece, Peter Tabuns
Effie J. Triantafilopoulos
Committee Clerk / Greffier: Julia Douglas

Standing Committee on Finance and Economic Affairs / Comité permanent des finances et des affaires économiques

Chair / Président: Amarjot Sandhu
Vice-Chair / Vice-président: Jeremy Roberts
Ian Arthur, Sol Mamakwa
David Piccini, Kaleed Rasheed
Jeremy Roberts, Amarjot Sandhu
Sandy Shaw, Donna Skelly
Dave Smith
Committee Clerk / Greffière: Julia Douglas

Standing Committee on General Government / Comité permanent des affaires gouvernementales

Chair / Présidente: Goldie Ghamari
Vice-Chair / Vice-président: Daryl Kramp
Robert Bailey, Jessica Bell
Goldie Ghamari, Chris Glover
Mike Harris, Daryl Kramp
Sheref Sabawy, Amarjot Sandhu
Mike Schreiner, Jennifer (Jennie) Stevens
Daisy Wai
Committee Clerk / Greffière: Jocelyn McCauley

Standing Committee on Government Agencies / Comité permanent des organismes gouvernementaux

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Vice-Chair / Vice-président: Taras Natyshak
Will Bouma, Lorne Coe
Rudy Cuzzetto, Parm Gill
Taras Natyshak, Rick Nicholls
Marit Stiles, Vijay Thanigasalam
John Vanthof
Committee Clerk / Greffière: Jocelyn McCauley

Standing Committee on Justice Policy / Comité permanent de la justice

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Vice-Chair / Vice-présidente: Effie J. Triantafilopoulos
Roman Baber, Will Bouma
Lorne Coe, Parm Gill
Natalia Kusendova, Suze Morrison
Gurratan Singh, Effie J. Triantafilopoulos
Kevin Yarde
Committee Clerk / Greffier: Christopher Tyrell

Standing Committee on the Legislative Assembly / Comité permanent de l'Assemblée législative

Chair / Président: Kaleed Rasheed
Vice-Chair / Vice-président: Vijay Thanigasalam
Rima Berns-McGown, Michael Coteau
Faisal Hassan, Logan Kanapathi
Jim McDonell, Christina Maria Mitas
Sam Oosterhoff, Kaleed Rasheed
Sara Singh, Donna Skelly
Vijay Thanigasalam
Committee Clerk / Greffière: Valerie Quioc Lim

Standing Committee on Public Accounts / Comité permanent des comptes publics

Chair / Présidente: Catherine Fife
Vice-Chair / Vice-présidente: France Gélinas
Jill Andrew, Toby Barrett
Stan Cho, Stephen Crawford
Catherine Fife, John Fraser
Goldie Ghamari, France Gélinas
Norman Miller, Michael Parsa
Nina Tangri
Committee Clerk / Greffier: Christopher Tyrell

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Vice-Chair / Vice-président: Will Bouma
Deepak Anand, Toby Barrett
Will Bouma, Stephen Crawford
Mitzie Hunter, Laura Mae Lindo
Gila Martow, Paul Miller
Billy Pang, Dave Smith
Jamie West
Committee Clerk / Greffier: Eric Rennie

Standing Committee on Social Policy / Comité permanent de la politique sociale

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Vice-Chair / Vice-président: Aris Babikian
Aris Babikian, Jeff Burch
Amy Fee, Michael Gravelle
Joel Harden, Mike Harris
Christine Hogarth, Belinda C. Karahalios
Terence Kernaghan, Natalia Kusendova
Robin Martin
Committee Clerk / Greffier: Eric Rennie