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of Ontario



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Jeudi
28 novembre 2019

Speaker: Honourable Ted Arnott
Clerk: Todd Decker

Président : L'honorable Ted Arnott
Greffier : Todd Decker

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LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY
OF ONTARIO

Thursday 28 November 2019

ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE
DE L'ONTARIO

Jeudi 28 novembre 2019

The House met at 0900.

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

ORDERS OF THE DAY

TIME ALLOCATION

ATTRIBUTION DE TEMPS

Hon. Paul Calandra: I move that, pursuant to standing order 47 and notwithstanding any other standing order or special order of the House relating to Bill 116, An Act to enact the Mental Health and Addictions Centre of Excellence Act, 2019 and the Opioid Damages and Health Costs Recovery Act, 2019, when the bill is next called as a government order, the Speaker shall put every question necessary to dispose of the second reading stage of the bill without further debate or amendment; and

That at such time the bill shall be ordered referred to the Standing Committee on Social Policy; and

That the Clerk of the Committee, in consultation with the committee Chair, be authorized to arrange the following with regard to Bill 116:

—That the Standing Committee on Social Policy be authorized to meet on Friday, December 6, 2019, from 9 a.m. to 12 p.m. and 1 p.m. to 5 p.m. for the purpose of public hearings; and

—That the deadline for requests to appear be Wednesday, December 4, 2019, at 9 a.m.; and

—That the Clerk of the Committee provide a list of all interested presenters to each member of the subcommittee and their designate following the deadline for requests to appear by 10 a.m. on Wednesday, December 4, 2019; and

—That each member of the subcommittee or their designate provide the Clerk of the Committee with a prioritized list of presenters to be scheduled, chosen from the list of all interested presenters received by the Clerk by 11 a.m. on Wednesday, December 4, 2019; and

—That each witness will receive up to five minutes for their presentation followed by eight minutes divided equally amongst the recognized parties for questioning, and two minutes for the independent member; and

That the deadline for filing written submissions be Friday, December 6, 2019, at 5 p.m.; and

That the deadline for filing amendments to the bill with the Clerk of the Committee shall be Monday, December 9, 2019, at 12 p.m.; and

That the Standing Committee on Social Policy be authorized to meet on Tuesday, December 10, 2019, from

9 a.m. to 10:15 a.m. and from 2 p.m. to 9 p.m. for the purpose of clause-by-clause consideration of the bill; and

That on Tuesday, December 10, 2019, at 5 p.m. those amendments which have not yet been moved shall be deemed to have been moved, and the Chair of the committee shall interrupt the proceedings and shall, without further debate or amendment, put every question necessary to dispose of all remaining sections of the bill and any amendments thereto. At this time, the Chair shall allow one 20-minute waiting period pursuant to standing order 129(a); and

That the committee shall report the bill to the House no later than Wednesday, December 11, 2019. In the event that the committee fails to report the bill on that day, the bill shall be deemed passed by the committee and shall be deemed to be reported to and received by the House; and

That upon receiving the report of the Standing Committee on Social Policy, the Speaker shall put the question for adoption of the report forthwith, and at such time the bill shall be ordered for third reading, which order may be called that same day; and

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

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

That third reading debate be limited to two hours, with 50 minutes for the government, 50 minutes for the official opposition, and 20 minutes for the independents.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Mr. Calandra has moved government notice of motion number 74. Further debate.

Hon. Paul Calandra: I will be splitting my time with the member for Eglinton–Lawrence, Mr. Speaker, only just to briefly say that it's an important bill that we want to see brought forward as soon as possible, and I think the motion speaks to that.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): I recognize the member for Eglinton–Lawrence.

Mrs. Robin Martin: I thank the government House leader for splitting his time with me. We're introducing this act, as you know, An Act to enact the Mental Health and Addictions Centre of Excellence Act, 2019 and the Opioid Damages and Health Costs Recovery Act, 2019, to do two things, basically: establish a Mental Health and Addictions Centre of Excellence within Ontario Health, and support the province's participation in the national class action lawsuit that the British Columbia government launched last year against more than 40 opioid manufacturers and wholesalers.

This mental health centre of excellence would really help us by laying a strong foundation on which we can develop and implement our mental health and addictions strategy. We heard from everyone during the debate so far that, really, these things are not controversial. I think we were all in agreement that these are things we should do, and that's really why we feel it's necessary to move on now.

It's a simple act. It does two things—two things that I think everybody spoke in support of. It really is something that we feel it is time to move forward on. In fact, most of the submissions made by the members opposite discussed how they wanted to get on with other pressing matters in this area and others. So I think that we're all in agreement that it's something that we should move forward with as soon as possible. The next step would be to take it to committee, as the motion suggests. I'm certainly in favour of doing that.

I think we're all agreed. I know the member from Nickel Belt spoke passionately about how this, finally, was enacting part of the 2010 select committee on mental health's recommendations. To have this kind of a centre, an organizing hub—like Cancer Care Ontario does for cancer, we can do in the mental health area. I'm encouraging everyone to vote in support of this motion.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Further debate?

M. Gilles Bisson: J'ai besoin de dire que je ne suis pas fier ni content qu'on se trouve encore à cette Assemblée dans la situation de débattre une autre motion par le gouvernement qui fait le bâillon. Comme on dit, cette Assemblée est ici pour la raison d'être capable de représenter le public.

Quand on utilise le bâillon pour couper le débat dans les comités, où le public a une chance de venir nous parler, de se prononcer sur un projet de loi—ce qu'ils aiment, ce qu'ils n'aiment pas—le gouvernement dit : « Non, on va limiter l'habileté du public à venir à Queen's Park au comité législatif », premièrement. Et, deuxièmement, de nier le droit aux citoyens de l'Ontario à avoir le comité d'aller chez eux, dans les différentes régions de la province, sur un projet de loi tel que celui, je pense que c'est vraiment une faiblesse de la part du gouvernement qui décrit une manière d'attitude que le gouvernement a envers toute la question de démocratie et le rôle que le public doit jouer.

So donc, écoute, je comprends : il va y avoir des fois pour un gouvernement quand il va falloir rentrer le bâillon. Ça, je le comprends. S'il y a une grosse opposition sur un projet de loi idéologique, oui, en certains cas, l'opposition va essayer de frustrer le gouvernement, et le gouvernement a des outils pour les arrêter. Le bâillon, c'est un de ces outils-là. Mais quand le gouvernement le fait à toute occasion, sur tous les projets de loi, il faut se demander la question : c'est quoi qu'eux autres pensent de la démocratie et le rôle du public?

Moi, je pense que c'est une des raisons pourquoi le public se méfie des politiciens et se méfie de nos institutions. Si le public ne se voit pas dans les décisions qu'on fait ici et n'entend pas leurs mots, leurs pensées et

leurs vœux quand ça vient à ce qu'on fait ici, le public, à un point, dit : « Écoute, je ne suis plus intéressé. On ne va pas aller aux urnes pour voter; on ne va pas payer attention. Je vais faire autre affaire. » Je pense que ça, c'est une des grosses faiblesses de notre démocratie. Ce jour ici est un bon exemple de ça.

Si on regarde, madame la Présidente, le pourcentage du monde qui vient voter, il est à la baisse chaque élection. Déjà, c'est anormal d'avoir quelque 60 % de la population en total de voteurs dans les élections provinciales. On est rendu à 50 % et même moins que 50 % dans beaucoup des comtés à travers la province. Il faut se demander la question : pourquoi est-ce que le public n'est plus intéressé à suivre ce qui arrive à l'Assemblée législative et de participer aux élections? Ce n'est pas tout le problème, mais c'est une partie du problème.

As I was saying, Madam Speaker, it's no pleasure and I'm not happy to be able to stand yet again in this House and to speak on a time allocation motion on the part of the government in regard to this mental health act, the changes that they're making.

0910

As I was saying, and I'm just very quickly going to make the point, the government is not using time allocation as it was intended. Time allocation should be a tool that's very rarely used. I am of the view that if I was the government, I would not use time allocation as much as humanly possible because I think you have to allow the legislative process to work, to have proper debate in the Legislature, right?

There used to be a time in this House not that long ago, when I first started here, where some bills got very little debate because most of us agreed. We allowed those bills to either go from second to third reading or to go into committee. But those bills that were more contentious, or those bills that the public was interested in—we tended to stay in the House and talk a little bit more about it, and about what we liked and disliked about the bill. The really neat part about that process was the government used to actually listen and amend their legislation based on what some of their own members were saying and what the opposition was saying.

But the really important part, and what was really key, is governments used to allow the public to come before our committees in order to make presentations on the particular bill. And those committees used to travel quite frequently during the intersession, either in the summer or in the January-February period. Committees used to travel two weeks or three weeks at a time on a piece of legislation.

In this particular bill, it's one of those bills that we should travel. The member who got up just prior to me talked about how the opposition supports this bill. Yes, that's fine. But mental health is an issue that affects many, many people in our society. In all of our communities across Ontario there are people who are looking for support and help when it comes to dealing with their mental health issues. We see it in our constituency offices pretty well on a daily basis. There are a lot of people out there

who recognize there's a lot of work that has to be done yet in order to be able to deal effectively with how to treat mental health issues in a more effective way, because there's a cost to society if we don't do a good job.

It's a cost to employers as far as lost time and lost productivity. The system costs more money because when people with a mental health issue—let's say it becomes acute. Well, then it becomes very expensive to treat. It either becomes an addiction issue, or it becomes anger management issues—it becomes all kinds of issues that society has to pay for in other forms, either by way of policing, institutionalization or whatever it might be.

So I think there are a lot of people in Ontario who would like to speak to this particular bill and to talk about what they see as the strengths in this bill, and where they think that the bill could be made better. The government would be well served to engage with the public through the committee process in order to be able to have that happen.

I heard the government House leader and I heard the member talk about, "Oh, let's just get on with it. This is a great bill. Oh, wow, let's just do it—you know, we've just got to do this quickly." Legislation is not about passing things quickly. It's not like this is a War Measures Act. There are very few times when we're pushed to pass legislation quickly. In a case of an emergency that may be the case, but in the case of this particular legislation, governments of all stripes over the years have tried the best they can to deal with mental health issues and how to be able to deal with mental health issues in a more effective way.

This bill is another one of those tools that we are building in order to be able to get to a point where we do a better job. The government would be well served to allow that bill to go into committee in a natural way, allow the subcommittee to meet, and then the general committee to meet, and decide where the bill should travel, how long it should be out on the road, and to be able to give it proper time in clause-by-clause in order to be able to deal with how we can make the bill better.

We all have stories of dealing with mental health issues. My sister was schizophrenic. She's now deceased, but suffered. Her whole life was dealing with schizophrenia. What was bad for my sister Louise was that she not only had voices, she had visions, so when she would be off her meds, I'll tell you, life got really complicated for her. Many a time she was in harm's way when it came to how she treated herself, as a result of what the voices and visions were telling her. If there wasn't somebody around to make sure that she took her meds and she got proper treatment, she was in danger—not to other people, but she was in danger to herself. Luckily, my mum and my dad, at the time, and my brother and I were there to be able to help her many times to go through some of the difficult bumps on the road that she had to go through with her life. She lived a very productive and very successful life. She lived independently. She did great when she was on her meds and she was properly treated, but often she would fall off of her meds, she would not be properly treated and she would end up back in an institution in order to stabilize.

Louise was lucky: She had a family and she had an ACT team under the Canadian Mental Health Association that was there to help her. But we all see it in our constituency offices: that there are many people who don't know how to go to get help from the Canadian Mental Health Association or any other agency—or don't want the help, in many cases, because they don't think there's anything wrong. Those are the issues that we've got to get to. That's what a committee, properly constituted, going out on the road and talking to Ontarians across the province, would be able to do.

I just think it's a sad, sad day for democracy and a sad day for this Legislature and the people of Ontario when a government says, "The only way that we're going to pass legislation is by use of time allocation. Not only do we just time-allocate the bill quickly through the House"—that's one thing. All right. I've been around here a while. Having less time for me to speak is probably a gift to some of you, and maybe to some of my own people. I get that. But the voice of the public should never be shut out. The voice of the public has to be heard. At a time when people are cynical about politics, the Legislature and politicians, I think we need to pay special attention to making sure that we leave our ears open and listen to what the public is telling us when it comes to the work that we do here.

So time allocation on bills like this, I think, is totally unnecessary. That's why, again, we're going to vote against the time allocation—not because we don't think the bill has some merit, but because we do think the bill has some merit and that the bill should go to the public so that the public can have their say.

None of the newer members who have been just elected in the last 10 or 15 years have really seen how committees can function. It used to be that the committees were where everything happened. We did very little in this House when I first got here in 1990. We used to do most of our work in committee. A bill would come to the House, it would be debated—not for an infinite amount of time. It wasn't time-allocated. The House leaders would work out an arrangement by way of negotiations about what it was that members on each side of the committee wanted when it came to dealing with bills. But then the committees were struck and did the work that they were tasked to do. And I'll tell you, Madam Speaker: Members took that job seriously, on all sides of the House.

I remember dealing with plenty of bills when I first got here: everything from mental health to municipal zoning to forestry and mining issues—all kinds of stuff—where I sat on committee in order to deal with the, back then, government legislation, which I was a member of. Members would go to committee from both the government side and the opposition side, and they took their job seriously. They would listen to what the public had to say. They would put forward the arguments to us—at that time, the government—in committee about why it was that the bill had to be changed. And we listened. We didn't change everything that the opposition wanted, because sometimes we didn't agree, and that's fair. But we listened, and many a time, bills were changed.

It was pretty well all of the time—it wasn't most of the time; it was all of the time—that you would go out and you would do a couple of weeks of hearings, you would hear what the public had to say, you would come back and there would be amendment packages coming in from the opposition and the government that were the thickness of a book. A lot of those amendments were adopted. Just because it said “Liberal” or “Conservative” on the amendment, we didn't care, as a government. If it was a good idea, you put it in the bill. You're going to get credit for it anyway. This is what the government is missing here: If you do a good job and you listen to the public and, yes, listen to the opposition, and you adopt some of those amendments, at the end of the day you're going to benefit. It's not so much the opposition that wins the reward; it's the government, because the government of the day is the one who ultimately is responsible for passing the legislation. They get the credit, so why wouldn't a government want legislation to go to committees so that you're able to do a better job on the bill?

I'm going to hear from the other side, “Oh, yeah, but you know, the opposition is just being dilatorious. They're really not interested.” Popycock. There's not a member in this House, on any side of the House, who doesn't care about what they're doing. Every member is an honourable member. We put forward our ideas and we put forward our arguments for reasons of who we are, where we come from, what our life experiences are, and what we're trying to do to represent our constituents. And, yes, there's differences of opinion, absolutely. The government says, “We want to do A,” and we say, “Well, we think that A maybe shouldn't happen” or “It should be amended.” And that's fair. That's what this place is all about.

0920

We still have a monarchy, but we got rid of the role of kings and queens to be absolute rulers for a reason: because the public said, “Listen, this doesn't work for us. The king and queen decide what they want to do. Then they just do what they have to do and they have no consequence for us.” Well, we've evolved into a modern democracy, a responsible government, where the Legislatures or the House of Commons in Canada decide the public business by way of regulation and by way of legislation. But there has to be accountability, Madam Speaker. There has to be transparency.

There's got to be a way that the public can look into what we're doing, not just by watching us on TV when we have debates, but, quite frankly, that they are able to come and participate at committee. I'll tell you, the public reacts well when we do that. I remember when we used to travel bills of all types. I can tell you that I very seldom remember going out on the road for committee work where we didn't have people who showed up. We often had to turn people away.

I remember the Adams mine fight. When we were government, that was just starting up. We had introduced a bill that would ban the use of the Adams mine to have garbage brought in from the city of Toronto. Well, there were people in Timiskaming who wanted that garbage. I didn't

agree with them. A lot of people in this House still don't agree with them. But they had the right to come and be heard, and when we introduced our legislation banning the shipping of garbage, the people who were in favour of the Adams mine project showed up in droves to the committee and made their arguments, in a passionate way, why they thought it was a good idea. We gave them their day as a government. We said, “Bring 'em on. Let them say what they have to say. Let them express what they have to express.” It helped the debate. It helped to bring the community together, to come to some sort of understanding about what this project was all about.

Eventually, what that did was that it actually built a stronger coalition against having garbage from Toronto being sent into the Adams mine. The proof of that is the fight that happened afterwards, when the Harris government came into power and changed the legislation that the NDP had put in place in order to allow the garbage to go north. The people in Timiskaming, by a majority, organized against that, and people like my good friend John Vanthof, the member for Timiskaming–Cochrane, was one of the key organizers in the farm community, which was one of the leaders of the people against the Adams mine project. One of the reasons that John is with us today as a member is that experience that he went through with the Adams mine fight, as we call it.

Charlie Angus was the other. I don't think Charlie was even an MP at the time when it started, but a lot of people got their start—or not their start, but their itch to want to do more and to serve the public—as a result of that whole process. So allowing the public to come to committee to be able to present on the issues that matter to them, one way or another, is a bonus for the government. It's something that allows the government to say, “Hey, look what we've got here for you. We have this legislation. What do you think about it?”

In this particular case, you're going to have people who are going to like this bill, and that's fine. But we should be listening to the public and saying, “What is it that we can do to make it better?” Because if the government thinks it has a monopoly on what they think should be done around mental health, well, then they don't understand the mental health file, quite frankly. Nobody in this Legislature, myself included, knows exactly what to do when it comes to dealing with mental health effectively. It's a very complex, very involved system, where it ain't exactly easy.

We all get it. I was talking to my staff just the other day where we had a particular constituent who had an issue. I'll just say “an issue,” and I won't say anything else or talk about the issue. I don't want to divulge who this person is. She had a problem, and the problem was caused by some decisions she had made. She asked us to try to walk back the problem that she had, to get a solution. So I contacted the people responsible, and they were prepared to walk back what was going to happen that was going to affect her. There were conditions. The person said, “Okay, as long as this constituent agrees to one, two and three.” She refused. It's a mental health issue, right? As a result, she's going to be affected in a negative way.

I think we need to provide support to people so that they can live a more productive and more full life and be able to cope with everything that happens when it comes to the complexity of our lives.

Imagine what people are having to face in all of our communities. We're lucky: Most of us went to school. Most of us were successful in some way. Most of us have got a few bucks. Most of us have pretty good families, where we have a good support network around us. It's easier for you and I, Madam Speaker, to be able to navigate our way through life because of our circumstance and our sheer luck of being born in the families that we were born into. But in some cases, people were not so lucky, or it's just a simple matter of mental health issues, like my sister.

You need to be able to make sure that you build a system that's robust enough to allow people to find their way into trying to seek help and, once they've made contact, that help could actually be delivered in a way that helps respond to the person's issue or crisis of the day. But time-allocating this bill is not going to accomplish that.

I know that the government, especially new members here—and I don't mean this in a condescending way; please understand. I was a new member. I did a lot of silly things when I first got elected here too—and I don't mean that in a negative way. But I know that the government members are being told, "Oh, yeah, well, we've got to get on. We have our agenda. We were elected. We've got to get all of this done now." That's not why you were elected. That's not why you were sent here. You weren't sent here just because you ran under the particular Conservative, NDP or Liberal banner that you ran under. You're here now because you represent your constituents, and your constituents want to know that they're being heard.

When government members—and I was one of them. Listen, I did this too. I'm speaking from experience here, so I'm not trying to be holier-than-thou. Brand new government members—and I was a brand new government member when I first got here—say, "Yeah, yeah. We won the election. We have the right to do this. We've got to do it. The opposition is in the way. Yeah, yeah." We get all hyped up. Then after a while, you start to realize: "Hang on. I'm just being wound up by my own people here." Maybe what we need to do is show some independence as members and say, "No, we're not going to allow that to happen."

Should the government get their bill? All the time. There's no rule in the Legislature today that prevents the government from passing any bill that it wants, right? Should the government get its way? Absolutely. You won the election. You have a majority. The people have spoken. We do not have a right, as the opposition, to stop the government from being able to govern. But you have a responsibility, also, to listen to the public and the opposition about how you can do better with what you're proposing. Time allocation is not the way to get there.

Again, you know that I'm no fan of time allocation, but I understand how it worked its way into our rules. There are extreme cases where government may have to use time

allocation. If the government is trying to pass their budget, for example, and is at a complete impasse, and all of a sudden we're in a position where the bills aren't going to get paid, well, the government has to act, right? There are reasons why we have closure, and there are reasons why we have time allocation. I don't like them, but I understand why they're there. But this is not such a bill.

At this point, over 95% of all bills passed in this House have been passed by way of time allocation. That's a bad record. It used to be an extreme, extreme case when government would use closure before the days of time allocation. Closure was hardly ever used, and if it was used, the threshold was a lot higher.

I'm trying to remember—and I may be wrong, and the Clerks might want to correct me—but when I first got here, the test to call the question on a debate was nowhere near seven or eight hours. It was more like 20 hours or 25 hours, because members had to have the opportunity—the Speaker had to say to himself or herself: "Is there anything new being said? Are there other members who want to talk? Is there some value or input to be given into the debate?" If the Speaker decided, "Yes, there is," the Speaker would refuse the question being called.

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I remember being a member of government when we tried to call the question on a couple of occasions. I remember on a agricultural bill, the Speaker—it was our own Speaker; it was an NDP Speaker—looked around, saw there were people ready to speak; they were bringing forward new ideas on the legislation. The Speaker said, "No, let the debate continue." The test was very high when it came to the question being called.

Again, it goes back to what Parliament is all about. We've got to remember, Parliament is not something that just popped up yesterday. The British parliamentary system has been developed over a period of hundreds of years. It goes back all the way to Runnymede, when they first met as a group of people trying to influence the decision of kings at that time. Over the years, more and more of the public has demanded, and the crown has ceded, the responsibility of governing to Parliament. It used to be a time with the monarchy that the monarch decided everything and Parliament was only there to rubber stamp. And if Parliament didn't do what the King wanted, guess what? The King would just dissolve Parliament and go off and do something else.

An interesting story about ship-money: I think it was King Charles—remember him? He was unfortunately the monarch who lost his head, as they might say, as a result of his actions. But the story is, he was in a war constantly with Parliament because Parliament was not voting him the money that he wanted for whatever he was doing. So he got mad and he dissolved Parliament for a long period of time. He had a lawyer he knew who was in his circle of confidants who had figured out that there was a law on the British books that allowed the King to go directly to the public to raise money for the navy. It was called ship-money. If you lived in a port city or nearby a port city, or if you were a key community in support of the business of

the navy—and as we know, the British navy was very big and powerful, and was really in the ascendant at that point—he had the right to levy the tax directly. It was called ship-money. So he bypassed Parliament altogether, I don't remember for how many years, but it was for quite a long time. He just kept on taxing by way of ship-money.

Eventually, they had the English Civil War, which is a whole other story, but when Parliament won the battle in the first part of the civil war, one of the things that Parliament did is they got the King to agree to give up the ability to tax people directly by way of ship-money. Again, it's a demonstration of how, over the years, the public has taken the responsibility of governing from the King and put it in the hands of the people through the House of Commons in Britain, and for us, the Ontario Legislature.

My worry about all of this, and why I raise King Charles and what happened by way of development of powers for the Legislature as a result of those actions, is we're now going full circle, Madam Speaker. We now have an executive where the Prime Minister, or the Premier, depending which Legislature you're in, has more and more power invested in their office than we've ever had before. One of the reasons for that is that members have given up their responsibility, to a certain extent, by toeing the line of the Premier's office.

Look at what happened in England when it came to Brexit. I think that was a declaration of how the British parliamentary system works. That nation is divided 50-50: "Shall we stay or shall we go?" And people are passionate on both sides. Parliament was hung on the decision, and rightfully so; so is the public. The Prime Minister just couldn't do what he wanted. In fact, he couldn't even call an election when he wanted because Parliament—the way that Parliament is set up in Britain—because of the circumstance Parliament needed a vote in the House in order to be able to get the writ. Eventually, the opposition ceded and allowed the election to happen; it's now going to happen on December 8, but my point is it's a testament to how Parliament actually works and does what it's supposed to do.

We are supposed to be a reflection of the people, and we need to be those people who are listening and acting—not always agreeing with what the public has to say, but at least listening and taking some action on what they have to say.

Where we've moved to now is that we have a Premier who now has more regulatory authority than we ever had, because we, as legislators, when we used to draft legislation, never, never used to allow regulatory power to sit in the hands of cabinet in the way that it does now. We would write the legislation specifically as to what we intended, as legislators, for the legislation to do. We didn't write in the legislation, "And all of this can be decided by regulation." But now you've got the cabinet, through the Premier, who can take a law, once passed, and pretty well change it to their will by way of regulation, which means to say it doesn't even come back here. How is that good for the public?

So we're kind of going full circle. We used to have kings and queens who made all the decisions, and we, the

public, just suffered the decision, to where now we've invested the power in the Office of the Premier, and the Premier is kind of acting as if he or she is the king or the queen. I think that's wrong. I think the way that Parliament was set up is to create a check and balance between the executive and the Parliament, and that the two institutions are somewhat separate. But unlike the republican system in the United States and in France and other places, we don't have checks and balances to the point that the governing party cannot pass its legislation. Of course, the government is going to support its government legislation whenever it is that they're trying to get things done, but you have to have a system that respects the public.

So I would just say that allowing the public to come forward to say something on this bill would be a good thing for the government, it would be a good thing for the institution of Parliament, and it would be a great thing for them. Because maybe, for once, they can start to see themselves in legislation. I know that some members on the other side say, "Oh, yeah, yeah. You're just saying that." No, actually, I'm not just saying that. It's how Parliament is supposed to work.

I would encourage people, if they ever have the time—and I know we're all busy, so where you get the time to read a book sometimes is a pretty taxing thing in our business. But take the time to go back and read some of the history on how Parliament has developed over the years. It will be a real eye-opener, because you'll begin to understand why the institution of Parliament is set up the way that it is and why we have certain rules. Right? It's about making sure that there is a check and balance between the executive and the Parliament—that, yes, they are related, but they are somewhat independent so that Parliament cannot be told what to do against its will, even if it's within their own party.

The British Parliament demonstrates that highly well, where you see, on a regular basis, members of the government just doing what they think is right as individuals or for their constituency, and entire blocs—in this case it was the Conservative governments; before that it was Labour governments—where members voted against their own governments on matters of principle. You saw that happen both under Labour and under Conservative governments in England. I think that was the strength of what the parliamentary system is.

So I would encourage the members to actually defeat this motion, to vote against time allocation and allow the committee to do its work. If the bill doesn't get passed until sometime in February, it's okay. If it doesn't get passed until sometime in February, it's going to be because we actually go out and listen to the public and design a better bill. So I encourage members of the House on all sides to vote against this time allocation motion.

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

Mr. Terence Kernaghan: I'm happy to be able to speak to the time allocation motion on Bill 116 today.

Democracy requires that there is due diligence, there is thought and there is consideration. From the very beginning, when we first were elected, the Minister of Health,

in talking about overdose prevention sites, was saying that we need to get this right, that this needed to be something that we considered.

We now see with this time allocation motion that there seems to be this rush to push this through, to not consider. Really, there are so many things that need to be included, so many things that have to be done, including, as the member from Timmins has mentioned, the importance of consultations, of listening to the public. If we take a look at our legislative roles, we are Ontario's official opposition: Her Majesty's loyal opposition. That is not simply something negative; that is simply another position that needs to be considered and taken into account when crafting legislation.

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So many people have shared their very personal and difficult stories when it comes to mental health within this chamber. But yet, the public has not had as much of an opportunity, through consultations, to indicate what we need to do as legislators to make sure that this legislation is crafted well. We really need to not have something such as time allocation. We need to go out and we need to listen to the public and consider what they would like to say.

Right now, when we take a look at this, we have such a patchwork health care system. Some parts of our bodies are covered by our health care; our minds, our eyes and our teeth are somehow all seen as separate. The World Health Organization recognized the flaw in the system when they stated, "There is no health without mental health." But that isn't how health care is treated within this province. We can see a doctor about a physical ailment with just our health card. Mental health services are costly and inaccessible and often hard to navigate. A staggering one third of Canadians struggling with mental health aren't able to obtain counselling services despite requesting them. It shouldn't be difficult for those experiencing a mental health crisis to get support, but it often is. Many Ontarians simply can't afford consistent and reliable access to counselling, and they therefore go without support during times they need it the most.

We need to do some serious work to end this patchwork health care model, as it ignores how important mental health is to our overall well-being. If we ignore our minds, we ignore our bodies. Our system is so dynamic, and it requires both pieces working together. People who are struggling with mental health—their sleep suffers, they lose energy and their cognitive functions begin to alter. It is such an incredibly important consideration, and yet, here we see legislation being pushed through with time allocation without the proper consideration. Has there been consultation with experts? I don't see it. The government has not yet been clear about who it has consulted, when it consulted and what the content was of those consultations.

One of the problems with Bill 116 is that neither schedule in the bill establishes policies, funding or resources that impact front-line services to support mental health and addiction issues. That is entirely problematic.

What we would need to see from this is consultation with families and consultation with people who have been

affected by the opioid crisis. There are so many people across this province who have had their lives completely interrupted and sometimes destroyed by the loss of a family member through addictions and through mental health.

What is also problematic—and this is why we don't understand the time allocation motion—is that, if you look at Bill 116, there's no requirement for the government to redirect the compensation from a lawsuit that they're proposing with the pharmaceutical companies. That money is not necessarily going to go to front-line services to deal with this opioid crisis. That's entirely problematic. Where is the money going to go?

Furthermore, suing those opioid manufacturers and pharmaceutical companies doesn't necessarily solve the problem. Within Ontario, the problem with the drug crisis is that there are illicit drugs that are causing poisonings, overdoses and deaths, so a safe supply is really something that we should be looking at.

There seems to be a double standard in our health care system within Ontario which we need to address. You can see a doctor about having type 2 diabetes just by presenting your health card. Nobody would bat an eye if you wanted to take time off of work if you're dealing with a heart condition. Yet our attitude towards mental health is exactly the opposite, and it's even worse when we consider addiction. You can't access mental health services just by showing your health card. Most Ontarians have to rely on their benefits to access care. This legislation does not address that, and pushing it through with time allocation shows that this government really hasn't listened to the needs of Ontario.

If this government wants to show that it's serious about tackling mental health, they need to do what front-line workers have repeatedly requested: Stop the cuts and actually invest in mental health services. Why are we pushing through this legislation? If you are in such a rush, then you should be showing that you are in a rush to deal with this by investing.

In my community, the overdose prevention site was such a political kickball, and still is. We started off this sitting of the Legislature with 21 approved sites. The government cut that back to 15. That doesn't show that the government is necessarily serious about dealing with this. Those six sites were defunded. Now there's talk that they can reapply and they may get funding, but if you're going to follow the BC NDP model, which is to adequately deal with and attack the opioid crisis, (1) you need to declare it a public health emergency, but (2) you also need to expand access, not limit and deny access. And so this time allocation motion is curious in that there seems to be this presentation as though there is a rush to get this done, and yet all of the actions prior have been absolutely to the contrary.

There are many organizations in this province that are already doing their utmost to provide mental health services to Ontarians, but they're dealing with extensive wait times due to a lack of provincial investment. Show that you are willing to do something by investing.

Rebecca Machado is the executive director of Daya Counselling, a charitable organization in London that provides thousands of hours of counselling to hundreds of Londoners each year. In particular, Daya offers free and sliding-scale counselling services in London to both couples and families who would not otherwise be able to afford these services. These services are so highly sought after that every Monday, Daya opens their phone lines to accept requests for these subsidized services, and almost every single week, without fail, the slots are filled within mere minutes. In fact, by 9:30 that morning, all the spots are filled. This is because there's a lack of provincial investment in mental health services.

Let's think about that for a moment. If somebody calls after 9:30 in the morning, well, Speaker, they're invited to call back next week or are redirected to other programs that have similarly extensive wait-lists. Daya and other organizations like them are doing the best they can to help Ontarians deal with their mental health, but they also need a government that supports their efforts. The fact that services at Daya are at capacity mere minutes after they open for the day demonstrates how badly Ontarians need these services fully funded.

So we see time allocation, this rush to get this legislation through, but we don't see a rush to provide funding that Ontarians actually need. That's one of my main issues that we're dealing with in this bill today. I'm concerned that this bill and the time allocation on this bill don't establish policies or a funding model that will directly impact front-line services. It will also keep those front-line service providers from delivering mental health care. This bill needs to empower them. It needs to provide funding so they can not only maintain but expand their services and address the lengthy wait times that people have to deal with. Mental health is not something that we can delay, and, quite frankly, it's not something we can ignore.

Rebecca, if I may quote her, said that "If there is money to be spent, it would likely be better spent fully funding those services that exist but have long (or even closed) waiting lists, or by beginning to fund the community-based agencies that are already filling the gaps through charitably funded mental health and addictions support."

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The front-line workers and organizations that are already doing the work to provide Ontarians with mental health care deserve to be listened to and to have their efforts respected and funded by the government.

But I think there's a reason that this bill doesn't include any actual funding for mental health, and that's because the government has made significant cuts to mental health funding in this province. So we see time allocation on this bill, and it seems an empty gesture because of those cuts.

One of the first actions this government took was slashing \$330 million for mental health and addiction services. Ontario already needed greater investments in mental health, and yet the government cut the funding instead. There are an estimated 12,000 children in Ontario who are waiting up to 18 months for mental health treatment. This number represents a 63% increase for children visiting the ER for mental health issues than there were in 2006.

Instead of seeing this as the crisis in children's mental health that it is, this government actually went ahead with their cuts. Last May, the Financial Accountability Office actually found that the government cut \$69 million from the children and youth mental health program for the 2019-20 school year. This represents a 15% cut of the overall program, compared to last year's estimates.

If this government was serious about mental health, such as it is presenting by pushing this time allocation motion through, then we should see seriousness with funding. We should see that cut undone, that funding restored.

There's no reason our kids should be waiting in the ER for hours when going through a mental health crisis. That's the last thing someone in crisis should have to endure.

Cuts will not help Ontarians access mental health support faster. Simply put, only funding will. If the government wants to show their commitment to mental health, they need to reverse these cuts and put those funds back into front-line organizations. Let's see actions, not words.

If this government were to pursue real actions with funding, rather than time allocation motions such as we are discussing today, then we would be able to address one of the biggest problems within our province, one that we hear about at every single door we knock on, and that is hallway medicine.

When you think of that statistic and that number of 12,000 children waiting in the ER, it's frightening. It's unacceptable.

I think back to my days as a teacher. One of the reasons I entered politics is because of the lack of mental health supports that were available to students. You see, when a child would have an episode, we would hear over the PA system, "Code yellow." That was a cue to teachers to keep all their kids in the classroom; don't let them in the hallway. Then you'd hear screaming, cursing and yelling as the student who was having an episode was being withdrawn from school.

We can never blame that child who was having that episode because, clearly, they had a need that our society was not meeting. But you think about the impacts of that. You think about all the children who are stuck in their classrooms, not able to use the washroom, not able to get a drink of water, but also hearing someone who is suffering and who is in pain.

We talk about improving educational outcomes for students, but, really, we need to address their mental health needs. Otherwise, everyone is impacted.

We look at the rise of violence in our school systems as well—the pictures of educational assistants and teachers who are having to wear Kevlar bodysuits. This government should be addressing that, not pushing through a bill with time allocation when we consider that every single day, there are kids in the classroom who are witnessing violence—professionals, educators being attacked, having to wear shields so they're not spat upon. Can you imagine wearing a Kevlar suit in your classroom, as designated by your school board, such that your arms had to be in "this" position for your entire day, for your own protection? You

tell me that's an investment in mental health? That is something we need to be addressing, not pushing through legislation that isn't worth the paper it's printed upon.

I'd like to return to a couple of stories from my riding. In 2015, Alex Godfrey sought help from the Victoria Hospital during a severe mental health crisis. Alex expected to stay only a single night while she received care, but overcrowding meant that Alex had to spend four nights and five days in a windowless area while she waited to enter the hospital's mental health floor. It wasn't a nice and open room. It didn't have a bathroom and, as I said, it didn't have a window to look outside. In fact, Alex later said that she felt more like a little caged zoo animal, and that her stay definitely hindered her ability to heal. Here's someone who entered the hospital, and yet it actually set them back.

A similar situation happened to Dawn Warren when she sought mental health support. You see, she struggled with postpartum depression, something that a lot of mothers go through, and during this difficult time, she sought the assistance of health care professionals. She waited hours to be admitted and eventually was placed on a bed in an overflow area. Guess what, Speaker? It was just a hallway. She was stuck there for over 100 hours. Someone struggling with depression; a busy and bustling hallway; patients, doctors; no privacy, no bathroom—how are you supposed to get better?

With this bill, we see this push to send this legislation through at breakneck pace with time allocation, but there are still so many stories like these of people struggling. We need to see funding, not a rush for legislation.

It's been a short while since we've had this sitting of the Legislature. When we first ran for election, we knew what the issue was when we knocked on doors, and that was to deal with the hallway health care crisis. It hasn't changed. You go out and you knock on doors and people are still saying the same issues. We still receive calls—and I'm sure you do as well on the opposite side of the House—and letters from constituents who are suffering in hallways, people who don't have privacy and dignity in their hospitals. That's not because of the care they're receiving, it is because of funding. Quite frankly, it's because of the cuts to funding.

I also wanted to point out a couple of disparities between this legislation and the model which this government seems to be copying from BC, and some curious absences, ones that need to be included before we should even be considering time allocation.

The \$330 million that was cut from mental health and addiction services removed the arbitrary caps on overdose prevention sites. Those six sites that were cut? They should have their funding restored.

Also, I hear from constituents who have talked about, rather than taking opioids, having pain injections. Yet the government seems to want to cut funding for that. Here's a way in which people can adequately deal with their pain, and yet that's being taken away.

In addition to declaring this the public health emergency that it is, we also need to reconvene the provincial Opioid Emergency Task Force. If there's such a rush,

government, if there's such a crisis, such as time allocation would presume there is, then why are these actions not being taken?

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We have words on paper and then we have actions. Those two things do not seem to be meeting, and that is a great concern. We need to restore funding for mental health, making sure we are dealing with children and youth. And, Speaker, we need to make sure that this government is actually taking action rather than simply dealing with low-hanging fruit or words.

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

Ms. Peggy Sattler: Another day, another time allocation motion. We have certainly seen this movie before. Ever since the Legislature reconvened on October 28, this government has chosen to use the heavy hand of a time allocation motion to push through its agenda.

Speaker, as I have said on a number of occasions, of course the government has the right to move forward with its legislative agenda. But at the same time, every MPP in this chamber, as the voice of the people who elected us, also has the right to participate in debate on the legislative initiatives that are brought forward by the government. The people of this province have the right to participate in public input on legislative initiatives that are being brought forward.

I want to commend my colleague the member for London North Centre, who pointed out some of the challenges that we face in London. London has a unique set of challenges, perhaps, but every community across this province faces its own unique set of challenges.

Speaker, even if one agreed that time allocation is an appropriate mechanism for this government to use to push forward its agenda, there are some big concerns about the content of this specific time allocation motion, which allows a single day of public hearings right here in Toronto. There are people from London who may have a lot of insights, a lot of front-line experience, a lot of valuable suggestions and knowledge to share about our experience with the opioid crisis in London and our experience with mental health patients lining the hallways of the hospital, unable to access emergency care or community care. People from London may really want to participate in the public input process on this bill, but with a very short turnaround, with only one day of public hearings, and with those public hearings held in Toronto, it may simply be not possible for that to happen.

My colleague the member for Timmins spoke earlier. I can't imagine how difficult it would be for people from Timmins, the constituents he represents—who also have very unique challenges with mental health and addictions—to get down to Toronto to participate in these public hearings.

So, Speaker, we are, as my colleagues have said, going to be voting against this time allocation motion. We do not believe that time allocation is an appropriate tool for governments to use on a routine, regular—practically daily—basis to move their agenda through. The purpose of the Legislative Assembly, the reason that we are here, is to

work on behalf of the people we represent, to bring the priorities, the concerns and the ideas of the people that we represent to this assembly. A time allocation motion limits our ability to do that. It undermines our effectiveness as representatives of our communities.

That is why there should be a process of negotiation between the government and the official opposition and the independent members about how we're going to manage the business of the House. In some cases, it's very clear that there is a lot of consensus around legislation. In those cases, let's move the legislation forward; we can come to some kind of agreement about how we're going to proceed. But this government doesn't want to engage in those kinds of discussions. They've been very clear that they have no interest in approaching the work that we do in that way. They prefer to lay these time allocation motions on the table with very little turnaround for people to request to participate in the public input process.

Now, Speaker, I will say that at least there is a public input process for this particular piece of legislation, because we have several examples of bills that this government has introduced in previous sessions that skipped the public input process altogether: The time allocation motion moved the bill immediately from second reading to third reading without any opportunity for the public to participate, to offer ideas, to suggest amendments to strengthen legislation and was completely shut out of the process that this government chose to follow.

So we're going to be opposing the time allocation motion. We believe that the crisis in mental health in this province merits much more fulsome debate in this chamber.

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

Mr. Calandra has moved government notice of motion number 74, relating to the allocation of time on Bill 116, An Act to enact the Mental Health and Addictions Centre of Excellence Act, 2019 and the Opioid Damages and Health Costs Recovery Act, 2019.

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.

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

Vote deferred.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Jennifer K. French): Orders of the day? I recognize the government House leader.

Hon. Paul Calandra: No further business.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Jennifer K. French): There being no further business, this House stands in recess until 10:30 this morning.

The House recessed from 1008 to 1030.

INTRODUCTION OF VISITORS

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): I would ask the members to give me their attention for a moment.

We have, in the Speaker's gallery, the family of the late John Roxburgh Smith, MPP for Hamilton Mountain during the 28th, 29th and 30th Parliaments: his wife, Judith Smith; daughter Hayley Post and her husband, John; son Drew Smith and his wife, Elizabeth; son John Smith and his wife, Ashley; grandchildren Edwina, Hamish, Charlotte and Lucia; and many cherished family friends and other members of the family.

Also in the Speaker's gallery are David Warner, who was Speaker in the 35th Parliament and is currently the Chair of the Association of Former Parliamentarians; Jean-Marc Lalonde, MPP for Glengarry–Prescott–Russell during the 36th, 37th, 38th and 39th Parliaments; Annamarie Castrilli, MPP for Downsview during the 36th Parliament; Steve Gilchrist, who was MPP for Scarborough East during the 36th and 37th Parliaments; and Rosario Marchese, who was the MPP for Trinity–Spadina during the 35th, 36th, 37th, 38th, 39th and 40th Parliaments.

Please join me in welcoming our guests who are here with us today.

Applause.

Mr. Percy Hatfield: I'd like to welcome vice-president John Fairley from St. Clair College in Windsor, who is over in the east members' gallery this morning. Welcome to Queen's Park, John.

Hon. John Yakabuski: I'd like to welcome to the Legislature this morning friends of former Speaker Dr. Alvin Curling: Shazaad Mohammed, who is an ambassador of peace with the Universal Peace Federation under the United Nations; William Fong, vice-president of Masami Group; and Sacha Singh, president of D&S Re/Max Realty. Welcome to Queen's Park.

Ms. Jill Andrew: Good morning, Mr. Speaker. I'd like to welcome the Ontario Book Publishers Organization and all the groups that are part of this advocacy day today at Queen's Park. In particular, I'd like to give a shout-out to Lesley Steeve, editor-in-chief at Irwin Law. Welcome, Lesley.

Hon. Bill Walker: I'd like to welcome dear friends from the great riding of Bruce–Grey–Owen Sound: Sandra Johnson and her daughter, Pam Atchison.

Mr. Sam Oosterhoff: I have the great privilege of welcoming to the Legislature today two constituents, Ken Kohut and Siva Sivapalan, who will be here watching the proceedings. Welcome to the Legislature.

Ms. Peggy Sattler: I'm pleased to welcome Alayna Munce of Brick Books. She is a London West constituent and is visiting today with the Ontario Book Publishers Organization. Welcome to Queen's Park.

Miss Christina Maria Mitas: I'd like to welcome Kenny, one of the vice-presidents of my riding association in Scarborough Centre and a super amazing volunteer. Thanks for being here.

Hon. Ross Romano: I would like to echo the introduction this morning of the member from Windsor–Tecumseh and welcome and introduce John Fairley to the House today. He is vice-president of college communications and community relations and executive director at St. Clair College. Welcome, John.

Mr. David Piccini: I'd like to welcome my friend Natalie Montgomery to the Legislature, who I see is sitting in the gallery. Welcome to the people's House.

Miss Monique Taylor: It's my daily welcome to parents and advocates of people living with autism. Today with us we have Amanda Mooyer and Stacy Kennedy. Welcome back to Queen's Park—and a personal welcome to the family of John Smith. Welcome back to Queen's Park.

Mrs. Belinda C. Karahalios: Good morning. It's my pleasure to welcome some special visitors to the House today, the family of our wonderful page, Julian Bal, from the great riding of Cambridge: his mom, Cambridge family physician Sharon Bal; his father, a Cambridge dentist, George Bal; his 10-year-old sister, Vanessa Bal of Cambridge; and also his grandparents, Mr. and Mrs. Bal from Markham and Mr. and Mrs. Kular from Acton. Thank you for coming today, and welcome to the Ontario Legislature.

Hon. Christine Elliott: I'd like to welcome Chief Greg Sage of the Halton Region paramedic service, Chief Carrie Hassberger of the Rama First Nation paramedic service, Chief Mike Nolan of the Renfrew county paramedic service, and Neal Roberts of the Middlesex-London paramedic service. Welcome to Queen's Park.

Hon. Monte McNaughton: I too would like to welcome a good friend of mine, a good friend of ours, the chief of Middlesex-London EMS, Neal Roberts. Welcome to Queen's Park.

M^{me} France Gélinas: I have guests who are making their way in to the House. That includes Michael Perley, from the Ontario Campaign for Action on Tobacco; Dr. Atul Kapur, from Physicians for a Smoke-Free Canada; and Lubaba Gemma and Saadia Sarker, who are members of the Youth Health Action Network; as well as representatives from the Canadian Cancer Society, the Nurse Practitioners' Association of Ontario, the Association of Parents in Catholic Education, the Lung Association, the Ontario Nurses' Association, Asthma Canada, the Heart and Stroke Foundation and Alliance. Welcome to Queen's Park. They're here to support the Vaping is not for Kids bill. Thank you.

Mr. Billy Pang: I would like to welcome Holly Kent and members of the Ontario Book Publishers Organization to Queen's Park. They are having a book fair in room 228 today, and I encourage our colleagues to stop by and support the many great titles being produced in Ontario. Thank you.

Mrs. Robin Martin: I'd just like to welcome Conceivable Dreams. Natalie Montgomery and others from Conceivable Dreams are here and had a breakfast this morning and will be talking to legislators.

Also, I want to recognize and acknowledge the presence—but she's not here yet—of journalist, author, artist, super mother and super grandmother, my mother-in-law, Sally Martin.

JOHN ROXBURGH SMITH

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): I'm going to recognize the government House leader on a point of order.

Hon. Paul Calandra: Mr. Speaker, I believe you will find we have unanimous consent to recognize the former member of provincial Parliament from the riding of Hamilton Mountain, John Roxburgh Smith, with five minutes being allocated to the government, five minutes being allocated to the official opposition and five minutes being allotted to the independent members, with the independent members going first, followed by the NDP and, finally, by the government.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): The government House leader is seeking the unanimous consent of the House to do a tribute to former member John Roxburgh Smith. Agreed? Agreed.

I'm going to recognize the member for Guelph.

Mr. Mike Schreiner: I'll be splitting my time with the member from Ottawa South. I'm honoured to rise today to pay tribute to John Roxburgh Smith for his distinguished public service and contributions to our province, our country and his community. I welcome his wife, Judith Smith, his children, grandchildren, nieces, cousins, friends and many colleagues who are here today.

I appreciate the legacy that Mr. Smith leaves behind, accomplishments in service that include serving as MPP and cabinet minister in the Ontario Legislature, as an alderman in Hamilton, on boards and as a rector and archdeacon of St. George's Church in Hamilton.

I'm especially inspired by Mr. Smith's contributions to humanitarian service, in particular for his work in founding, with a group of friends, an organization that helped hundreds of Vietnamese refugees come to Canada. Mr. Smith's purposeful life of service is an inspiration to all of us.

I want to thank you, Mr. Smith, for your contributions to public life in this province and in this country. I especially want to thank your family for their support of your work and for sharing you with all Ontarians.

May you rest in peace, Mr. Smith, and may your legacy of public service and support for humanitarian causes endure.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Member for Ottawa South.

Mr. John Fraser: It's an honour to say a few words in tribute to John Roxburgh Smith, member of provincial Parliament, with many of his family and friends here. I asked David Warner, who we all know and who served with him briefly, "What was he like?" David said he was a quiet man and that he'd never heard anyone say a bad word about him. That's the first of three things I learned about John Roxburgh Smith: that it is possible to leave this place with the respect of all of your colleagues.

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The second thing that I learned is: Act on your conviction. I'm going to read a short article from the Toronto Star in 1975:

"Correctional Services Minister John Roxburgh Smith, a cabinet newcomer, has a background on paper at least that would qualify him as a maverick.

"In April 1971, he joined opposition members as a lone Progressive Conservative to vote in favour of providing

research money and independent staff for a committee to investigate post-secondary education spending.”

Earlier in 1968, he accused his government of neglecting teacher training.

Speaker, I kind of wish he was around today because we might be able to attract him over to this little corner of the Legislature. He did vote against his government in the 1973 budget because of the energy tax, so maybe my hopes are a little unfounded and he wouldn't be that comfortable over here.

As Minister of Corrections, he worked to expand the opportunities for community input and correctional staffing to be more inclusive of women and Indigenous communities.

The third thing I learned from John Roxburgh Smith is live your conviction. John Roxburgh Smith was a person of deep faith, an educator, a prize-winning gardener, a husband, a father, a grandfather. He created an organization to assist refugee Vietnamese boat people, the families coming from Vietnam to our country.

He was an ordained priest in the Reformed Episcopal Church. John Roxburgh Smith was guided by his faith in humanity. He served his community not just as an elected member here, but, afterwards, as a very active participant in the community he served.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): The member for Hamilton Mountain.

Miss Monique Taylor: It is an honour to rise today on behalf of my New Democratic colleagues to pay tribute to John Roxburgh Smith. I want to begin by extending a warm welcome to his loved ones who are here with us today: his beloved wife, Judy, his children, Hayley, Drew and John and their spouses, his four grandchildren, his niece, cousins and other guests who have joined us here today.

As you know, he was the MPP for my riding of Hamilton Mountain, and I know our community is eternally grateful for his years of commitment and service. John Smith truly believed in leading by example as a politician, as a community leader and as a father. He was a man who dedicated his life to the betterment of his community and to those around him, and he took his work very seriously.

When I spoke to his wife, Judy, she told me that he was always going full speed; there was always more for him to do. She told me that John always worked to help advance others, that it wasn't about him. It was about making sure other people had the opportunity to rise and reach their full potential. He was tirelessly driven to make his community and the people around him better. He would always try to figure out a way to make somebody rise through their own commitment. One of the things Judy told me that was very important to him was that what he did in this life was to make sure that when he left it, he left it a better place.

After his years as a Hamilton alderman and MPP, he found a new way to serve his community through his faith. He was very proud that he was ordained and was able to continue to serve others, and his service was also extended abroad through his work to help sponsor and settle Vietnamese refugees. Ultimately, he helped over 3,000

people build a new, safe and secure life in Canada—truly a wonderful legacy.

Judy also told me that, for John, the politics came second. He believed that we're all human and we're all in this together. Though sometimes we get caught up in the politics, when the rubber hits the road at the end of the day, we're all here to serve our community and to truly leave it better than we found it. He did that through passion and commitment and truly serving our community.

He knew that we had different ways on how we did this, different political views, but it truly came down to human rights at the end of it. She spoke to me about letters she received from the MPP who came after him, Mr. Brian Charlton, who took over Hamilton Mountain, and how pleased she was to hear from the Charltons, because, like they said, it didn't matter the politics and who beat who, at the end of the day, we were all here serving our community. It truly meant so much to Judy, and she was happy to share that with me.

He was a dedicated, compassionate public servant, and we can all learn so much from the life of John Smith. I think that's why it's important that we do these honourees here in the Legislature, to make sure it puts some human perspective back into the job that we do.

Thank you for sharing John with us for all of those years throughout his different services to our community. He was truly appreciated. We are grateful for his years of service—again, to humbly serve our community and to leave this place better than we found it. Thank you so much for all of his years of service.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): I'll next recognize the member for Flamborough—Glanbrook.

Ms. Donna Skelly: I'm honoured to rise today to speak about the life and legacy of John Roxburgh Smith. John Smith was a Progressive Conservative MPP who represented the riding of Hamilton Mountain in this Legislature for 10 years, from 1967 to 1977. He served in cabinet as Minister of Correctional Services and Minister of Government Services. He sat on the Immigration and Refugee Board of Canada. His family says his last political quest was to convince the provincial government to replace the statue of Chief Tecumseh in the lobby here at Queen's Park.

John stepped into political life at an early age, serving as a Hamilton alderman during two different periods. He enjoyed political life, but helping people really was his true calling. During the exodus of refugees from Vietnam, John invited a group of friends to form a charity called the Mountain Fund to Help Save the Boat People. For 14 years, he worked tirelessly in helping Vietnamese refugees resettle in Canada. Under John's leadership, the group resettled 3,000 Vietnamese refugees. His wife, Judy, tells the story of the time that John insisted on driving to the Toronto airport in the middle of the night, during a snowstorm, to meet a refugee family that had just arrived. He told his wife, "They can't wait any longer. They have suffered enough." That was the heart of John Smith.

He was a man of faith, a man who lived his life according to his firm belief in the Christian gospel. After

leaving the political arena, John became an ordained minister. He told his friend Reverend Paul Luth that his years as an ordained minister were some of the most fulfilling of his life. He loved the ministry and poured himself into his work. While serving as rector and later as archdeacon at St. George's Church in Hamilton, John made it a point of knowing the name of every single person in the congregation. He had a way of making an instant connection with people.

In 2012, he was awarded the Queen's diamond jubilee medal, a medal to honour his significant contributions to his community. He was the founder of the Sir John A. Macdonald Society. He also served on the Ontario Horticultural Association executive and volunteered his summers to work among the Inuit in the Arctic.

People who knew him say John was a soft-spoken man, but he had a fierce and compassionate spirit for helping those in need. John passed away on December 6 last year at the age of 82. In the days before he died, a steady stream of people arrived at the intensive care unit at Hamilton General Hospital. The hospital waiting room was packed with refugees, some from as far away as California. They wanted to hold his hand and thank him for what he had done for them. The doctors were so moved by the outpouring of gratitude that they allowed the hundreds of visitors to stay.

When John would walk through Lime Ridge Mall in Hamilton, he would often be stopped by people whom he had helped over the years. His family would comment that he was famous for helping people.

John Smith adored his family. He was married to his wife, Judy, for 43 years, and together they raised three children and four grandchildren. His family and extended family members are sitting in the gallery here today. Please join me in welcoming his wife, Judy; daughter, Hayley; sons Drew and John; and their spouses, grandchildren and extended family and friends back to the Legislature where John served for a decade. You must be very proud.

Applause.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): I want to thank the member for their eloquent tributes in memory of John Roxburgh Smith's extraordinary life of faith and service. Once again, we thank his family and friends for joining us here this morning.

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ORAL QUESTIONS

CLIMATE CHANGE

Mr. Peter Tabuns: My question is to the Minister of Energy. This week the Minister of Energy justified his government's scrapping of clean energy contracts by quoting what he called his "favourite periodical", a climate change conspiracy website called Climate Change Dispatch. The minister seems to doubt climate science, and is now getting dubious facts from conspiracies he finds online.

The minister says he likes to consider both sides of the question. When it comes to the question of whether there is a climate crisis, does the energy minister believe there are two legitimate sides of the coin?

Hon. Greg Rickford: I certainly do believe in climate change. That's why I'm proud of the fact that Ontario is one of the cleanest energy jurisdictions on the continent: 92% of our energy system is GHG-emission-free, and more than 60% of it comes from a clean nuclear source, which the NDP do not support.

Let's be clear that this journey started 18 years ago. Then-Premier Harris issued a directive to phase out coal, starting with the Lakeview Generating Station. It took 14 years and other governments to complete that journey, but it was a major step in ensuring that Ontario would be one of the cleanest energy jurisdictions in North America and for the world to marvel at.

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

Mr. Peter Tabuns: Again to the Minister of Energy: In the face of a major new report that says the world needs to take bold action to tackle the climate crisis, the Ford government rejects the consensus of climate scientists that we are facing a human-caused climate crisis and clings to climate denial websites. The minister couldn't even answer a yes-or-no question from the media on whether he believes human activity is a significant contributor to climate change.

I'd like to give him another chance. Does the minister believe human activity is a significant contributor to climate change?

Hon. Greg Rickford: It's always interesting when an official opposition has to use the media to carry the big boxes for them. Isn't it interesting over the past week that they've had to quote big words that they had to check in the dictionary from a Toronto Star reporter, or a headline from the CBC which was a departure from the facts in the discussion that was had that day, Mr. Speaker?

Here's the truth: Ontario leads North America as one of the cleanest—as the cleanest energy jurisdiction. It's because we remained committed to a coal phase-out over the course of 18 years. It's because we believe in the people in the Durham region who every day go to work as a skilled workforce to ensure that we have world-class, safe nuclear energy to supply almost two thirds of this province with its energy. We remain committed to those kinds of investments, not projects that have made our system too complex, non-competitive and, more importantly for families, seniors and Indigenous communities across the province—

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

Mr. Peter Tabuns: Speaker, we all know what it means when a minister won't address the question. I think we all know that.

Denying the climate crisis, a human-caused climate crisis, would certainly explain many of this government's actions. The government ripped up clean energy contracts costing Ontarians at least \$231 million and spent millions

more on stickers on gas pumps that didn't even stick, and fighting a losing court battle against putting a price on pollution. The Ford government would clearly rather rip down windmills and stick up stickers than invest in the clean energy economy of Ontario's future.

I'd like to ask for a third time: Does the minister believe that human-caused climate change is real?

Hon. Greg Rickford: Climate change is real, Mr. Speaker. There's no dispute about that anywhere in this place; I'm pretty sure of that. The question is, how do we develop a clean, affordable energy system here in Ontario?

Here's how we don't do it, Mr. Speaker. In the 2015 annual report, the Auditor General concluded that ratepayers paid—wait for it—\$37 billion more than necessary from 2006 to 2014. The same hydro rates went up by 22%. She also determined that we'd spend an additional \$133 billion by 2032 due to the global adjustment electricity fees on hydro bills.

Do you want to talk about expensive and how we got there, Mr. Speaker? I'll tell you how we got there. There were votes in this place that made that system the most complex and expensive in the system, and that member voted for it every single time.

GOVERNMENT CONTRACTS

Mr. Peter Tabuns: I guess the answer to my last question was a no, so we'll go to my next.

For over a year, the Premier has insisted that scrapping clean energy would lead to a 12% reduction in hydro bills. Now the contracts have been scrapped and the price tag for scrapping them has gone from zero dollars—and I'm sure you remember, Speaker—to \$231 million. Can the minister tell families when they can expect their bills to go down?

Hon. Greg Rickford: Let's be clear on the cost savings from scrapping more than 750 of these projects: \$790 million in net present value. That's not accommodating for inflationary rates. That's not accommodating for the fact that this would, in fact, fortify a system that has become so complex and so expensive, it runs the risk of putting Ontario out of business, and families are spending too much more for their energy. We've taken the kinds of extraordinary steps—most of them from the Auditor General—to ensure that we have a path to reduce hydro rates in the province of Ontario, and it's coming soon.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Supplementary?

Mr. Peter Tabuns: Thank you, Speaker. I don't think he quite addressed the question there.

After one year of the Ford government, hydro bills are higher than they have ever been. In fact, they're climbing. The Ford government's strategy so far has consisted of meddling at Hydro One and tearing up contracts for renewable energy. That's made a lot of money for energy companies raking in hundreds of millions of dollars in compensation for bungled contracts, but families are still waiting for relief. Can the minister tell families when they can expect their bills to go down?

Hon. Greg Rickford: Mr. Speaker, it just occurred to me that the impact of the increase in hydro rates from 2009 to 2015, which ranged from 5.5% every year to 22% every year, fully endorsed by the member opposite in cahoots with the previous Liberal government—because it wasn't on the bill. You see, they didn't have to hide it. An inflationary rate this past November 1 we take very seriously, Mr. Speaker—and we've spent the last year making sure that we get rid of the things and pressures that have been on our system to make this one of the most complex and expensive there is.

But that member has never had to account for the fact that on November 1, 2015, he gave a ringing endorsement for a 22% increase to the ratepayers of Ontario. The people of Kenora, the people of Thunder Bay, the residents who live in Kiiwetinoong—you name the community, they paid way too much, and he voted—

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

The final supplementary.

Interjections.

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

Restart the clock. Member for Toronto–Danforth, final supplementary.

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Mr. Peter Tabuns: Well, thank you, Speaker. I think they're getting a bit touchy on that side.

Speaker, if the Premier's job was to make energy companies millions of dollars, he has done an amazingly good job. Let's face it: The US energy company Avista took home a \$103-million cancellation fee when the Premier bungled a deal with them. Renewable energy providers here in Ontario will be paid at least \$231 million not to generate electricity.

But families aren't getting a break. They're certainly not seeing a 12% reduction in their bills, as was promised.

Does the Ford government have any intention of delivering on their promise to reduce hydro bills by 12%?

Hon. Greg Rickford: We certainly do, Mr. Speaker. It started with an act that some might have deemed colloquial in nature, but it was the "clean up the hydro mess" act—the mess that was created by the previous government and supported 100% of the time by the official opposition.

No less than 90 communities across this province said that they were unwilling host communities to the Green Energy Act. I think that's grounds to repeal that act, if I'm not mistaken. That's exactly what we did, and we scrapped 750 projects that went with it, because they were going to continue to support the most complex and expensive energy system we have.

We are finally at a place where we have gotten rid of all the ridiculous things that were built into our energy system, baked into it. We're going to deliver on our promise to reduce hydro rates for major employers, small businesses, seniors, Indigenous communities and communities all across our great province.

RELIGIOUS FREEDOM

Ms. Sara Singh: My question is to the Premier. On Monday, the Legislature unanimously passed a motion calling on this government to communicate directly to the Premier of Quebec our opposition to Quebec's Bill 21. The Premier has a meeting face to face with Premier Legault, and there is an expectation from organizations such as the World Sikh Organization, the Toronto Board of Rabbis and the National Council of Canadian Muslims that this government will do what it says it will do and communicate Ontario's concern and opposition to Bill 21 directly to Premier Legault.

Yet the Premier is refusing to address this serious violation of basic human rights. Why, Premier?

Hon. Christine Elliott: Government House leader.

Hon. Paul Calandra: Mr. Speaker, I've addressed this on multiple occasions, both yesterday and in a speech to this House. We've reaffirmed on multiple occasions, both the Premier on behalf of the government and the members of this Legislature on behalf of all parliamentarians, that a bill like that has no place in the province of Ontario, and we would fight something like that.

I would encourage the members opposite to continue to do what we're doing, to work towards those things and focus on those things that unify the country, and help us do that.

At the same time, let's also talk about other things, like the economy. Let's work to build a better economy.

Mr. Speaker, again, finally, I think that we've been very clear on this. I appreciate the honourable member for bringing it up. But hopefully, we can move on from the politics of this and move towards doing what's right for the people of Canada.

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

Ms. Sara Singh: I think it's important that we acknowledge that this House indeed stood up and spoke out, but we are still waiting to have the Premier address and do what the motion calls on him to do.

This meeting is a chance to defend basic human rights in Ontario and across this country, Speaker. The Premier hasn't been shy about standing up for Alberta's equalization payments or for his opposition to pharmacare here in the country. Yet when it comes to basic human rights, he suddenly doesn't know where he stands, and can't stand up and speak out and say what he needs to. The Premier needs to show leadership on the national stage. Leaders don't sit silent when human rights are at stake.

Cabinet ministers stood proudly to announce their support for this motion. The Associate Minister of Small Business and Red Tape Reduction even tweeted out a video talking about his support. So why don't any of these cabinet ministers mention that they have no intention of actually doing what the motion says that it will do?

Hon. Paul Calandra: The easy thing would be for me to ramp up, but I'm not going to, Mr. Speaker.

The communities that the minister of small business and trade talked about, and the member from Milton, the

member for Eglinton–Lawrence, the education minister and the member for York Centre—these are all very important communities, not just to the government but to all members of the House.

I remind the honourable member that it was unanimous in this Parliament on the motion that was brought forward, not once but twice. The Premier has spoken often about this and has been extraordinarily clear—prior to the first motion, prior to the second motion, and since—that a bill like this would have no place in the province of Ontario.

TOURISM

Mr. Stephen Crawford: My question is for the Minister of Heritage, Sport, Tourism and Culture Industries. Visiting Ontario's museums, art galleries and attractions is a great experience, but it can be very expensive for lower- to middle-income families. I know within the ministry, there are several cultural assets like the Royal Ontario Museum, the Art Gallery of Ontario, the McMichael gallery, the Royal Botanical Gardens, the Ontario Science Centre in Toronto, Science North in Sudbury and the parks commission in Niagara. It would be great if the government could make these assets attainable for all Ontario families.

Can the minister inform this House how her ministry's assets support lower- and middle-income families so they can see the incredible works of art and history that this province has to offer?

Hon. Lisa MacLeod: I want to say thank you to the member from Oakville for that question. I know as a father of two daughters that are my daughter's age—it's really important that we continue to make the arts, the cultural history of our province, our museums and our historic sites accessible and attainable for every family in this wonderful province.

Now, he mentioned the AGO. I'm so very proud of the Art Gallery of Ontario. They offer free admission to all Indigenous peoples and they offer those 25 years of age and under free admission on every Wednesday evening. In addition, the Royal Ontario Museum, which I believe is one of the best-run museums in the world, offers free admission on the third Tuesday of each month from 5:30 to 8:30. They also offer the Daphne Cockwell Gallery, dedicated to First Peoples art and culture, free of charge for every Ontarian.

Speaker, I often say that we are the world in one province. We also have world-class facilities that every Ontario child deserves to see.

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

Mr. Stephen Crawford: Thank you, Minister. It's wonderful to hear that very positive news.

Ensuring all families have access to arts and culture and all our natural heritage is incredibly important. Since my constituents neither live in Toronto or near any of the other cultural assets, it can sometimes be difficult for them to take part in these free events.

In my community, we have the Oakville Museum, which recently told the story in an exhibit—“Preserving Peace: Souvenirs of Peacekeeping”—of Eva Martinez, the first female United Nations observer who spoke about her experience with the UN peacekeeping mission in Guatemala in 1997. The value of learning of experiences such as this are immeasurable and essential to instilling pride in our province and country.

Can the minister tell us what she is doing to support local museums like this, and help local families access these services?

Hon. Lisa MacLeod: It’s a very good question. I’m glad that he was able to tell this House about the wonderful work that they’re doing in Oakville at their museum.

Again, in our ministry, our goal is to build on and grow our spectacular double bottom line; that is, a \$71-billion economic imprint, but at the same time preserving and protecting our cultural history and our fabric. We do so within this ministry by investing directly into museums across Ontario to ensure that they continue to operate.

One of the things I’m most excited about, Speaker, that was in the fall economic statement is the fact that we are going to expand the Fun Pass to all museums, galleries and attractions throughout Ontario so that we can make local museums, local historic sites and local attractions free for children. We’ll have more details in the months ahead, but this is, I think, one of the most exciting things this government can be doing to make sure that we are offering the entire world in one province to every child that lives in our great communities.

EDUCATION FUNDING

Ms. Marit Stiles: My question is for the Minister of Education. Elementary and secondary teachers are continuing job action today, standing firm in defence of our public education system and against this government’s cuts. Teachers are standing up for students and their right to learn in a classroom that isn’t bursting at the seams. They’re standing up for parents who don’t want their kids left to fend for themselves with risky online courses, or to fall through the cracks as 10,000 caring adults and countless supports disappear from our schools.

As negotiations drag on, could the minister update the House on the status of those negotiations?

1110

Hon. Stephen Lecce: Thank you to the member opposite for the question. It is the position of this government that we want a deal, not a strike, to keep the children of this province in class. That’s why, this week, we’re meeting with OSSTF and ETFO, as well as with all teacher unions over the coming seven days, but the three major unions will be met with this week as part of our plan to negotiate in good faith, to provide predictability for parents.

What is regrettable through this experience, Mr. Speaker, is that irrespective of government and Premier and party, the one constant through this process every three years is that unions choose to escalate. My message

to them, and I hope the member opposite would agree with this premise: to cease from escalation, to stand with parents, to stay at the table and let’s get a deal that keeps the children of this province in class.

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

Ms. Marit Stiles: That’s exactly the kind of demonization of the workers we expect from this government, and it is not helpful.

The reason there’s no progress at the bargaining table is because there have been no real moves by the minister to stop his cuts. Only this government would try to spin eliminating 10,000 jobs to eliminating 6,000 jobs and massively increasing class sizes as some kind of reasonable move.

By now, it should be pretty darned clear to this minister and this government that Ontarians don’t support the elimination of those jobs, they don’t support mandatory online learning replacing in-person instruction, and they don’t support trading their children’s education for short-term savings. Will the minister listen, get back to work, stop the spin and reverse these terrible cuts to our classrooms?

Hon. Stephen Lecce: As I made clear, the Premier and this entire government are committed to getting a resolution, as we did with CUPE, that provides predictability for the families and the children of this province. However, what is telling is that when given the opportunity to affirm her support with parents against escalation, she and the leader of the New Democrats have said nothing, and that abdication of responsibility to say with clarity that they oppose escalation, they oppose their children being out of class—or, more importantly, having steps being taken to undermine their education—is in fact quite telling and regrettable.

My position, and the position of every member of this team, is to keep children in class through negotiated settlements that are good for teachers, good for students and good for parents in this province.

NORTHERN ONTARIO

Mr. Mike Harris: My question is for the Minister of Finance. Earlier this month, the minister delivered our government’s fall economic statement and, with it, our plan to build Ontario together. The minister outlined a plan to make life more affordable for Ontarians across the province. It’s a plan that also recognizes the unique challenges and opportunities in northern Ontario.

Could the minister please inform the House about the steps our government is taking to make life more affordable for families and individuals living in the north?

Hon. Rod Phillips: I thank the member from Kitchener–Conestoga. He represents his constituents well. Of course, he also grew up in the north, and so he appreciates the unique challenges and opportunities that face our citizens in the north. We understand that as a government. That is why, in our fall economic statement, we have put forward the proposal to reduce the cost of living in the

north by reducing the cost of aviation fuel, reducing the tax from 6.7 cents to 2.7 cents.

Mr. Speaker, what does that mean? I often talk about affordability not as grandiose gestures but tangible actions. That means reducing the cost of groceries for a family of four by \$230 a year or reducing the cost of air travel by \$135.

I'd ask our colleagues in the opposition, where the north is well represented, how they plan to vote—I know they voted twice against reducing the cost of living in the north, but how they plan to vote when this comes for a final vote in this Legislature.

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

Mr. Mike Harris: Thank you to the minister for his answer. The proposed aviation fuel tax cut makes it abundantly clear that this is a government committed to supporting northern Ontario. Our government is dedicated to making life more affordable for Ontarians across the province. No matter where you live, we want to put more money in your pocket and make it easier for families and individuals.

Could the minister please inform the House about what other steps this government is taking to improve affordability?

Hon. Rod Phillips: I thank the member for the question. The aviation fuel tax reduction will reduce the cost of living in Thunder Bay, Timmins, Sudbury and across the north, and that's important. Again, I ask the members across the Legislature to think about that.

But, Mr. Speaker, that's not all this government has done. We've also introduced our low-income tax credit so that 1.1 million Ontarians will see a reduction in their costs and, in fact, eliminates 580,000 Ontarians who make minimum wage from the tax rolls. Our low-income child care tax credit targets the families most in need and will reduce costs by an average of \$1,200 for those families in child care.

These are the specific actions we're taking. Again, not grandiose statements about making life affordable, but specific actions we're taking to make life more affordable. I ask all our colleagues in our House to support these kinds of important actions.

GOVERNMENT ACCOUNTABILITY

Mr. John Vanthof: My question is for the Premier. Today's Globe and Mail reports that Brad Blair, the decorated police veteran who was fired as acting OPP commissioner when he blew the whistle on the Premier's attempts to hire his friend, has launched a constitutional challenge against the government—specifically against Bill 100, the government's blatant attempt to place itself above the law and to make the Premier immune from lawsuits. Does the Ford government truly believe that their legislation is justifiable and constitutional?

Hon. Christine Elliott: To the Attorney General.

Hon. Doug Downey: It's interesting, because I know all members of the House understand the rules and how

things work. To ask me about a question that is in the courts is very difficult for me to respond to. So I look forward to the member's second question, which perhaps I can actually deal with.

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

Mr. John Vanthof: That actually was the point of the question. But if the Ford government genuinely thought this legislation was defensible, they wouldn't have buried it in an omnibus bill and rammed it through with only two days of hearings.

The former commissioner wasn't afraid to blow the whistle when the Premier tried to appoint his friend as OPP commissioner or when the Premier asked him to buy a van and keep it off the books, and he's not afraid to take on the Ford government now. Brad Blair shouldn't have to take this government to court to do the right thing. So a question that the Attorney General can answer is: How much money is the government willing to waste to drag this through the courts?

Hon. Doug Downey: I miss the member from Essex on these kinds of questions.

Again, it's matter of litigation. I can't address matters of litigation when they're proceeding. So I would love to have a dialogue, perhaps when litigation is completed, about whatever the process was or whatever perceived difficulties the member has, but for the moment, as a matter of litigation, I can't respond.

HUMAN TRAFFICKING

Mr. Sam Oosterhoff: My question is for the Associate Minister of Children and Women's Issues. Human trafficking is a serious issue happening across the globe and across our province. This summer, the minister visited my riding of Niagara West and held a round table with those impacted by human trafficking in our region, where it is a serious problem. It was shocking for me to hear about the realities of human trafficking in our province, and especially the reality of human trafficking happening in our local communities.

Did you know that the average age for recruitment is only 13 years old, and over 70% of human trafficking victims identified by police are under the age of 25? It is disgusting and completely unacceptable. Could the minister tell the House what she is doing to stop human trafficking in our province?

Hon. Jill Dunlop: Thank you to the member for Niagara West for the important question. First, I would like to thank and acknowledge the Minister of Infrastructure for all her advocacy on this file for the past five years. Her knowledge and activism have helped me personally as our government works to build a comprehensive anti-human trafficking strategy.

The member is right. Human trafficking is a crisis that is happening across the province, in all of our communities and at all levels of society. Victims are being lured by perpetrators who rob them of their safety and dignity and profit from their abuse. That is why, this morning, our

government announced that we are committing \$20 million per year to support survivors and to combat human trafficking. This is a first step as we develop a comprehensive anti-human trafficking strategy. Our goal is that everyone in this province can live safely and free from the threat, fear or experience of exploitation and violence.

1120

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

Mr. Sam Oosterhoff: I would like to thank the minister for her response and investment in such an important issue in our province. I would also like to congratulate the minister and the Solicitor General on co-developing and working together to build a new, stronger, cross-government strategy to raise awareness of these horrific crimes, ensure survivors get the supports they need, and that we hold offenders accountable. It's so important to have across-government work.

Human trafficking impacts so many aspects of a survivor's life, and this requires wraparound services. I know that at the round table that we did hold earlier this year, we heard from survivors who have been supported by local community organizations in my riding like Gillian's Place, the Niagara Sexual Assault Centre and even the Niagara Falls firefighters, but there is so much more to be done.

Could the minister tell the House exactly what this funding is for and what exactly our government is doing to support those who have been impacted by human trafficking?

Hon. Jill Dunlop: Thank you again to the member for that question. The funding announced this morning is part of a range of investments we have made to combat human trafficking, prevent and end violence against women, support victims of sexual violence and exploitation, and end gang-related activity. This announcement is a signal that we are taking immediate action on what we heard from stakeholders in our human trafficking round table discussions this summer—that there was a need for consistent and reliable funding.

This funding includes supports for culturally relevant services and care designed by and for Indigenous peoples within Ontario. It also includes support for projects that offer wraparound services to those being trafficked and increased protection for people at risk of being trafficked.

As we continue to develop a new anti-human trafficking strategy, we all need to work together. This means working across sectors, across jurisdictions and across the aisle, so we can raise awareness, help survivors and—

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

Next question.

ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION

Ms. Sandy Shaw: My question this morning is for the Premier. Yesterday, the Minister of the Environment shifted blame from his ministry and denied any responsibility for informing Hamiltonians of a massive sewage spill his own ministry has been investigating for some

time. The minister's own officials have known of the spill since the spring of 2018, if not earlier than that, and yet his ministry chose not to tell Hamiltonians or their watershed neighbours like Burlington. They didn't tell them about what the potential for contamination could mean for the health of citizens and for our environment.

To the minister: If Hamilton has "failed its citizens," what does it say about this government that knew about this spill and said basically, "Oh, well. Not my job to tell anyone"?

Hon. Christine Elliott: Minister of the Environment.

Hon. Jeff Yurek: Thanks very much to the member opposite. We've been working with public health down there, the municipality and the conservation authority, to deal with this issue. But under the current system, the onus of municipalities, local health authorities and conservation authorities is to notify the public of these health and safety matters.

While the city complied with the intent of the ministry orders, we think more should have been done to fulfill the responsibility. Mr. Speaker, we're going to take action on that. It's part of our Made-in-Ontario Environment Plan, which is a year old tomorrow. In this plan, which continues to evolve and make Ontario a better place to live, we're going to transfer into a system that delivers online notification to people living across Ontario so that any sewage spills or any event such as that going on, they will be able to go online and get real-time data to ensure that they're informed of what's going on.

Again, I reiterate: The city council of Hamilton let their people down. Hopefully they learn from their errors, move on and become more open and transparent to the people of Hamilton.

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

Ms. Sandy Shaw: That's all well and good, but I believe the ministry has the discretion to make sure that Hamiltonians were informed, and you chose not to use that discretionary power.

Obviously, Ontarians deserve transparency when it comes to the contamination of our ecosystems, especially when that contamination could affect our water supply. Families walk their dogs by rivers and creeks and they let their kids play in ponds. They deserve to know what could be lurking.

We now know the Ministry of the Environment has known about the massive sewage spill for some time in Hamilton. My question again to the minister—the people of Hamilton and the people of Ontario deserve to know what's in our water. How many other spills and leaks is the ministry currently waiting for someone else to report?

Hon. Jeff Yurek: Thanks again for the question. Other jurisdictions are informing their people if there are spillages of sewage or not. Unfortunately, the city of Hamilton decided not to be fully open to the people of the city. It's unfortunate that that council failed its residents.

But whether or not the member opposite wants to make up certain rules and regulations, the onus to report today, in any type of system, is on the municipalities. We are

working, as the Ministry of the Environment, to ensure that the cleanup is happening and that the water and the resources are returned to the best state possible. We are making changes to the system, for online, real-time data to be available to all residents of Ontario for any source of sewage contamination.

We are going to continue to work and ensure that system is up and going. Our main environmental plan will start dealing with waste water treatment. We are going to make Ontario a better place to live in as we protect our land, air and sea, and make a healthy economy and a healthy environment.

LEGISLATIVE REFORM

Mr. Mike Harris: My question is for the government House leader. Yesterday, the government House leader introduced a package of changes to the standing orders. The NDP claims that these proposed changes will allow our government to ram through legislation and pass a bill in a single day.

Would the government House leader please explain if the proposed changes to the standing orders really limit debate, as the NDP claims?

Hon. Paul Calandra: Let me congratulate the member for Kitchener–Conestoga. He has been a wealth of knowledge over the summer as we've been consulting on potential changes to the standing orders. He has been a very fierce advocate for improving debate and the ability for members across the aisle to engage in more fulsome debate. So I thank him for that.

Mr. Speaker, let me assure the member—because I know this is important to the member. But let me assure the member and all members of the House that in fact, the changes that are being proposed to the standing orders in no way impact or have given this government more tools to pass a bill in one day. In fact, we've added the following standing order, 47(d), which says: “A bill, and a time allocation motion applying to that same bill, may not be considered on the same ... day.” We of course have not removed the ability for the opposition to provide reasoned amendments, which would also allow them to delay the passage of legislation.

Part of the problem, I suspect, is that the NDP withdrew from the process—

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

The supplementary question.

Mr. Mike Harris: Thank you to the government House leader for those kind words and clearing up what we're here to talk about today.

If the NDP indicated that they did not want to support the proposed changes, I assume that would also mean that they don't support the accommodation of members with disabilities. I find that quite outstanding.

Would the government House leader please explain what consultation process went into these proposals?

Hon. Paul Calandra: Thank you very much for the question. The member raises a very important point, because early on in the process, we talked a lot about which

standing orders we could modernize. In the standing order changes, we did make a proposal that members with a disability would not have to ask for unanimous consent in order to participate in the daily operations of the House. We made some changes with respect to cellphones and laptops. I'm sure if you look around the chamber—most members have laptops and phones on their desks.

We reached out in early October and said to the opposition, “What are the things that we can agree upon? Let's put those on the table. Let's pass those”—like those I was talking about with respect to members with disabilities—“and let's debate the rest of it.” The NDP chose at that point to withdraw from the discussions, unfortunately.

I am encouraged that both the Liberal Party and the Green Party have continued to participate. I think the standing orders will reflect improved opportunity for debate across both sides of the House.

WINTER HIGHWAY MAINTENANCE

Mr. Guy Bourgouin: Ma question est pour le premier ministre. Yesterday it snowed again in northern Ontario, and once again the province's response was to close Highways 11 and 17. Once again, northern Ontario families were cut off, and once again, the movement of goods throughout northern Ontario came to a halt.

The government officially treats Highways 11 and 17 in northern Ontario as class 2—literally second-class. This means the province thinks it's okay that northern Ontario drivers must wait longer for their highways to be cleared.

1130

Why does this Premier think that northern Ontario families deserve second-class safety and services?

Hon. Christine Elliott: Minister of Transportation.

Hon. Caroline Mulroney: I'm happy to rise in the House to answer this question yet again. And I will do it every single day because I'm sure that every day in the north it will snow and the Ministry of Transportation will work closely with the OPP to make sure that we are taking steps to ensure the safety of our motorists in the north.

I'm sure, Mr. Speaker, that the member opposite would not want to subject our motorists to unsafe driving conditions. That's what we work on and that's what we're focused on at the Ministry of Transportation. I'm happy to report, as I have already in this House, that we exceed our safety standards and our snowplowing standards on Highway 11 and Highway 17. They exceed the standards that we expect for our class 1 highways.

We will continue, Mr. Speaker, to find ways to exceed those standards and to continue to do better, because on this side of the House we are focused on the safety of the motorists of the north.

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

Mr. Guy Bourgouin: The answer to snow, Madam Minister, is more plows.

Earlier this month, this government voted down my bill to apply the same snow clearance standards to northern Highways 11 and 17 as to the 400-series highways in the

south. The government voted to keep northern Ontario as second class. The member for Nipissing said that second-class status for the north was fine by him. This week, northern Ontario families are seeing this second-class status for themselves with repeated highway closures.

The answer to snow is not to close northern highways; the answer is to run more plows. Will the Premier listen to northern Ontario families and stop this second-class treatment?

Hon. Caroline Mulroney: I'm very pleased to say that our government has taken concrete steps to improve the lives of people living in northern Ontario. But instead of supporting our initiatives that help the people living in northern Ontario, the NDP decided to vote against it and to play politics. In this year's budget, Mr. Speaker, our government reaffirmed our commitment. The four-laning of Highway 69 and Highway 11 and Highway 17 in the north, including stretches between Kenora and the Manitoba border; the creation of a mining working group that's going to focus on attracting investment to northern Ontario: The opposition voted against those initiatives. But that's not just it; they're voting against the Ontario Seniors Dental Care Program, they're voting against the child care tax credit and they're voting against the Low-income Individuals and Families Tax Credit. They're also voting against the aviation fuel tax credit, which will make the life of people living in the north—

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

Interjections.

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

Start the clock. The next question.

MENTAL HEALTH AND ADDICTION SERVICES

Mr. Stan Cho: My question is for our province's first Associate Minister of Mental Health and Addictions. Mental health and addictions affect people and families in all of our communities across this great province each and every year. No matter where in Ontario, we know that each year 2.5 million Ontarians—that's one in five, Mr. Speaker—will experience a mental health or addiction challenge. And for many living in northern Ontario, especially those in our Indigenous communities, there's next to no mental health and addiction support.

I know that our government recognizes that we must do more. Would the minister please explain what this government is doing to address mental health and addiction in northern Ontario?

Hon. Michael A. Tibollo: I want to thank the member from Willowdale for his excellent and important question.

I recently travelled throughout northern Ontario, visiting many of the remote communities that provided me with an understanding of the mental health and addiction challenges faced by many Ontarians living in rural and remote communities each and every day. My travels took me from Thunder Bay to Sioux Lookout and all the way

to remote Indigenous communities such as Pikangikum and Sandy Lake.

During my travels, I met with a number of Indigenous leaders, community organizations and first responders, who continue to work with populations who were continually neglected by previous governments. I heard from the people with lived experience in these communities.

Our government remains committed to taking real action to ensure that Ontarians in the north receive access to high-quality mental health and addiction services where and when they need them.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Supplementary?

Mr. Stan Cho: I am proud to stand here in this Legislature knowing that our government is making mental health and addictions a top priority.

I'm also proud that our government is continuing to deliver real action to address the mental health and addiction crisis in northern Ontario.

I'm also pleased to hear that the minister has taken the time to meet with Indigenous partners and front-line workers throughout the north. I know that these first-hand experiences will inform much of the work that we are doing to address the gaps in our mental health and addiction system.

Speaker, would the minister please provide this House with more detail on the mental health and addiction supports being provided for those incredible citizens in northern Ontario?

Hon. Michael A. Tibollo: Again, I want to thank the member for that question. Since the very beginning, our government has remained committed to investing \$3.8 billion over 10 years to build a comprehensive, connected and integrated mental health and addiction system, underpinned by our mental health and addiction strategy, which we look forward to unveiling in the coming months.

Our government will continue working hard to ensure that Ontarians in the north are able to access quality mental health and addiction services, no matter where they live in the province.

On top of the \$19.9 million we have invested in consumption and treatment service sites this year, we will also make investments in the north that will generate positive impacts in northern communities. This year, we have invested over \$33 million in opioid addiction treatment services, funding that has and will continue to go to service providers in regions across northern Ontario.

PHARMACARE

Mrs. Jennifer (Jennie) Stevens: My question is to the Acting Premier. Today in St. Catharines, I have a resident, Jared Wayland, who suffers from spinal muscular atrophy, a degenerative disease that requires a drug called Spinraza. Jared is over 18 years old, which means he has to cover the full cost of the life-saving drug. He simply cannot afford to pay upwards of \$700,000 per dose.

Back in June, the health minister committed to reviewing coverage on a case-by-case basis through the Exceptional Access Program for people who are too old for automatic coverage. However, despite fulfilling all the

requirements for exceptional coverage, Jared has been waiting for months to hear back from the ministry.

Does the Premier think it is fair to make young people like Jared hope and pray they'll receive approval of this because of an arbitrary age restriction established by this government?

Hon. Christine Elliott: I thank the member very much for the question, and I'm sorry that Jared has been waiting so long to find out about the availability of Spinraza under the Exceptional Access Program.

I would be happy to speak with you privately about this to understand more about the details, and I will certainly follow up with the ministry to try to get an answer for him as soon as possible.

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

Mrs. Jennifer (Jennie) Stevens: Thank you for that response. However, Jared is 31 years old. His life expectancy is cut short because he cannot afford this medication that he needs—and you know this.

However, the Minister of Health knows this because I sent her a letter in June, and then another one in August. I only received a letter late in October after reminding the health minister in person, but her response still did not include an actual answer for the dying man.

1140

Just earlier this week, the Premier gave the excuse that nearly all Ontarians have drug coverage, for his reason to oppose pharmacare.

Will the Premier admit that he was wrong and immediately commit to covering Jared's drug treatment today?

Hon. Christine Elliott: Again, thank you for the question. But as the member will know, we have to make evidence-based decisions with respect to drugs, with respect to any kind of coverage. The indications that we have right now are that Spinraza is particularly effective for people of a younger age.

But as I have indicated to you, I am certainly very happy to look specifically into Jared's case and to discuss that with you in greater detail.

FLOODING

Mr. Norman Miller: My question is for the Minister of Natural Resources and Forestry. Flooding is having an increased impact on the people of Ontario and our communities. In both 2017 and 2019, we experienced widespread flooding during the spring freshet. As a result, there are ongoing concerns about the situation, especially in my riding of Parry Sound–Muskoka.

This summer, you appointed Doug McNeil as special adviser to examine Ontario's flood preparedness and response to this year's floods. The special adviser's report has been made public this morning, and I look forward to studying it closely.

Can the minister tell the people of Parry Sound–Muskoka and other areas that experienced flooding this year about what steps are being taken by our government?

Hon. John Yakabuski: I thank the member from Parry Sound–Muskoka for the question, and I want to thank him

for his hard work during the floods during the spring as well.

I want to thank Mr. McNeil for his hard work on the report as the special adviser, as well as the Premier for his leadership on this file.

As I announced this morning, Mr. McNeil's independent report on Ontario's flood response found that the actions taken by our government and our partners in water management have been effective in reducing and mitigating the risks posed by flooding.

However, we know that there is always more that can be done so that Ontario is better prepared for future events. The special adviser's report contains recommendations on how we can improve flood management in Ontario. I look forward to speaking to more of the specifics of the recommendations in the supplemental.

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

Mr. Norman Miller: The number one priority for any government needs to be public safety and the protection of people and property.

I, too, want to thank Mr. McNeil for his work on this report. I was impressed with his knowledge and expertise when I attended his meeting with municipal leaders in Muskoka.

Can the minister tell us the nature of the recommendations in the report, and what actions the government will be taking to increase Ontario's resiliency for future flood events?

Hon. John Yakabuski: I thank the member for his supplemental as well.

As I said earlier, the special adviser's report makes recommendations on improving Ontario's flood management. Our government is committed to addressing these recommendations by updating policies, regulations and guidelines to protect people and property, as well as continuing to invest over \$4.7 million in infrastructure for flood forecasting and warnings.

Last week, the Premier sent a letter to Prime Minister Trudeau asking the International Joint Commission to appoint a member to the International Lake Ontario–St. Lawrence River Board from Ontario, someone chosen by the province to represent the region impacted by record high water levels. It is imperative that communities most impacted by the decisions made by the IJC are represented at the table.

TREATIES RECOGNITION

Mr. Sol Mamakwa: Good morning, Speaker. My question is to the Gitchi ogemeh, the Premier.

The Matawa Chiefs Council came to Queen's Park this week to address the concerns they had with Bill 32, at committee. They stated that it was inappropriate for Ontario to address inherent Aboriginal and treaty rights within the schedule of the red tape reduction bill. The chiefs council came here to speak to Ontario, not just as partners but as investors of certainty that is required for anyone to do business in the north.

Mr. Speaker, why does this government not understand the financial impact of not properly partnering with First Nations?

Hon. Christine Elliott: Minister of Indigenous Affairs.

Hon. Greg Rickford: I want to thank the member opposite for his question.

Of course, the Better for People, Smarter for Business Act, 2019, provides certainty to the mining sector. The proposed amendments to the Mining Act hold the government to make a decision about filing or returning a closure plan amendment to 45 days. But there are no impacts to treaty and Aboriginal rights as a result of these proposed changes. All consultation, importantly, needs to be completed up front with the consultation report before any certified closure plan is received.

Mr. Speaker, we take our duty to consult and accommodate and, more importantly, build relationships with the Matawa communities—like the \$30-million investment into their broadband to ensure that they have an information highway; hopefully, a corridor to prosperity; and a better life overall.

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

Mr. Sol Mamakwa: Ontario's north has the potential to be the next economic engine of the country. But any development in what Ontario calls "the Far North" cannot and will not be imposed without the consent of First Nations.

The omnibus legislation of Bill 132 is being fast-tracked by this government without giving First Nations an appropriate engagement mechanism and time to respond. Will the government remove schedules 8 and 16 from the bill and establish a respectful process for engagement with First Nations, yes or no?

Hon. Greg Rickford: It's important to understand the history of the Far North Act. No one should dispute, on either side of this floor, Mr. Speaker, that that Far North Act lacked any consultation or accommodation for the Indigenous communities in the Far North.

I happened to be living up in those communities when that act was being shoved down their throats. The only piece of it that was salvageable was land use planning. We intend and we continue to support the communities in those important activities, because they will have a say. The fact of the matter is that I just had a conversation with Grand Chief Alvin Fiddler, who is looking forward to an important dialogue moving forward that will transform the opportunity for those communities in the north.

But while I'm on my feet, Mr. Speaker, I have to ask the member opposite: When it comes to voting against the aviation fuel test, why did he say no to something that would, in actual dollars, reduce the cost of food transportation in and out of the isolated communities in his—

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

The next question.

HUMAN TRAFFICKING

Mr. Sam Oosterhoff: My question is again for the Associate Minister of Children and Women's Issues. As I

mentioned earlier, the minister attended a human trafficking round table in my riding this summer. I'm proud to say that we had a wonderful turnout from organizations across the region. Out of the 13 that were held, I understand that we had the most participants. We even had firefighters speaking about their experience working with victims and survivors.

It's so unfortunate that human trafficking occurs and impacts so many areas of life. But it is also so encouraging to see that many different sectors are taking this seriously and providing training so that they can be supportive and understanding in helping those who need it most.

Could the minister expand on the role of the stakeholders and how they've played such an important role in developing our anti-human trafficking work, what she heard at our round tables across the province and how this has informed the announcement this morning?

Hon. Jill Dunlop: Thank you to the member for that question.

Speaker, I want to thank all stakeholders for participating in these round tables. I was privileged to meet with survivors, law enforcement officers, Indigenous partners like the Ontario Native Women's Association—who is in the gallery today and whom I'll be meeting with later—and also other front-line workers.

It is the work of partners like ONWA that encouraged us to act on today's announcement, and it is through collaborative work that the Solicitor General and I will be developing a comprehensive anti-human trafficking strategy.

I want to thank Cora Lee McGuire-Cyrette from the Ontario Native Women's Association for her supportive quote today: "The Ontario Native Women's Association is pleased that the Ontario government has renewed and expanded on their commitment to end human trafficking. This is a significant step honouring the voices and expertise of Indigenous survivors who have bravely shared their stories to create programming services that meet the needs of Indigenous women and children."

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

Mr. Sam Oosterhoff: My question is back to the Associate Minister of Children and Women's Issues. This is such an important subject, and it's one that I know so many of us, across party lines, have heard from constituents and have heard from people in our communities about. But it's often a hidden problem. It's one that we might not know about and we might not hear about until it impacts someone very close to us. I know that prior to getting into elected office, I did not know much about human trafficking and I was unaware of just how much of it occurs in the Niagara region.

As our eyes are opened, the call to action becomes stronger. I'm so proud that this government, with the leadership of Premier Ford and our whole team, has shown dedication towards this issue. I also want to acknowledge the work of the Minister of Infrastructure in this regard. But I think it's so important that the announcement this morning be the first step toward much more work that

needs to be done in this area. Could the minister explain how this announcement came to be and what the steps are going to be moving forward?

Hon. Jill Dunlop: Thank you to the member again for your question, and thank you for hosting a round table in your riding. The round table we held in Niagara Falls was the last of 13 round tables that we did. I thank all those stakeholders who came out and shared their valuable information: those with lived experience, those working on the front lines, those in the community safety sector. We were in Thunder Bay, Niagara, Barrie and Burlington, just to name a few. I've also met with violence against women coordinating committees and shelters across the province to hear first-hand from those working with victims of human trafficking.

I'd like to thank all of those with lived experience who shared that experience with us in moving forward as we develop our anti-human trafficking program. As the member said, it's often unreported cases. Two thirds of the cases happening in Canada happen right here at home in our own communities. It's very important that we're supporting victims, but that we're also educating the public to have—

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

WOMEN'S SERVICES

Mr. Gilles Bisson: My question is to the Minister of Children, Community and Social Services. My colleague from Toronto—St. Paul's earlier this week asked a question in regard to the closure of Tranquility House, the women's shelter that was in Matheson, in my colleague's riding. As a result of that closure, capacity has increased as far as the number of women seeking beds in the shelters both in his communities and in the city of Timmins.

We need to get you to transfer the money that used to go to shelters, that provided the dollars in order to be able to provide services to the women who enter those shelters. Will you make sure that the money that used to be used in order to fund the services at Tranquility House in Matheson is transferred to the other centres so that they can deal with the overcapacity? We are now running at 130% in Timmins at the women's centres, both in Passerelle and also at the women's shelter. Will you do that?

Hon. Todd Smith: To the Associate Minister of Children and Women's Issues.

Hon. Jill Dunlop: Thank you to the member for your question. The safety and security of all Ontarians is a top priority, and I will work to meet with you as well as your shelter on how we can do better in those areas.

Our government is investing in violence prevention and community services that support women and their dependants. This year the ministry is investing more than \$166 million in supports for survivors and violence prevention initiatives. This includes more than \$8.7 million in supports for areas.

We remain committed to combatting violence against women in all of its forms. I look forward to meeting with the member and discussing the situation in your riding.

DEFERRED VOTES

TIME ALLOCATION

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): We have a deferred vote on government notice of motion number 74, relating to allocation of time on Bill 116, An Act to enact the Mental Health and Addictions Centre of Excellence Act, 2019 and the Opioid Damages and Health Costs Recovery Act, 2019.

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

The division bells rang from 1154 to 1159.

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

On November 28, 2019, Mr. Calandra moved government notice of motion number 74 relating to allocation of time on Bill 116. All those in favour of the motion will please rise one at a time and be counted by the Clerk.

Ayes

Anand, Deepak	Kanapathi, Logan	Rasheed, Kaleed
Baber, Roman	Karahalios, Belinda C.	Rickford, Greg
Babikian, Aris	Ke, Vincent	Roberts, Jeremy
Bailey, Robert	Khanjin, Andrea	Romano, Ross
Barrett, Toby	Kusendova, Natalia	Sabawy, Sheref
Bouma, Will	Lecce, Stephen	Sandhu, Amarjot
Calandra, Paul	Martin, Robin	Scott, Laurie
Cho, Raymond Sung Joon	McDonell, Jim	Skelly, Donna
Cho, Stan	McKenna, Jane	Smith, Dave
Clark, Steve	McNaughton, Monte	Smith, Todd
Coe, Lorne	Miller, Norman	Surma, Kinga
Crawford, Stephen	Mitas, Christina Maria	Tangri, Nina
Downey, Doug	Mulroney, Caroline	Thanigasalam, Vijay
Dunlop, Jill	Oosterhoff, Sam	Thompson, Lisa M.
Elliott, Christine	Pang, Billy	Tibollo, Michael A.
Fullerton, Merrilee	Park, Lindsey	Triantafilopoulos, Effie J.
Ghamari, Goldie	Parsa, Michael	Walker, Bill
Gill, Parm	Pettapiece, Randy	Yakabuski, John
Harris, Mike	Phillips, Rod	Yurek, Jeff
Hogarth, Christine	Piccini, David	

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

Nays

Andrew, Jill	Gélinas, France	Schreiner, Mike
Armstrong, Teresa J.	Glover, Chris	Shaw, Sandy
Arthur, Ian	Hassan, Faisal	Singh, Gurratan
Begum, Doly	Hatfield, Percy	Singh, Sara
Bell, Jessica	Kernaghan, Terence	Stevens, Jennifer (Jennie)
Berns-McGown, Rima	Lindo, Laura Mae	Stiles, Marit
Bisson, Gilles	Mamakwa, Sol	Tabuns, Peter
Bourgouin, Guy	Mantha, Michael	Taylor, Monique
Burch, Jeff	Monteith-Farrell, Judith	Vanhof, John
Fife, Catherine	Morrison, Suze	Yarde, Kevin
Fraser, John	Rakocevic, Tom	
French, Jennifer K.	Sattler, Peggy	

The Clerk of the Assembly (Mr. Todd Decker): The ayes are 59; the nays are 34.

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

Motion agreed to.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): The House stands in recess until 1 p.m.

The House recessed from 1202 to 1300.

INTRODUCTION OF VISITORS

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): I want to inform the House that one of my constituents is in the Legislative Assembly building today. He was here this morning for question period. His name is Alex Soler, and I wanted to welcome him to the Legislature today.

Mrs. Nina Tangri: They're not here at this point, but they are in the legislative dining room: the Greater Toronto Airports Authority and members of the airport taxi and limo industry. They are here to speak with members to look at ways of ending illegal scooping at airports in Ontario.

Mr. Sheref Sabawy: I would like to welcome our friends from Mississauga from the limo and taxi industry, Gus El Gharib and Sami Khairallah; and from the airport authority, I would like to welcome Lorrie McKee. I would also like to welcome from the airport authority Mark Regimbald and Dwayne Macintosh.

Miss Christina Maria Mitas: I would like to introduce my sister, who has been taking care of my baby, Cressida, at Queen's Park this session. Thank you for being here and for all your help.

MEMBERS' STATEMENTS

FIRE IN TORONTO

Mr. Tom Rakocevic: On Friday, November 15, as I drove to an evening event, there was the constant sound of helicopters overhead. Fire trucks were speeding from all directions toward the heart of my community.

My friend and local advocate Susel Munoz called me and gave me the terrible news: There was a five-alarm fire at 235 Gosford Boulevard. Over 100 firefighters battled the blaze and saved hundreds of lives with the help of other first responders, while many city agencies and the Red Cross attended to the displaced residents, who were temporarily sheltered in TTC buses. Toronto mayor John Tory and local city councillor Anthony Perruzza were on site that night and brought the entire weight of the city behind them to help, promptly opening the Driftwood Community Centre for residents. The next morning, we were all deeply saddened to hear that a tenant had perished in the fire.

I thank everyone who helped the tenants of 235 Gosford, including York University, which opened its doors; the Toronto public and Catholic district school boards and their school communities; the Angel Foundation; the Ghanaian Canadian community and their consul general; the FMTA; ACORN; Jane Finch Community Legal Services; the Christian Centre Church; JFAAP; Black Creek Community Health Centre; HAACO; the Grandravine Italian seniors; and many caring individuals and groups from our community and beyond.

But as I joined the shocked residents that night on the buses, many spoke about their fears for the future. It is now clear that many will be unable to return to their units for a long time, meaning many will once again have to find a new rental unit in a Toronto market where the average rent is over \$2,000.

The hard life of Toronto's tenants continues to get harder, and the government must listen to tenants and not just big landlord builders and developers. The tenants of 235 Gosford will continue to need our help. We must be there for them in their time of need.

LEGISLATIVE REFORM

Mr. Mike Harris: Yesterday we began debate on a package of proposed changes to the standing orders of this Legislature. The proposed changes accomplish many things, including allowing the Speaker to accommodate members with disabilities.

If a member in this Legislature has a disability which prevents them from following the normal rules of the House, that member requires the special unanimous consent of the entire chamber. If a member is confined to a wheelchair and cannot stand to vote, they must ask the permission of the Legislature to be able to do something as basic as voting. It's time that the Legislature modernize its rules so that those with disabilities may have the same opportunities as all other members.

The proposed changes to the standing orders would allow the independent members to more actively participate and would also help to enhance the quality of debate.

I call on every member in this Legislature to consider the motion before the House and support the thoughtful and productive changes it provides.

OUT OF THE COLD PROGRAM

Mrs. Jennifer (Jennie) Stevens: I'd like to celebrate a very St. Catharines story about a people-run program to fight homelessness called Out of the Cold. It is a story spanning decades, with hundreds and hundreds of volunteers in St. Catharines building something amazing together.

Out of the Cold started in 1996 from a pilot project at Queen Street Baptist Church. The goal was to provide a hot meal and a bed to people facing poverty, hunger and homelessness during the winter months. Out of the Cold began as a 100% volunteer effort funded 100% by donations.

I want to thank all the amazing teams, all the amazing host churches, all the amazing community groups and all the amazing volunteers across St. Catharines that do so much for their programs.

Yet, I think this government owes them something. The fact is, Out of the Cold started in 1996 as a temporary solution for a permanent problem. However, we all want to work towards not having this program necessary anymore.

St. Catharines is a community that stepped up to the plate to solve a problem and has done it for years without

proper funding. People in St. Catharines and Niagara do their part; we need this government to do theirs. So we need two things to happen: a comprehensive review of the antiquated CHPI funding to Niagara that is wildly outdated, and the St. Catharines community needs more support from this government for permanent supportive housing.

Thank you to the volunteers. You have done your part. Now we need this government to do their part and help St. Catharines help others that are in need.

CRESSIDA POWER

Miss Christina Maria Mitas: Today, I am elated to rise and speak about a very special young lady: my beautiful daughter, Cressida. As we won't be sitting on her actual birthday, I thought today would be a fitting day to pay tribute to her as it is her 10-month birthday. On January 28, 2019, my life—and Cressida's daddy Patrick's life—changed forever. She came into the world just after midnight and immediately made very good use of her lungs, a foreshadowing, if you will, of how vocal and expressive she would prove to be.

The nurse taught us both how to change a diaper—yes, it was a first for us—and we took our little bundle home. Cressida immediately took to her new surroundings and felt comfortable sleeping through the night until about the four-month mark, when we found out what other parents were complaining about when they talked about the dreaded “sleep regression,” and we realized just how lucky we had been for those first few months.

From day one, she has been the happiest baby we've ever met, and an energetic little monkey. I wish I had a quarter of her energy. It's great. Even when she has felt the need to express her distaste or frustration with something, she has behaved like a perfect angel with strangers in public, and let us have it in private—the consummate political baby, her dad calls her.

Today, she is speed-crawling and cruising everywhere, throwing new words at us every day, biting mommy pretty vigorously with those two front teeth, kicking daddy all night long, eating anything and everything, especially enjoying hand-peeled grapes—which is quite the luxury, let me tell you—and bringing us more joy than we could ever have imagined.

Cressida Yianna Litsa Power, your dad and I are the two luckiest humans in the world because we get to be your parents. Thank you for being the sassy, smart, dramatic, beautiful, hilarious little ham that you are. We love you so much and we know that you'll excel at everything that comes your way, including your promotion to big sister come this February. Happy almost-birthday, baby girl!

CITY OF BRAMPTON

Mr. Gurratan Singh: As we are about to enter 2020, let's look back at the track record of this Conservative government. After more than a year and a half of this Conservative government, Bramptonians are still struggling. We are struggling with a health care crisis where thousands of people are being treated in an overcrowded and

underfunded hospital. Instead of helping Brampton, this Conservative government has voted against investing in Brampton's health care multiple times. This Conservative government killed our city's dream of having a university when they cancelled it, and students are still struggling in hours of commute and the added financial costs of having to attend a university outside of our city. And after over a year and a half, we have seen this Conservative government continue to approve increases to our car insurance rates as Bramptonians pay some of the highest rates in this country. I have said it before and I will say it again: This Conservative government doesn't care about Brampton.

This Conservative government doesn't care about Brampton, but the NDP is committed to fighting for our city. We know that Brampton deserves better. We deserve access to health care with dignity, and that means investing in our city and that means building an additional hospital in our city. We need a city where students can live and learn, and that means bringing a university to Brampton. We need to stop billion-dollar insurance companies from gouging Bramptonians, and we're going to fight to bring down car insurance rates. That's the kind of city we deserve and that's the kind of city that we in the NDP are committed to fighting for.

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SCARBOROUGH

Mr. Aris Babikian: On November 20, I was heartbroken to learn that a Google search result for Scarborough yields a picture of a dilapidated building. As the MPP for Scarborough–Agincourt and a long-time resident of our beautiful community, I was shocked and dismayed that a Google algorithm would depict our vibrant, diverse and welcoming community in such a state of disrepair.

In fact, Scarborough is home to the Toronto Zoo, Vimy Oaks Farm, Scarborough Bluffs and other major attractions and heritage sites. Scarborough is one of the most diverse places in Ontario. Scarborough is a place where the world is living harmoniously in one place. This is why we choose to work, live and raise a family in our community.

Mr. Speaker, as the MPP for Scarborough–Agincourt and the representative of a sizable number of Scarborough residents, I'm calling upon Google and its parent company, Alphabet Inc., to apologize to Scarborough and the residents of our community for depicting their home as a rundown and tired place.

I was disheartened yesterday by the half-hearted measure that Google made to rectify their mistake. By publishing a bright, multicoloured tribute to Scarborough, Google is not acknowledging the hurtful way they have portrayed Scarborough to the world. Nothing short of an outright apology will alleviate the pain Google has inflicted on the people of Scarborough.

MINISTER'S COMMENTS

Mr. Peter Tabuns: Speaker, I rise today to call for the Premier to fire the Minister of Energy. He's an embarrassment to the province and clearly not capable of carrying

out his duties as a minister. If a minister stood up and said he thought that the moon landings were a fake, he or she would be seen as an embarrassment. The same thing—

Hon. Paul Calandra: Mr. Speaker, point of order.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): I'm going to recognize the government House leader on a point of order.

Hon. Paul Calandra: I'm hearing a member opposite use a member's statement to attack a minister of the crown. I cannot imagine that that is anywhere appropriate as a use of a member's statement. I would ask that the member not only withdraw but apologize to the House and to the minister.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): It is a valid point of order. There are standing orders that prohibit members attacking other members, and from what the member for Toronto–Danforth has said so far, I believe it's an attack on another member. I'm going to ask him to withdraw and rephrase the balance of his statement if he chooses to continue. I ask the member to withdraw.

Mr. Peter Tabuns: Withdraw.

May I have the clock start over again? All of my time was used up.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): I'm prepared to listen to the member, as I said. I'm not going to give you 90 seconds. Please go ahead. Finish your statement.

Mr. Peter Tabuns: Thank you, Speaker. I think it is incumbent on the Premier of this province to stand up for science and for fact, and when a member quotes a conspiracy theory website to try and discredit appropriate action on climate crisis or on energy, then the Premier is required to act. If, in fact, in this House, a conspiracy around the moon landings was used as a reason for a particular course of government action, everyone would see that that was an embarrassment to this province. If, in fact, someone—

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

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Order. Members' statements.

THE DAM

Mr. Kaleed Rasheed: Today I have the honour of highlighting the accomplishments of the Dam, an organization for youth in Mississauga. The Dam is a local organization that partners with youth to create an inclusive community where all are welcome, valued and respected.

Over 20 years ago, the founders of the Dam, Michael Clarke and Bill Crawford, found research indicating that 60% to 80% of the youth that became street youth in the inner city came from middle—

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Order.

Miss Monique Taylor: That is not acceptable.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Order.

I apologize to the member from Mississauga East–Cooksville for interrupting him. Please continue with your statement.

Mr. Kaleed Rasheed: Thank you, Mr. Speaker—found research indicating that 60% to 80% of the youth that became street youth in the inner city came from

middle-class, or better, homes in the suburbs or small towns like Mississauga.

In July 1995, they opened a drop-in centre to address this persistent problem. It was named the Dam Youth Drop-in in the hopes that building relationships with youth while they were still at home would serve a function like a dam, stopping the flow of youth from Mississauga becoming homeless on the streets of Toronto.

The Dam currently has two locations in Mississauga, one of which is in my riding. This past week, I was invited to the Dam's open house to recognize their executive director, Carol Reist. Carol has worked at the Dam for 20 years and contributed to thousands of youth finding a place where they can belong, connect and lead. The Dam is a recipient of an Ontario Trillium Foundation grant.

I'm very proud of the work the Dam does for the community. I want to thank them for their dedication and service to the Mississauga community. I cannot wait to see the great work the organization will do in the future and hope to attend many more events held by them.

DIABETES

Mr. Sheref Sabawy: I rise today to recognize that this month marks Diabetes Awareness Month, and Thursday, November 14, was World Diabetes Day.

Unfortunately, the diabetes epidemic is growing each year. Both type 1 and type 2 diabetes affect millions of Canadians and their families each year. Every six minutes, another person in Ontario is diagnosed with diabetes, and approximately 4.4 million people in our province have diabetes or pre-diabetes. This number is expected to grow by 29% over the next 10 years. It is important that all Ontarians be aware of diabetes and speak to their health care professionals, particularly if they are at risk.

Our government is doing our part to support Ontarians who may be living with diabetes through the funding of various diabetes education and support programs across the province, as well as ensuring that people with diabetes have access to the appropriate medications, supplies and technologies through our publicly funded programs.

Our government's recent decision to publicly fund an innovative flash glucose monitoring system from Abbott through the ODB is an excellent example of our ongoing commitment to supporting the people of Ontario.

As a technology specialist and advocate, I'm calling on all innovators, companies and associations of diabetes to continue growing the technology to make it better, cheaper and accessible to all Ontarians.

REPORTS BY COMMITTEES

STANDING COMMITTEE ON ESTIMATES

Mr. Peter Tabuns: I beg leave to present a report from the Standing Committee on Estimates.

The Clerk-at-the-Table (Mr. William Short): Pursuant to the order of the House dated May 28, 2019, Mr.

Tabuns from the Standing Committee on Estimates reports the following resolutions:

Resolved that supply in the following amounts and to defray the expenses of the following ministries be granted to Her Majesty for the fiscal year ending March 31, 2020:

Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care: 1401, ministry administration—

Mr. Peter Tabuns: Dispense.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Dispense? Agreed.

Pursuant to standing order 63(d), an order for concurrence for each of the resolutions reported from the committee will be placed on the Orders and Notices paper.

Report deemed received.

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 154, An Act to proclaim Stop Cyberbullying in Ontario Day / Projet de loi 154, 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 care to explain his bill?

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

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MOTIONS

PRIVATE MEMBERS' PUBLIC BUSINESS

Hon. Paul Calandra: I am seeking unanimous consent to move a motion without notice regarding notice for private members' public business.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Mr. Calandra is seeking unanimous consent to move a motion without notice regarding notice for private members' public business. Agreed? Agreed.

Again I recognize the government House leader.

Hon. Paul Calandra: Speaker, I move that notice for ballot item number 91, standing in the name of Mr. Rasheed on the list drawn on July 11, 2018, be waived.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Mr. Calandra has moved that notice for ballot item number 91, standing in the name of Mr. Rasheed on the list drawn on July 11,

2018, be waived. Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? Carried.

Motion agreed to.

STATEMENTS BY THE MINISTRY AND RESPONSES

WOMAN ABUSE PREVENTION MONTH

Hon. Jill Dunlop: Speaker, I rise today to recognize the month of November as Woman Abuse Prevention Month in Ontario.

Violence and abuse against women does not discriminate. It crosses every social, economic and cultural boundary in our communities.

Abuse comes in many forms. It can be physical, sexual, emotional, psychological, verbal and many other forms.

One in three women will experience sexual violence in their lifetime. Women are also three times more likely to be stalked and four times more likely to be a victim of intimate partner violence. Indigenous women, newcomers, members of the LGBTQI2S community and women with disabilities are at an even greater risk of experiencing violence.

All violence and abuse is unacceptable and it calls us to action.

In the past five months, I've travelled across the province to visit violence-against-women shelters. It has given me an opportunity to listen to both shelter staff and survivors on how we can better support those fleeing violence. These front-line workers are the kind and caring people who see first-hand the stark realities of violence against women, and they are often the only source of hope in a survivor's life at that moment.

In Canada's reported cases of domestic sex trafficking, over 90% of victims are women and girls and 70% of victims are under 25, with more than a quarter of victims being children under 18.

This past summer, we held 13 round tables across Ontario on this issue. We spoke with front-line workers, survivors and others affected by this unspeakable violence. I want to thank all those who participated for their advocacy in this space.

We believe it is every woman's fundamental right to live safely and securely in her home and her community, free from abuse of any kind. That's why, this morning, our government announced that we are developing a new strategy to combat human trafficking. This strategy is being co-led by my colleague the Solicitor General and is a part of our overarching commitment to protect women and children and fight against gender-based violence, sexual exploitation and abuse.

Speaker, we are committing \$20 million per year in stable funding for victim supports and anti-human-trafficking enforcement initiatives.

This strategy is being informed by the people who have been impacted directly by this abuse: survivors and front-

line staff. These crimes must end so that children, women and everyone in this province can live safely and free from the threat, fear or experience of exploitation and abuse.

We are backing up that belief in communities across Ontario by providing supports for victims, raising public awareness and holding offenders accountable as we combat domestic violence.

This year, our government is investing more than \$166 million in supports for survivors and violence prevention initiatives. We are funding vital services like emergency shelters, counselling, 24-hour crisis lines, safety planning and transitional and housing supports.

It is also important that we make these programs as accessible as possible for those living in rural areas. That is why we have boosted support for rural front-line agencies to increase collaboration and reduce geographic and transportation barriers.

We are also providing funding to 18 Indigenous agencies that provide emergency shelter, counselling, child witness programs and other supports, both on- and off-reserve.

Talking about this issue—not just during Woman Abuse Prevention Month but year-round—is key to raising awareness and encouraging women to come forward with their stories.

Equally important, we must be listening. Exposing the reality of violence against women means protecting women and girls who have been abused. And it means creating efficient and effective supports and services that reach those who need them, no matter where they live in this province.

Earlier this week, we marked the International Day for the Elimination of Violence Against Women and have officially begun the 16 Days of Activism against Gender-Based Violence campaign.

I'd like to thank the Minister of Children, Community and Social Services for his statement regarding the White Ribbon campaign, and I'd like to thank all of our male colleagues here for standing up with White Ribbon to call out the abuse of women and girls.

I ask all Ontarians to use the month of November to rededicate ourselves to the idea of personal safety and freedom from violence for women and girls.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Responses?

Ms. Jill Andrew: I am going to read out the names of victims of violence, women who have lost their lives. From November 26, 2018, to November 25, 2019, there have been 37 women killed. This list is compiled by the Ontario Association of Interval and Transition Houses and also by the assistance of some fantastic students from Guelph university under the tutelage of Dr. Mavis Morton:

Shubangi Amin, 41; Maria Araujo, 83; Firoza Begum, 70; Momotaz Begum, 59; Mariantonia Biunno, 88; Geraldine “Gerry” Butterfield, 63; Talia Carey, 30; Rae Kara Carrington, 51; Chiou-Shuang Cheng, 40; Sara “Sylvia” Cimerman, 68; Amber Cobean, age unknown; Jane Doe; Jane Doe, 64; Jane Doe, 50 to 60; Marion Fenwick, 86; Helen Fronczak, 79; Bethelhem Geleta, 22; Maria Lisa Gorospe, 53; Christian Gorospe, 13—because

children often die too when violence against women occurs; Laura Grant, 57; Tharshika Jeganathan, 27; Maryhelen Johnston, 39; Jennyfer Lachapelle, 42; Brenda Lautaoja, 68; Bao Lian Li, 82; Yvonne Mooney, 83; Hanh Nguyen, 41; Tan Nguyen, 74; Kathryn Niedoba, 36; Lorraine Ogoti, 30; Abigail Ootoova, 54; Riya Rajkumar, 11; Helen Schaller, 58; Terri-Lynn Thompson, 54; Verna Traina, 94 years old; Lucy Wojtalski, 58; and Malesa Zaman, 21.

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We have to remember the names and the faces of these women. And that's just one list. As of 2019, there have been more than 780 femicides over the past 30 years in Ontario alone.

Yes, violence against women, abuse, comes in many forms. We must remember that economic abuse is one of those forms. When we live in a society, when we live in a province, governed by a government that does not make real investments into real affordable housing, that does not make real investments into shelters and transition houses—and I'm not making this up, Mr. Speaker; this is information that I've gotten, having spoken to dozens and dozens of front-line workers and survivors themselves—when we live in a province where women cannot be paid, and are not paid, equal dollar for their hard work and their intellectual acumen because we have a government that says no to a Pay Transparency Act, to pay equity, to the actual dollars and cents that will allow for women to be able to rise up out of systems of oppression, as my colleague from Beaches–East York mentioned, it is social murder.

We must all take account for the role we have in this House to ensure that women and girls have a voice, that they can use their voice and that they can actually have a sustainable future in our province—one that allows them to go to school and graduate without debt, one that allows them to be independent, sir, to be an independent woman, unreliant on having to suffer for what they need.

We have to do better for women and girls, and if we want to address violence against women, we've got to also address the inequitable economic barriers that are facing our women and girls.

Mr. John Fraser: It's a privilege to be able to rise today and speak with regard to November as Woman Abuse Prevention Month.

I want to thank the member from Toronto–St. Paul's for her remarks. It really lays it out there, hearing those names. Those are daughters, mothers, nieces. They're real people, so how is it that a member can stand up in this Legislature and read out 37 names of women who have been victims of violence?

How is it that gender-based violence is so prevalent in our society? It's 2019.

How is it that in the whole world, one in three women will experience violence in their lifetime, and that over 3,000 women and children every night are in some sort of shelter or transitional housing and there are more than 20 women and girls murdered every year here in Ontario? How is that?

How is it that the second-most-common emergency call is for violence against women? How is that we've been talking about this for so long, and we keep talking about it and every November we make the same speeches? How is it that it's not getting better?

Stopping violence in our communities requires a community approach. As a Legislature and as a government of any stripe, we have to empower communities and the people who serve women with the tools and the resources to be able to do this. We need to do a better job of educating our young people about compassion and equality and non-violence, especially young men.

It starts, frankly, by having a child advocate in this province who is going to advocate for the most vulnerable girls and young women to be able to talk about the things that are happening to them. It means making sure that on campus we really are doing our best to work with that community to ensure that we're reducing violence against women.

Speaker, I want to conclude by saying that on Monday we all wore purple scarves and everyone from the interval and transitional houses were here. They're not here today, but I think the message we have to send to them is that we want to thank you for everything you do. It's hard work. It's really hard work when you're not meeting the need, so we want to thank you for that—and that we commit to doing a better job on all the things that I've outlined here. I thank you for your time.

PETITIONS

ALZHEIMER'S DISEASE

Mr. Percy Hatfield: “To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“Whereas Alzheimer's disease and other dementias are progressive, degenerative diseases of the brain that cause thinking, memory and physical functioning to become seriously impaired; and

“Whereas there is no known cause or cure for this devastating illness; and

“Whereas Alzheimer's disease and other dementias also take their toll on hundreds of thousands of families and care partners; and

“Whereas Alzheimer's disease and other dementias affect more than 200,000 Ontarians today, with an annual total economic burden rising to \$15.7 billion by” next year; and

“Whereas the cost related to the health care system is in the billions and only going to increase, at a time when our health care system is already facing enormous financial challenges; and

“Whereas there is work under way to address the need, but no coordinated or comprehensive approach to tackling the issues; and

“Whereas there is an urgent need to plan and raise awareness and understanding about Alzheimer's disease

and other dementias for the sake of improving the quality of life of the people it touches;

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

“To approve the development of a comprehensive Ontario dementia plan that would include the development of strategies in primary health care, in health promotion and prevention of illness, in community development, in building community capacity and care partner engagement, in caregiver support and investments in research.”

I fully agree. I'll affix my name and give it to Suhani to bring to the table.

ANIMAL PROTECTION

Ms. Christine Hogarth: This is a petition that states:

“To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“Whereas on June 28, 2019, the Ontario Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals (OSPCA) stopped enforcing Ontario's animal welfare laws; and

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“Whereas on June 6, 2019, royal assent was given to Bill 117, Ontario Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals Amendment Act (Interim Period), 2019, which provides an interim solution to ensure animals remain protected while the government developed a new permanent animal welfare enforcement model; and

“Whereas the continued protection of animals across this province is an urgent priority to the people of Ontario;

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

“To unanimously support the Provincial Animal Welfare Services Act (PAWS Act) so that Ontario's pets and animals can be protected without delay under a system that establishes the strongest penalties for animal abusers in Canada.”

I've already signed this, but I will give it to page Isabella.

EDUCATION FUNDING

Mr. Tom Rakocevic: I'm going to be reading a petition from the CFS. It's called “Increase Grants Not Loans, Access for All, Protect Student Rights.

“To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

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

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

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

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

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

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

- “—provide more grants, not loans;
- “—eliminate tuition fees for all students;
- “—increase public funding for public education;
- “—protect students’ independent voices; and
- “—defend the right to organize.”

I’ll be signing this and giving it to page Emily.

LONG-TERM CARE

Miss Monique Taylor: I have a petition from the Family Council Network 4 Advocacy titled “Time to Care Act—Bill 13.

“To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

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

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

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

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

I fully support this petition. I’m going to affix my name to it and give it to page Augustine to bring to the Clerk.

FOOD SAFETY

Mrs. Nina Tangri: I’d like to read a petition.

“To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“Whereas Ontario regulation 493/17 part III, section 14, states that ‘every room where food is prepared, processed, packaged, served, transported, manufactured, handled, sold, offered for sale or displayed shall be kept free from live birds or animals’; and

“Whereas low-risk food premises serving only beverages and/or only prepackaged or non-hazardous foods have for many years in this province allowed customers to be accompanied by their pet dogs for their convenience and social benefit; and

“Whereas the decision whether or not to allow dogs on site should be driven by the business needs of such premises, so long as sanitary and safe conditions are upheld;

“We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to create an exception to Ontario regulation 493/17 part III, section 14, for low-risk food premises serving only prepackaged or non-hazardous foods, for the

benefit of all Ontario pet owners and the businesses that serve them.”

I’d like to sign my name to this petition and give it to page Mathias.

LONG-TERM CARE

Ms. Teresa J. Armstrong: I want to thank the West Oak Village family council for providing me with these signed petitions to reach the Legislature on their behalf.

“To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

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

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

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

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

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

VETERANS MEMORIAL

Ms. Christine Hogarth: This is a petition in support of constructing a memorial to honour our heroes.

“To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

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

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

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

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

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

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

I’ve already signed my name to this and I will give it to Isabella again.

VETERANS MEMORIAL

Mr. Michael Mantha: The petition is from the good people of Wawa.

“Support the Highway of Heroes Tree Campaign.

“To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“Whereas during the war in Afghanistan, Canada lost 159 military personnel;

“Whereas those brave souls were driven along the Highway of Heroes between CFB Trenton and the coroner’s office in Toronto;

“Whereas since Confederation, 117,000 Canadian lives have been lost in military conflict;

“Whereas there is a recognized and celebrated plan to transform the Highway of Heroes into a living tribute that honours all of Canada’s war dead;

“Whereas that plan calls for the planting of two million trees, including 117,000 beautiful commemorative trees adjacent to Highway 401 along the Highway of Heroes;

“Whereas this effort would provide an inspired drive along an otherwise pedestrian stretch of asphalt;

“Whereas the two million trees will recognize all Canadians who have served during times of war;

“Whereas over three million tonnes of CO₂ will be sequestered, over 500 million pounds of oxygen will be produced and 200 million gallons of water will be released into the air each day, benefiting all Ontarians in the name of those who served our country and those who gave the ultimate sacrifice; and

“Whereas there is a fundraising goal of \$10 million;

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

“That the current government of Ontario put its financial support behind this fundraising effort for the Highway of Heroes Tree campaign.”

I wholeheartedly support this petition and present it to page Julian to bring down to the Clerks’ table.

ONTARIO NORTHLAND
TRANSPORTATION COMMISSION

Mr. Guy Bourgoin: I have a petition entitled “Save the Polar Bear Express Passenger Train.

“To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“Whereas the Polar Bear Express connects the town of Cochrane to the otherwise isolated James Bay communities of Moosonee and Moose Factory;

“Whereas families, students, elders, workers, tourists and business people rely on the Polar Bear Express to attend to affairs, medical appointments, school, work, family visits and tourism;

1350

“Whereas the current Conservative government has failed to expand or restore train services in northern Ontario;

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

“—demand the Minister of Energy, Northern Development and Mines to examine ways to permanently expand Polar Express service;

“—maintain the current schedule offer of five weekly round trips travelling north and south;

“—improve the funding for the Polar Bear Express passenger rail service.”

I fully endorse this petition, and I will give it to page Emily to bring to the Clerks’ table.

SERVICES D’URGENCE

M. Michael Mantha: Encore de la communauté de Wawa :

« À l’Assemblée législative de l’Ontario :

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

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

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

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

« Nous, soussignés, demandons à l’Assemblée législative de l’Ontario : de fournir une intervention d’urgence 911 partout en Ontario par des lignes téléphoniques ou cellulaires. »

Je suis complètement d’accord avec cette pétition. Je la présente au page Augustine pour l’apporter à la table des greffiers.

LONG-TERM CARE

Ms. Teresa J. Armstrong: Speaker, I’m going to read this petition because it’s extremely important to residents in Ontario.

“To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

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

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

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

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

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

**PRIVATE MEMBERS'
PUBLIC BUSINESS**

**RESERVED PARKING FOR ELECTRIC
VEHICLE CHARGING ACT, 2019**

**LOI DE 2019 SUR LE STATIONNEMENT
RÉSERVÉ À LA RECHARGE
DES VÉHICULES ÉLECTRIQUES**

Mr. Coe moved second reading of the following bill:

Bill 123, An Act to amend the Highway Traffic Act respecting electric vehicle charging stations / Projet de loi 123, Loi modifiant le Code de la route en ce qui concerne les stations de recharge pour véhicules électriques.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Jennifer K. French): Pursuant to standing order 98, the member has 12 minutes for his presentation.

Mr. Lorne Coe: Thank you, Speaker. I'll be sharing my time with the member from Guelph.

At the beginning, I'd like to acknowledge the effort of the Honourable Paul Calandra, who first introduced this bill in the last session.

Although we know that there will be an eventual shift toward the increased use of electric vehicles, what remains uncertain is when and how rapid that shift will be. But what we should not be doing in these challenging times is identifying a problem and then not working diligently to find a solution. Bill 123 is a direct response to a simple challenge.

If passed, the legislation will address a problem experienced by current electric or hybrid vehicle users, and perhaps, in some small measure, will help spur the sales of electric vehicles during this period of transition.

At the same time, those businesses that have made spaces for fast chargers will achieve the returns they first envisioned when they made their capital investment.

Current electric vehicle owners have found it incredibly frustrating to arrive at a high-speed charging station only to discover a vehicle parked in that charging space—a vehicle not connected to the charger. These stations are often located close to mall entrances, and people, whether driving gasoline, electric or hybrid vehicles, park in those spots for convenience, not for charging. There's a tremendous disruption for electric vehicle users requiring a charge. This is not how the spaces were intended to be used. Bill 123, if passed, will provide a fine of \$125 for any vehicle parked in one of those spots, should the vehicle not be connected to the provided charger.

Charging facilities are essential components to an expanding electric vehicle industry, and misuse will add to what some drivers have called "range anxiety." If people find it difficult to locate them, or, once they've been located, discover that they're being misused, that frustration escalates. We must remind ourselves that

charging stations are more than a convenience for electric vehicle owners; they're a necessity.

With most purchase decisions, as consumers we often do our own cost-benefit and, yes, risk analysis. The proposed legislation will help eliminate one of the risks in that consumer analysis. The more barriers we can remove, the more attractive the purchase of an electric vehicle or hybrid will become.

Bill 123 is the right legislation at the right time. It protects people, it protects businesses and it supports environmental strategies. I hope that all members see the benefits of the proposed legislation and support the bill.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Jennifer K. French): I recognize the member for Guelph.

Mr. Mike Schreiner: Thank you, Speaker. I'm pleased to speak on Bill 123, the Reserved Parking for Electric Vehicle Charging Act, which would make it a fineable offence to park a non-charging vehicle in an EV charging space. In the spirit of co-operation, I am pleased to be co-sponsoring this bill with the honourable member from Whitby, because I will always be a constructive member working across party lines to put forward legislation that benefits people and planet.

I hope that no one in this House will doubt that the future of driving is zero-emission electric and fuel cell vehicles. Business experts, financial analysts and car companies all agree on this. Over the next five years, global auto makers will invest \$255 billion in electric vehicle research and development.

The International Energy Agency estimates that the number of electric vehicles on the road will climb from a current six million to 127 million in the next decade. Seventeen countries have already announced plans to phase out gasoline-powered vehicles, including the two most populous countries on the planet, China and India. Companies are going all-in on zero- and low-emission vehicles. As a matter of fact, all Volvo car models launched after 2019 will be electric or hybrid; two thirds of Ford—not the Premier, but the motor company—vehicles will be electric by 2030.

I want Ontario to be a part of leading the electric vehicle revolution that is sweeping around the world. I believe that Bill 123 is an important, albeit small, step on the road to making sure that Ontario is ready for the electric vehicle future.

I want to credit and thank Guelph city councillor Phil Allt for approaching me about sponsoring just this kind of bill. He approached me earlier this year, in the spring, after travelling across Ontario in his electric vehicle and finding it challenging when he pulled off to charge and found a number of charging spots being occupied by vehicles that were not charging. This can be a serious issue for electric vehicle drivers.

1400

As a matter of fact, just last week—I have an electric vehicle, and I travel between Guelph and Toronto to Queen's Park. I have a regular spot I stop in to charge. Just last week, when I stopped there, there was a gentleman who pulled in right after me and all the spots were full—a

number of those spots by non-electric vehicles. He said to me, "Somebody has got to do something about this problem. This happens to me all the time. I'm sick and tired of it." I looked at him and I said, "Sir, I will get on that right away." He said, "Who are you, by the way?" I said, "Well, I'm the MPP for Guelph, and we'll be debating this very issue next week in the Legislature."

I don't know how many of you are aware of this, but a lot of electric vehicle owners like myself have apps that tell us where to find an electric vehicle charging station. On those apps, it actually tells you whether the charging station is in use or not. So you depend on the app. It says that the charging facility is available. You may be getting low on electricity, and you go there to charge your car and there is somebody else in the spot, not using the charger, essentially making the information on the app inaccurate.

If you're pretty low, that's a pretty serious issue. If I can put it in perspective for people who drive gasoline-powered cars, it's kind of like pulling up at a gas station and having a whole bunch of cars parked in front of all the gasoline pumps, and you can't access the pump to fill up your car. Imagine what that does to your ability to commute.

It's a serious risk for EV drivers. As a matter of fact, it's probably one of the biggest barriers preventing people from purchasing electric vehicles, something known as range anxiety: worry about running out of electricity and not having a place to charge.

Speaker, I want to be clear that the barrier to electric vehicles really isn't cost as much anymore because—and I want people in Ontario to know this—you can operate an electric vehicle for one fifth the price of a gasoline-powered vehicle, and that's a conservative estimate. Whenever I say it, electric vehicle owners say, "Well, actually, I operate mine at one tenth of the cost," because the cost of electricity is much less than purchasing gasoline and the cost of maintenance to operate your vehicle is substantially less as well.

I think this bill highlights the need not only to have legislation in place to make sure that electric vehicle charging stations are available to motorists, but also the need to increase the amount of electric vehicle infrastructure in Ontario. It highlights the need to retrofit much of our infrastructure for the inevitable future that's coming with the growth in electric and zero-emissions vehicles.

This bill is one piece in a large puzzle to solve this emerging issue. As a matter of fact, an expert on this is saying that Canada needs to get up to speed. An expert from the Smith School of Business at Queen's University recently described Canada as "curious bystanders" when it comes to electric vehicles. He says that we're falling behind other countries who are being much more aggressive in rolling out electric vehicle infrastructure.

I'm sure we've all had families and friends who have said that they would like to purchase an electric vehicle, but are worried about the lack of infrastructure and charging stations. I hear it time and time again.

Speaker, I want to commit today to working with all parties in this Legislature to come up with solutions to

advance and expand electric charging infrastructure in Ontario. Currently, there is not a single EV charging station in an ONroute in Ontario, for example. There's no reason for us not to be in a situation where every café, restaurant, fast food outlet, shopping mall, parking garage, ONroute and other business has EV charging stations—and to have rules, which are outlined in Bill 123, to make sure those stations are available to drivers.

I want to encourage us to think about things like creating tax incentives for businesses to invest in EV charging infrastructure. Maybe we could take the provincial portion of the HST off electric vehicles. We could look at installing electric charging facilities in government-owned parking lots, for example. We can look at ways to roll out more EV infrastructure in this province.

I believe it's essential for us to do this in order to attract jobs and investment to generate prosperity in Ontario, to be part of rolling out an electric vehicle strategy for the province to attract more investment. Electrifying our transportation system is going to be essential to meeting our climate obligations and to maintaining prosperity in our economy.

I hope all members of this House will vote in favour of this bill, which is an important, small step to ensuring that drivers have access to electric vehicle charging stations in Ontario.

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

Mr. Ian Arthur: While I'm glad to rise and contribute to the debate on this bill, I'm struck by the tokenism of this piece of legislation.

Speaker, I drive an EV and getting ICed, as we call it, at a charging station is certainly annoying, but I would rather see real support to accelerate the transition to electric vehicles in Ontario. BC has leapfrogged Ontario in EV purchases. Why? Because they have supports to accelerate that transition, very much like the subsidy that we used to have in Ontario before this government cancelled it.

We used to have charging stations along the GO network, in parking lots, that this government paid to literally rip out of the ground. Now we have a bill co-sponsored by the independent member from Guelph and a Conservative member of the government that voted to rip these very stations from the ground.

I shouldn't be too surprised, Speaker. Just this week, the government commented in this House, recognizing the contributions the member from Guelph has made towards this government's failing environmental policies. Today, in the member's speech, there is not one mention of the complete lack of action on the environment displayed by this government, or the countless attacks that it has launched against the environment in nearly every way that they could think of.

The not-so-independent Green member from Guelph is undermining his own authority on environmental issues by bringing legitimacy to a government that is waging war on the environment.

This codependence goes further, Speaker. In return for crumbs of speaking time allotted in the standing orders, the member from Guelph is supporting legislation that undermines democracy in Ontario.

So, I will repeat myself, Speaker: As much as I support any bill that advances EV adoption, this measure is tokenism at its best, perhaps only eclipsed by the day of action on litter instead of actually trying to prevent litter from entering the environment in the first place.

Speaker, we need to dramatically accelerate the transition to electric vehicles in Ontario. We need government supports behind that. Fines for people who block charging stations are simply not enough. We have to do better. This needs public money, this needs infrastructure spending, this needs everything thrown at it, and this bill will do nothing to help that.

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

Ms. Natalia Kusendova: I am happy to rise in support of Bill 123, put forward by the members for Whitby and Guelph. I would also like to give credit to the government House leader, who originally proposed this bill.

I would also like to congratulate all members involved, as this demonstrates their collaborative effort and how we can work across party lines on issues important to all Ontarians.

Electric cars and plug-in hybrids are becoming an increasingly common sight in Ontario, with their shining green parking signs that state, “Electric vehicle parking only,” and there is a reason for that. The introduction of electric vehicles and plug-in hybrids to Ontario’s automotive market was a positive step, as these vehicles are part of the solution to addressing climate change. These vehicles are greener and cleaner, and have a much smaller imprint, from an emissions perspective.

The reason why Bill 123 was originally introduced by my colleague the House leader was: “It’s another way of encouraging the growth of the industry that doesn’t include a subsidy.”

With the rise of electric vehicles, many commercial and public parking spaces have introduced electric charging stations so that electric vehicle owners can recharge their battery. Unfortunately, some gas-vehicle drivers park in these allocated charging spaces. These spaces are often located conveniently closer to the door, and it is therefore tempting for some drivers of traditional vehicles to park there. As a result, electric vehicle owners often cannot charge their cars, because someone else has taken up this valuable charging space.

1410

This has given rise to a new problem experienced by electric and hybrid car drivers, coined “range anxiety”—« l’angoisse de l’autonomie », c’est-à-dire l’inquiétude des conducteurs de véhicules électriques de se retrouver en panne d’électricité sur le bord de la route sans batterie suffisante pour se rendre à la borne de chargement la plus proche pour recharger.

Les entreprises ont constaté une croissance du nombre de véhicules électriques et ont commencé à installer des

bornes de chargement afin d’attirer plus de clientèles et éliminer leur inquiétude de ne pas avoir assez d’autonomie pour rentrer chez eux. Cela devrait donc régler le problème, n’est-ce pas?

The purpose of this bill is to discourage drivers of non-electric and non-hybrid vehicles from parking in these designated charging stations. Bill 123, if passed, will enable municipalities to charge the offenders a fine of \$125. The provincial bill would lay a framework that municipalities could customize to their needs.

The science is clear: Man-made climate change is real, and the growth of electric vehicles is a good thing for Ontario. We must work as a Legislature to help reduce emissions across Ontario, and encouraging the switch to electric vehicles is part of that.

Range anxiety is a real barrier for those considering purchasing an electric vehicle. By working to ensure that charging spots are reserved for those who need to charge, we can help alleviate range anxiety and make electric vehicles a practical green alternative.

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

Mr. Peter Tabuns: Speaker, I appreciate this opportunity. Clearly, I’ll be voting in favour of this bill. I don’t think it’s a bad idea as a bill, but I have to say a few things.

We face a crisis that is profound, a crisis that threatens our way of life, a crisis that will threaten many people’s lives, and we are in a situation now where we have a government that has been using conspiracy theories in public to talk about how we need to be responding to that crisis. That, Speaker, is a substantial problem. That undermines the credibility of this government.

My worry about this bill is that the member from Guelph is giving credibility to a government that has been engaged in a war on the environment, engaged in a war against those who would take action on the climate crisis. That is profoundly troubling to me.

My colleague from Kingston noted that this government ripped out electric vehicle charging stations from Metrolinx train stations, that it cut the funding to expand ownership of electric vehicles. If we’re going to have an auto industry in this province in the decades to come, we need to be encouraging the purchase of electric vehicles here, so that we have an interest on the part of manufacturers to make them here. Not only are we undermining what we need to do to protect our lives, our children’s lives, our future and our environment, but we’re undermining our economic prospects for decades and generations to come. No government that engages in that kind of activity should be given cover, ever.

I understand that the member has talked about the need to work with everyone. Well, Speaker, I used to be a city councillor, and I would try to work with everyone, but at times you would find that there were members of council who you could not work with because of the consequences of their activity and the consequences of giving them cover. That is a profound problem for me here.

I would say that we are faced with yet another instance of being given cover, and it bears directly on this bill: the

cutting back of the rights of this House to debate legislation and have proper public hearings and proper time for things to be dealt with. You could well imagine, Speaker, if the legislation that would have rolled back protection of the greenbelt had been jammed through in two days, the public would not have had the time to mobilize and protect that greenbelt. But after those changes that were put in place, that ability to protect the environment is going to be profoundly damaged.

A government that does that should not be given cover, so even though this bill is a positive rather than a negative, I have to say that giving this government the protection of credibility, for them to be able to wave and say, "We've done something around electric vehicles," is contrary to environmental interests.

I'll repeat: I'll vote for the motion, because no one could support not supporting it, but I think everyone needs to be entirely clear about the direction this government is taking.

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

Ms. Donna Skelly: I am pleased to rise in the House today to speak in favour of Bill 123, An Act to amend the Highway Traffic Act respecting electric vehicle charging stations.

This amendment would establish a penalty for drivers who park in an EV station spot but are not charging their vehicles. Violators could be slapped with a \$125 fine.

Understandably, business owners who have provided and paid for the EV charging stations are angry that the stations are being blocked, not only by non-electric vehicles but also by electric vehicles that are not plugged in to the charging station. Blocking what is known as a "fast charger" is a huge expense to a business that has made the investment to have it installed.

The government wants to encourage businesses and other organizations to provide the needed EV charging stations, and the government also wants to ensure that electric vehicle drivers aren't inconvenienced by inattentive and thoughtless drivers who don't need the charging stations. Can you imagine the uproar in any community if non-EV drivers pulled up to gas stations only to find the pumps blocked by other vehicles parked at the pumps?

This fine has been proposed to support progressive and environmentally friendly businesses, and to remind drivers to be more attentive to where they park. There is a term for a conventional vehicle with an internal combustion engine occupying an EV charging station. It's called ICEing.

Many business and mall owners will install EV charging stations in priority spaces in an effort to attract customers. Some of those businesses will incur all of the costs connected to the charging station, costs that include the charging equipment, installation, maintenance and the price of electricity. The charging stations are used as loss leaders by businesses. It's becoming a vital investment in an effort to attract customers to their stores.

The charging stations are usually installed in premium parking spots close to a store. Businesses see the value in

investing in public electric vehicle charging stations, because they want customers to use them to charge their vehicle while they shop. Given that it takes at least 35 minutes to charge an electric vehicle, it would keep customers in the stores longer.

Some municipalities, such as London, Ontario, have bylaws and signage restricting use of these parking spaces to EVs. Although they don't currently levy fines for improper use, this provincial bill would be a framework for municipalities to draw up their own bylaws.

This initiative has been applauded by consumer groups representing electric vehicle owners. Blocking e-car charging stations is a growing frustration for eco-friendly motorists and businesses. I wholeheartedly support the proposed amendment to introduce fines as a penalty for those who block EV charging stations.

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

Ms. Jessica Bell: I was surprised to see this government supporting a bill that helps drivers of electric vehicles to essentially fine gas-fuelled vehicles from parking in a spot reserved for an electric car.

I also support this bill, because I believe it's a small step that governments can take to make our transportation system more green—to move us towards walking, to using public transit, to cycling, to using electric vehicles, and also to how we redesign our cities to make sure that we live closer to where we work, play and study, to reduce the need to travel long distances in the first place.

But I also have to say this bill does feel out of place with this government moving it forward, because this government has proven itself to be no friend to electric vehicles. This government has not moved forward on electrifying our public transit fleet. This government scrapped the vehicle rebate program for electric vehicles, and you messed it up so badly that you were taken to court by Tesla Canada and you lost.

This government has also ripped out charging stations at GO Transit stops, because that is the reality of this government, which is that this government has essentially declared a war on the environment. Your track record reveals that. You've cancelled Ontario's cap-and-trade program. You spent billions fighting a losing court battle to stop the rollout of the carbon tax. You eliminated the Office of the Environmental Commissioner of Ontario. You've slashed funding to conservation and parks. You've slashed funding to flood management, and you've slashed funding to fight emergency forest fires. Not only that, but you've changed the Endangered Species Act to make it easier for polluters to pave over parks and green space, and you've wasted \$200 million and counting, ripping up 750 green energy contracts. This government is literally paying green energy companies not to produce green energy. Right now you're ramming through a bill that would gut the penalties that companies pay when they pollute our environment. You're opening up the door to lawsuits, and you're opening up the door to people getting sick and dying because of groundwater contamination.

1420

That is your legacy. So when it comes to protecting the environment and tackling climate change, this government has been a catastrophic failure. I support this bill, but you're going to have to forgive me for not taking this government's efforts to green our energy grid very seriously, because your track record suggests something completely different.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Jennifer K. French): A reminder to all members to address their comments to and through the Chair, please, going forward.

Further debate?

Mr. Kaleed Rasheed: I stand today to lend my full support to Bill 123, the Reserved Parking for Electric Vehicle Charging Act.

I'm going to start my debate on a positive note by thanking the member from Whitby, as well as the member from Guelph, for bringing this bill forward, because this bill is a prime example of a small change we can make that will have a big impact for people across this province. So my sincere thanks to the members from Guelph and Whitby for bringing this bill forward.

Madam Speaker, my constituents in Mississauga East–Cooksville and people across the province are adopting electric and hybrid vehicles in part to protect our environment and save on gas money. The adoption of EV is especially relevant as gas prices skyrocket up with the federal carbon tax. As we all know, Ontario taxpayers are currently facing an extra 4.4 cents on each litre of gas, which will increase to 11.1 cents per litre in the coming years. Many Ontarians are investing in electric and hybrid cars to avoid this unreasonable tax on gas.

This bill addresses a very common problem: people who abuse EV charging spaces and make life more difficult for everyone else. To hear that people are abusing these spaces, Madam Speaker, actually makes me really, really upset. Under this bill, drivers who take up EV charging spots but don't plug in would face a \$125 fine.

Business owners make a big investment to put in EV stations, and a few drivers are making it hard for all other EV drivers to benefit from the stations. This bill will protect the investment of so many small business owners who see the great potential of EVs and are building a network across the province. If we want to continue to encourage Ontarians to invest in electric vehicles, we have to make it clear that we are investing in laws that allow people to charge them wherever and whenever it is convenient.

Madam Speaker, before becoming an MPP, I was working for a technology company in Waterloo. I remember they used to have these EV charging stations. Organizations were encouraging their employees to drive the EV cars. A lot of my colleagues, actually, used to be really, really upset about the fact that whenever they used to come in the morning to plug in their car, they used to find cars that were not even EV—electric vehicles—parked at the charging station. It really used to upset my colleagues. They used to say to me that they really wished that there was a law or something that could stop these other colleagues parking their cars at the EV station.

I'm sure, after today, they are going to be very excited that our government, along with the member from Guelph, is bringing a bill forward that is not going to allow certain individuals who do not have an electric vehicle to be parking their cars at the station. I'm sure I'm going to be getting a few phone calls as well, too, thanking our government and, again, the member from Guelph, for bringing this motion forward.

This bill introduces a smart, common-sense change that will allow Ontarians to help the environment while saving their hard-earned money.

To end off my debate, I just want to once again thank both members. Truly, I'm thankful to both members, from Whitby and Guelph, for bringing this bill forward and helping those individuals who are investing money in electric vehicles to have the right to park their cars at these stations. Thank you so much for making their life easy. Once again, congratulations for making the lives of Ontarians better and easy.

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

Mr. Chris Glover: I have got to say, after a year and a half of being in this House and watching this government gut just about every environmental piece of legislation that this province has, it's finally nice to see the government taking a small, baby step by setting a \$125 fine for vehicles that park in electric charging station parking spots when they are not actually charging. I think it's a small, baby step, but it doesn't make up for all the damage that this government has done.

A couple of weeks ago, I was visiting some friends in Huntsville who have two electric vehicles. I have driven both of them, and those vehicles are as good as or better than any gas-powered vehicle that I have driven in my entire career of driving vehicles. They have lots of pep. For a \$5 charge, they can drive 500 kilometres. So you could drive from Toronto to Montreal for five dollars' worth of electricity, rather than six or seven times that with even a small car.

The reason that we need to make this change: The technology for electric vehicles is available, and the cars are as good as or better than the gas-powered cars that we have. One argument that's not made often enough, and I haven't heard it in this House: The Toronto Public Health department reports that every year in Toronto, car and truck pollution leads to 280 premature deaths and 1,090 hospitalizations—every year in Toronto. Greg Evans, a chemical engineering professor at the University of Toronto, reports that one-third of all Canadians live within 250 metres of a major roadway, and living within 250 metres of a major roadway leads to higher rates of cancer and cardiovascular disease, and it leads to adverse effects on birth and child development.

So we absolutely need to make this transition to electric vehicles. The technology is there, and the prices are coming down, but we need to make the change soon. This government's actions, so far, have actually taken us in the other direction. They've cancelled the rebate for electric cars. They've actually used taxpayers' dollars to rip up

electric charging stations at GO Transit stations in order to deprive people who drive electric vehicles of the opportunity to charge there.

We know that this government is no friend to the environment. This morning, the Minister of the Environment, whose favourite source of information is a climate-denying website, refused to acknowledge that human-caused climate change is real. Last year, this government fired the environmental commissioner.

I've got just a few seconds left.

The thing that we're really missing out on is the economic opportunity that is presented with the change from fossil fuels to a green economy. The cost of not doing so is that by 2050, climate change will cost Canadians \$60 billion a year, whereas the opportunity to build electric cars in places like General Motors in Oshawa and the plants in Windsor creates a—

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Jennifer K. French): Thank you.

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The member for Whitby has two minutes to reply.

Mr. Lorne Coe: Thank you, Speaker. I'd like to once again acknowledge the co-sponsor of the legislation, and the contributions and perspectives that were provided by other members at the same time.

The proposed legislation solves a problem. At the same time, it acknowledges that change is occurring as we shift to more environmentally sensitive means of transportation. In my earlier remarks, I talked about the investments that businesses have made to install the chargers, made by the private and public sectors. This legislation would also provide some protection to them as well.

But it's incumbent upon us to help remove barriers for electric and hybrid vehicle owners and potential owners in the operation of their vehicles. Some of the perspectives we heard earlier in the debate focused on that. At the end of the day, let's make life easier for electric vehicles and hybrid vehicles, and penalize those people who either consciously abuse or ignore charging station rules. I believe that the penalties proposed in the legislation provide the necessary tools to help.

OCCUPATIONAL SAFETY
AND HEALTH DAY ACT, 2019
LOI DE 2019 SUR LA JOURNÉE
DE LA SÉCURITÉ ET DE LA SANTÉ
AU TRAVAIL

Ms. McKenna moved second reading of the following bill:

Bill 152, An Act to proclaim Occupational Safety and Health Day / Projet de loi 152, Loi proclamant la Journée de la sécurité et de la santé au travail.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Jennifer K. French): Pursuant to standing order 98, the member has 12 minutes for her presentation.

Ms. Jane McKenna: If you've ever ridden the subway on the Yonge-University line and exited at the York Mills

station, you've likely seen the Breaking Ground commemorative quilt by Lauri Swim hanging on the north side mezzanine. This tapestry honours the five Italian immigrant workers—Pasquale Allegranza, Giovanni Carriglio, Giovanni Fusillo, Alessandro Mantella and Guido Mantella—who lost their lives in a tragic accident while working on a water main under the Don River in Toronto on March 17, 1960. These men lost their lives after being trapped 10 and a half metres underground in a cramped, dimly lit tunnel. This sparked a public outcry over the lack of safety standards in construction. The accident became known as the Hogg's Hollow disaster and was a catalyst that forever changed the safety laws in Ontario and saved many lives as a result.

Following Hogg's Hollow, the government of Premier John Robarts enacted the Industrial Safety Act in 1964, which defined safety as "freedom from injury to the body or freedom from damage to health." For the first time, employers were required to take reasonable precautions to ensure worker safety.

Then in 1979, the government of Premier Bill Davis passed the Ontario Health and Safety Act, incorporating over 100 recommendations from a 1976 royal commission report.

In 1978, the Canadian Centre for Occupational Health and Safety was created to provide health and safety information, training and education.

With the 1980s came even more progress. In 1985, the Canadian Labour Congress declared April 28 as the Day of Mourning, an annual day to remember workers killed on the job.

Then in 1986, Canada celebrated the first Canadian Occupational Health and Safety Week, which was observed from 1986 to 1996, Madam Speaker.

Ontario and Canada have led the way when it comes to improving health and safety in the workplace. That's why, in talks between Mexico, Canada and the United States leading up to the North American Free Trade Agreement, the status of workplace safety in all three countries was discussed. Canada suggested to our Mexican and American partners that their countries should consider a similar health and safety week as ours. The United States and Mexico agreed, and together the three nations launched North American Occupational Safety and Health Week in June 1997. Both Labour Canada and the Canadian Society of Safety Engineering were also instrumental in making this happen. Then, in 1998, the Ontario government re-vamped the workers' compensation system and created the Workplace Safety and Insurance Board. Twenty-one years later, the WSIB covers over five million workers in more than 300,000 workplaces across Ontario.

Whether we serve in this place for a year or for several decades, we all know that the road to healthier and safer workplaces has been built over many, many decades. There will always be more work we can do. Workplace injuries still occur every day and profoundly affect workers, their families and their communities—like Dan, who came into my community office in Burlington for assistance after a two-by-six fell from a second storey and

hit him in the arm. Since the accident, he has been unable to work, and it has significantly impacted his family.

As parliamentary assistant to the Minister of Labour, Training and Skills Development, I can tell you that our government recognizes that creating a robust health and safety culture is fundamental to a prosperous Ontario economy. In support of that goal, my private member's bill proposes recognizing the first Tuesday in May as Occupational Safety and Health Day in Ontario. This day would fall during North American Occupational Safety and Health Week and will further emphasize the importance of preventing injury and illness in the workplace, at home and in the community. This special day will help promote health and safety by highlighting the roles and responsibilities of employers, supervisors and workers to support and nurture a health and safety culture in every workplace. It can also help educate employers and employees in their rights and obligations under the Occupational Health and Safety Act. For example, many employees may not realize that they have the legal right to refuse unsafe work, and some employers may not understand their legal obligation to investigate, address and respect a worker's right to refuse unsafe work. This is especially the case among young workers. In fact, new and young workers in Ontario are three times more likely to be injured during the first month on the job than more experienced workers.

I have never forgotten the article by Moira Welsh in the Toronto Star back in 2002. It told the story of a young 19-year-old Wilfrid Laurier student from Sault Ste. Marie, Lewis Wheelan. Lewis was back home in the Soo after finishing his first year of university. It was May 2001, and Lewis had what seemed like a great job for the summer: \$10 an hour cutting overgrown trees near Great Lakes Power lines. He showed up to work wearing a new pair of safety boots, a friend's safety goggles and his dad's yellow hard hat. All that wasn't enough to protect him from what happened one hour into his second day on the job when a 7,200-volt power line fell across his body. As a result, he lost two legs, his right arm and his right shoulder. Sadly, Lewis passed away in 2003. We owe it to Lewis and every young worker injured or killed at work to do more to protect young people entering the workplace. Occupational Safety and Health Day could play a key role in doing this.

Between 2011 and 2015, 33 young workers aged 15 to 24 died in work-related incidents, according to the WSIB. During the same time period, the WSIB processed 31,689 lost-time claims from young workers. More recently, in 2018, injuries to young workers resulted in more than 8,500 lost-time claims.

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In July of this year, the WSIB launched a campaign to promote workplace safety to young workers and their parents. The campaign delivered the serious message that workplace injuries are real and that no one is invincible.

The timing of Occupational Safety and Health Day in the first week of May coincides with the end of exams at colleges and universities in Ontario. It would be a timely reminder to empower young people to speak up and ask

questions before working in unsafe environments. This could help lower workplace injuries among this age group.

Madam Speaker, recognizing the importance of health and safety with a specific day in Ontario also allows us to show appreciation to all health and safety professionals, the people who work to develop and implement policies and procedures for the well-being of everyone in the workplace.

The idea of recognizing an annual health and safety day is not new. In fact, since 2003, the International Labour Organization has observed a World Day for Safety and Health at Work. If you're not familiar with the ILO, it's a tripartite agency of the United Nations established in 1919. The ILO brings together governments, employers and workers of 187 member states to set labour standards, develop policies and devise programs for promoting a safe and healthy working environment.

Ontario's Occupational Safety and Health Day will be a yearly reminder of the importance of creating a culture in every workplace where the right to a safe and healthy working environment is respected by all; where governments, employers and workers actively participate in securing a safe and healthy working environment through a system of defined rights, responsibilities and duties; and where the highest priority is the principle of prevention.

We know that a safer workplace results in many benefits to the employer, including high productivity, fewer sick days, and lower WSIB premiums. It builds a strong reputation and makes attracting qualified employees easier. For workers and their families, they expect their employers, their government and this Legislature to do what they can to ensure they come home safe to their families at the end of a workday.

Madam Speaker, today in Canada there are nearly five fatalities on the job every workday, and it should come as no surprise that the least safe jobs in the country have casualty rates well above average. Based on total fatalities according to statistics from the Association of Workers' Compensation Boards of Canada, Canada's most dangerous industries are: fishing and trapping; mining, quarries and oil wells; logging and forestry; construction; transportation and storage.

Here in Ontario in 2017 there were 81 deaths related to injuries in the workplace and 146 deaths from illnesses caused by workplace exposures. The most common incidents in which workers were killed included motor vehicle accidents; slips, trips and falls from heights; and being crushed or struck by machinery.

The health and safety system pays special attention to these workers' hazards and has implemented standards training for things such as working at heights. Despite new health and safety initiatives, there are still about 15.5 cases of work-related injuries per thousand people employed in Canada.

I am pleased to have the support of the Board of Canadian Registered Safety Professionals. BCRSP is a non-profit federally incorporated association which sets the certified standards for occupational health and safety. Their membership is dedicated to the principles of occupational health and safety as a profession in Canada.

I received a letter of support yesterday from Monica Szabo, the chair of the governing board, and Nikki Wright, the executive director. They said in their letter: “We believe that Bill 152 would be a much-needed step in improving Ontario’s workplace safety. An Occupational Safety and Health Day would highlight the imperative to ensure that strong preventative measures and oversight are in place and respected at all workplaces in order to prevent accidents and injuries.”

In my role at the ministry, I look forward to working with organizations like the Board of Canadian Registered Safety Professionals to help make—

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Jennifer K. French): Thank you.

Further debate? I recognize the member for Niagara Falls.

Mr. Wayne Gates: Thank you, Madam Speaker. Today, allow me to rise and speak to Bill 143 today, which would proclaim the first Tuesday of May as Occupational Safety and Health Day. All I can say is that I’m shocked and disappointed. I’m going to let the PA for the Minister of Labour know that we already have a day in the province of Ontario—it’s called the National Day of Mourning—on April 28. Every year, workers right across the province, right across the country and right across the world show respect to those that have lost their lives. We remember those thousands of workers who have been killed on the job, who suffered illnesses, and we also pay honour to their families.

But we also commit to fighting for the living. It’s unfortunate that the PA didn’t understand that and decided, when she first put this bill forward, Madam Speaker, to have the day scheduled for April 28. She changed it.

Since this government has taken over, three workers have been killed at Fiera Foods. I’m actually shaking when I say this, because while the last man who died there was lying on the floor and his chest was crushed, the company didn’t even have the decency to stop running the machines. They kept running the production as he laid on the floor.

And then this summer—the PA talked about young people—an unregistered electrician in a workplace in Toronto was left alone, because they feel they can do that now because of all the cuts of the Conservative government. He was electrocuted and was killed, an unregistered electrician.

You know what the government has done in the face of those facts? I want you to listen to this: They cut \$16 million to the budget of the Chief Prevention Officer, they cut WSIB premiums by \$1.45 billion, they cut the required time in classrooms to learn about safe workplaces. This is the government that did this. And what do the workers get from this? They get an empty day from the government. Instead of an empty day, a memorial day, why not spend your time writing legislation to make our workplaces safer? Why not pass legislation to hold these murderous companies liable? Why not try and get some justice for killed workers?

I’m going to close; I’ve only got three minutes. If you kill a worker in the province of Ontario, the only thing we should be doing here is saying, “You’re going to jail.”

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

Mrs. Robin Martin: I am delighted to rise today to speak in favour of the private member’s bill introduced by my friend the member from Burlington: Bill 152, An Act to proclaim Occupational Safety and Health Day on the first Tuesday in May every year. This date, as the member said, is in line with North American Occupational Safety and Health Week, which has been celebrated since 1996.

Speaker, I want to begin my remarks with a few reflections from my own riding of Eglinton–Lawrence. Many people living to this day in my riding of Eglinton–Lawrence, which is in the heart of Toronto and has part of it as the first suburb in the city of Toronto, immigrated there from Italy in the 1950s. Many of them or their loved ones worked in the construction industry and literally built this city of Toronto. Unfortunately, many of their loved ones were injured, sometimes very seriously, or killed at their place of work. All of these sacrifices were made as they struggled to earn a living to provide a better life for their families.

Speaker, we have all benefited from these enormous sacrifices. The city of Toronto that these workers built—the buildings, the transit, the roads—supports everything that we do in our day-to-day lives here in Toronto. We are grateful for their legacy, but the benefits really do not outweigh the very real costs in human life. One worker injured in Ontario is one worker too many.

I strongly believe that we all need to learn more and to know more about the enormous sacrifices made by the Italian immigrants in my riding of Eglinton–Lawrence and the many other workers across our province, regardless of their background, who have suffered from workplace accidents or injuries and who have sometimes lost their lives. We need to make sure that people are aware of the importance of occupational safety at work to ensure that everyone comes home safely at the end of a hard day’s work.

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If anyone would like to learn more about the heroic sacrifices made by the Italian immigrants who came to my riding of Eglinton–Lawrence in the 1950s, I highly recommend that they do a few things. First, consider attending the Day of Mourning for fallen workers on April 28—

Interjections.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Jennifer K. French): The opposition will come to order.

Mrs. Robin Martin: —any year at the Columbus Centre in my riding, which is at Dufferin and Lawrence. This has always been a very moving ceremony. I have gone several years to that ceremony. It’s very moving. While no formal ceremony was held on that date last year, the Italian Canadian community there still came together to remember and pay their respects.

The Columbus Centre, I should mention, is home to the Italian Fallen Workers Memorial, which lists the names of more than 1,000 workers of Italian origin who have been killed in workplace accidents across Ontario. It is a very moving memorial and a poignant reminder of the importance of workplace safety. I want to recognize the many years of work by the Italian Canadian community in designing, researching and documenting all of the names that appear on the memorial.

In this regard, I can also add a special mention of our Associate Minister of Mental Health and Addictions, who was an early member of the project committee that led to the creation of that memorial. To my knowledge, it is the largest memorial of its kind anywhere in Canada. The team that made it happen did such a thorough job that, regrettably, the memorial wall installed in 2016 is now full. There is no room for additional names on that memorial, but the list is available online for everyone to review and reflect on. Unfortunately, they keep finding more names to add to that list.

Second, I strongly recommend, if people are more interested and want to learn more about this, reading two great books on the topic of this specific memorial and group of people in my riding of Eglinton–Lawrence. Those books are *The Voice of Labour: A Life in Toronto's Construction Industry* by Marino Toppan, and *Land of Triumph and Tragedy: Voices of the Fallen Workers* by Paola Breda. The stories contained in those books, both of which I have read, are very moving. To quote the International Brotherhood of Electrical Engineers from 2018:

“The birthplace of the modern injured workers’ movement was the Hoggs Hollow disaster in Toronto. On March 17, 1960, five Italian workers were killed while constructing a tunnel for a water main.”

According to Marino Toppan, the author I mentioned earlier, the “five Italian men went down into a water main tunnel at the foot of York Mills in north Toronto; they never saw the light of day again. They were suffocated by smoke, a spark ignited a fire and then rescue efforts were disorganized.”

The spark of this tragedy spurred the nascent labour movement forward. The strong Italian immigrants decided that enough was enough. They were no longer willing to put up with working conditions which were unsafe.

Paola Breda, the other author I mentioned, charts that the Italian immigrant labourers’ struggle to gain safety and fairness in the workplace had a major role in the changes in labour legislation for all of Ontario’s residents. Thankfully, we have come a long way since that point. Ontario today has one of the best workplace safety records in Canada, and our province continues to take a proactive approach to worker health and safety, emphasizing safety first and educating on the prevention of hazards.

As I said earlier, remembering is important. It reminds us and makes us reflect on how we got to where we are today, and it gives us the knowledge necessary to avoid repeating the mistakes of the past.

That’s also why we mark North American Occupational Health and Safety Week during the first week of May.

During this time, organizations and individuals across Canada, the United States and Mexico, as my friend the member from Burlington indicated, including the American Society of Safety Engineers and the Canadian Society of Safety Engineering, come together to focus the efforts of employees, employers and the general public on the importance of preventing injury and illness in the workplace, at home and in the community. It’s a time for us all to reflect, to look at what is being done to ensure occupational health and safety and on our current practices, and to identify what is working and what can be done better.

But as important as this time is, it currently has no official recognition by the government of Ontario. That’s why I was so pleased to see my colleague the member for Burlington bring this bill forward to the floor of the Legislature for debate this afternoon. It’s one thing to mark the National Day of Mourning, which I do every year when I go to the Columbus Centre, which is on April 28, but I think it’s another thing to say that we should also mark a positive emphasis on ensuring occupational safety and health at work going forward. I think it doesn’t hurt us to mark both. So I’m pleased to do that. I think it’s certainly important to future generations.

That’s why I’m supporting this bill, and I think passing Bill 152 will send a clear message that the province of Ontario recognizes the importance of supporting and nurturing a safety and health culture in every workplace. It will formalize the first Tuesday in May each year as Occupational Safety and Health Day. It will give employers and employees an additional opportunity to ensure that safety is always top of mind—another opportunity to promote workplace safety and health through education of safety and health rights, responsibilities and prevention measures. It will complement, and not compete with, ongoing worker remembrance and education efforts already conducted by the Ministry of Labour and by outside organizations, employers and employees.

My friend the member from Burlington mentioned that between 2011 and 2015, 33 young workers died, according to the WSIB. That’s a very frightening number. I think it’s important that we need to educate everybody, but particularly young people starting work. I think that we can’t do enough in that regard, and having another day where we have a chance to emphasize these safety messages, especially in this timely way around the end of the school year etc., is really important to ensure that we get the message to young people before they start working that safety is critical.

I also want to note that the Ontario General Contractors Association is supporting this bill. They were founded in 1939 by a group of 11 general contracting firms. The OGCA has grown into the largest representative association in the construction industry. Their members include small, medium and large firms, representing both union and open-shop contractors. They’ve sent a letter of support under the signature of David Frame, who is their director of government relations, saying that “the OGCA supports our members in establishing a safety culture throughout their organizations.”

Employers have a responsibility to keep their workers safe, and employees should have a reasonable expectation of a safe working environment. Education is not the only way to ensure safety in the workplace, but it is an important part of that work. Bill 152 aims to ensure that this education is top of mind at least on one day, on the first Tuesday of May each year. I urge my colleagues to support this bill.

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

Ms. Jessica Bell: It's an honour to be speaking on this issue with my NDP colleagues in the House today. We should not be injured or killed at work. It's really that simple. It should be a priority each and every day, not just one day a year.

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My office works with many people in our riding who have been injured at work. One recent example that we have had is a lady who I'll call Rosie. She's an older woman. She worked as a life science technician, and she had to stop due to an injury that she received at work. She has tried everything to be able to return, including extensive physiotherapy, and she has complied with every single one of the WSIB's requests, but even after all that, her physiotherapy benefits have been cut off and the WSIB is refusing to support her claim.

This woman is the main income-earner of her family. She doesn't want to reveal her name—it's understandable if she's dealing with the WSIB; she doesn't want her name to be out there—and she's facing an uphill battle just to try to get the treatment she needs to go back to work. Then, on top of that, she has to deal with the financial difficulty of being injured, not having an income and then fighting an institution that is essentially unaccountable.

Unfortunately, Rosie's experience is common, and I believe that announcing a day to promote health and safety is not going to make Rosie's life any better, or the lives of the workers in Ontario who have been injured or killed in the workplace. In fact, this government's record on worker health and safety is just appalling. This government has cut workplace safety investigations, including investigations into Fiera Foods, where three people have died since your government took office. It has cut millions in funding for health and safety organizations, and you don't even require employers to put up a health and safety poster so that workers understand their rights—a poster; I don't get it. And then, on top of that, you've cut WSIB premiums for employers by 30%.

What these changes mean is that people who get injured on the job don't get the compensation they need to recover or pay their bills until they're ready to work again. I don't believe that a health and safety day is going to improve these workers' lives. Real laws that we can enact here in Queen's Park do, and I encourage this government to do exactly that.

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

Interruption.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Jennifer K. French): I will remind all members in the galleries that while they can

enjoy, they cannot participate. Stop the clock—sorry. I didn't mean to not stop the clock for her. But members in the galleries, please remind yourselves not to participate.

I apologize to the member from Hamilton Mountain.

Miss Monique Taylor: Thank you, Speaker. I wanted to rise today to express my utter disbelief that this government would introduce a bill like this—a bill that offers a symbolic day of workplace safety while this government guts workplace safety legislation and funding.

What I find unbelievable is that the original version of this bill had April 28 set for the new symbolic workers' safety day. Did this government or the member from Burlington not know that April 28 was the National Day of Mourning, that this is the labour movement's most solemn day, that that's the day where labour mourns the dead and fights for the living? Was this Conservative government trying to whitewash the Day of Mourning for workers? Did they not know? It's unbelievable. Either way, I'm shocked. It is clear that this government is out of touch with the working people of Ontario.

Who is this bill actually for? It does nothing for the betterment of the lives of workers. If anything, this bill is by the government, for the government. It's designed to make them look better.

And it's not just health and safety. This government routinely tramples on workers' rights to collective bargaining, just like Bill 124 or when this government passed back-to-work legislation for OPG workers before they even went on strike. It's very clear that this government has no respect for the rights of working Ontarians.

This bill is a lazy attempt to cover up all of the terrible cuts that are dragging Ontario backwards and undermine our workplace safety. To see this bill attempt to sugar-coat their disastrous anti-labour agenda is absolutely infuriating. This Conservative government is making life harder and harder for working families, and now it's adding insult to injury with this do-nothing bill.

That is why I am happy to be voting against this bill and to demand legislation that actually helps the working people of this province.

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

Ms. Doly Begum: I am deeply, deeply disappointed with this government, bringing this bill forward. What this motion potentially does is it puts the responsibility, the onus, on the worker, to say, "You know what? Try not to get hurt or get killed, because the responsibility is on you to be educated in terms of what the workplace is."

It's so disappointing when this government makes so many cuts to legal aid. Legal Aid Ontario is one of those places that workers go to when they have nowhere else to go, when they are not treated well with WSIB, when they do not get compensation, especially after the Doug Ford government reduced the amount of the premiums in WSIB. These people do not have the luxury to go to a lawyer. They end up at legal aid, and do you know what's happening right now, Speaker? They do not have that luxury. There are lineups at Legal Aid Ontario and these workers do not have the right representation.

So I am extremely disappointed to see that this government has a day. The member opposite mentioned that workplace injuries happen every single day. Yes, member, you're right. But do you know what? Putting in a day to recognize that, meanwhile the entire year we're forgetting the responsibility of the employer, is extremely disappointing and outrageous.

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

Mrs. Lisa Gretzky: I'm pleased to stand to speak to Bill 152, which is entitled the Health and Safety at Work Day Act, tabled by the member from Burlington, who is the parliamentary assistant to the Minister of Labour. That's important to point out because the first time that she tabled legislation was just a week ago, and the day when she suggested that we recognize health and safety at work was on the Workers Day of Mourning. Had the parliamentary assistant to the Minister of Labour simply gone on the Ontario Ministry of Labour website, she would have seen that it was the Day of Mourning. It shows how out of touch this government is.

Madam Speaker, I'm going to speak to why we're opposing this bill. I will gladly oppose this hollow piece of legislation that does nothing more than just political posturing to try and hide the fact that this government has gutted protections to workers in this province. They have moved workplace safety training out of the classroom into online courses, cut the number of hours of safety training members get, extended the deadline for completing safety training, allowing workers to go without training, and lowered supervision requirements for apprenticeships, meaning less experienced workers have less support on the job. A young person was killed on the job doing electrical work because he was not being supervised, because of this government's decisions.

They cut back on workplace safety inspections and cut \$16 million from the Chief Prevention Officer's budget. They've taken money away from injured workers and given it to employers by slashing WSIB payments by 30%, even while advocates say legitimate injury claims are often being denied. They've eliminated working-at-heights training in the auto sector. The member from Burlington referred several times to the importance of that specific training; this government has removed it. They've scrapped the Ontario College of Trades, eliminating some standards for skilled trades.

The members on that side of the House don't seem to know—don't seem to care—that April 28 is the National Day of Mourning, brought in by the labour movement to honour the brothers and sisters who have died or been injured on the job. All they do is gut health and safety—now they're calling it safety and health; apparently we've renamed it. All they've done is gutted it and brought forward an empty piece of legislation that is nothing more than political posturing. While they continue to gut health and safety and pull stunts like this, those of us on this side will continue to stand with workers, mourn the dead and fight like hell for the living.

Interjections.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Jennifer K. French): Order. I will remind all members of a few things: Our language will remain parliamentary, and we do not refer to any sitting member by their name but rather by their title or their ministerial portfolio.

With that, I return to the member for Burlington, who has two minutes to reply.

Ms. Jane McKenna: As I've said in here numerous times, everybody has the right to go to work and come home safe. If you visit the home page of the Ministry of Labour's website you'll see the following statement front and centre: "Preventing work-related illness and injury is the most important job at any workplace."

The nature of this place requires government and opposition members to disagree more than we agree. I remember sitting in the opposition benches when I first was elected in 2011. In fact, my very first private member's bill was co-sponsored by the NDP member from Hamilton Mountain and the former Liberal member from Oakville.

1510

When it comes to health and safety, I recall sitting in this place earlier this year, when the leader of the official opposition said, "We are committed to working ... with employers, with unions, with safety experts and with the WSIB to eliminate workplace incidents" and provide support for "victims of workplace illness and injury...." I truly think that Bill 152 is one of those pieces of legislation where we can all agree to come together—

Interjection.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Jennifer K. French): Niagara Falls.

Ms. Jane McKenna: —in order to create a culture of health and safety in every workplace across this great province.

Interjection.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Jennifer K. French): Windsor West.

Ms. Jane McKenna: We have an opportunity today in our workplace with Bill 152 to encourage and improve health and safety in every workplace in Ontario. Everybody deserves to have a day of recognition of occupational safety and health. Today, I'm thrilled to be a part of this—

Interjections.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Jennifer K. French): The opposition will come to order.

Ms. Jane McKenna: Thank you so much. I look forward to the vote later on today.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Jennifer K. French): The opposition will come to order. A number of members have been reminded individually.

We will continue. Orders of the day.

ANTI-RACISM ACTIVITIES

Ms. Sara Singh: I move that, in the opinion of this House, the Ministry of Education should commit to a fully independent, comprehensive public investigation of the charges of anti-Black racism within the Peel District School Board, and to presenting its findings and plan for

action to the House, detailing the resources to be allocated to address this long-standing systemic issue.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Jennifer K. French): Ms. Singh, Brampton Centre, has moved private member's notice of motion number 84. Pursuant to standing order 98, the member has 12 minutes for her presentation.

Ms. Sara Singh: I am very proud to rise here today to put forward this motion and, with the support of the Black caucus and our community, to finally address a prevalent issue within the region of Peel and our education system.

I want to start off, Speaker, by thanking all of the community members who have helped inform the work that we've put into this motion. Many of them are here with us today, so I just want to thank you for taking the time out to be here with us today at Queen's Park as we present this message. It is your voices that I am echoing. Thank you for the courage in fighting for racial justice for yourselves, for your children and for future generations. I've had the opportunity to speak directly with many of these individuals since the announcement of the review at the PDSB. Thank you for candidly sharing your thoughts, your concerns and ideas on how we can address anti-Black racism within our education system.

I also want to thank the families in Peel and across this province who have, for decades, endured and continue to endure the impacts of systemic racism, which is so clearly embedded in our institutions, impacting every aspect of our lives and how we engage with society.

Speaker, education is thought to be "the most powerful weapon which we can use to change the world," a quote once made famous by the late Nelson Mandela. This is why it is so concerning to so many of us that within a system as political and fundamental as our education system, that within this very system which is meant to shape and mould the minds of future generations, that within these institutions we see racism and other forms of discrimination so deeply embedded and continuously perpetuated, and yet—and yet—many cannot even identify how pervasive racism is.

I want to commend the Minister of Education for initiating a review and for seeking to address the concerns brought forward by the community in Peel. My hope here today is that we can have a dialogue about the real work that needs to happen, and that we can create a space to listen and work with the Black community about the concerns that they have, their experiences. I hope that we not only listen but that we create and implement real solutions to finally address the problem.

I want to acknowledge as well my positionality. I am a South Asian Indo-Caribbean woman who grew up in Brampton and attended Peel schools. I, along with many of my friends in Peel, can recount many experiences of discrimination either directly or indirectly, Speaker. Growing up, many of us did not have the language to describe what we may have been experiencing or what our friends were experiencing. In some instances, we were told that what we felt and what we heard and what we saw simply wasn't true. For many of our parents who wanted

to trust the powers that be, they dared not question the authority of our education system.

It is important for me to understand and to help others understand that even within racialized communities, our experiences are different. Today, I am standing here as an ally with the Black community, and I want our conversation to focus specifically on the anti-Black racism that happens within our Peel District School Board.

Speaker, on November 7 the Minister of Education announced a review into the Peel District School Board in response to serious "allegations related to equity in the Peel District School Board ... specifically related to anti-Black racism and lack of adherence to governance, leadership, and human resources practices."

The minister has asked that recommendations on how the board can ensure effective board governance, which promotes equality, increases accountability and transparency, and provides safeguards to the success and well-being of students, are brought forward. This is good news in our community. For those who have known and endured for years, anti-Black racism is real; it is prevalent. A review is absolutely necessary. It's great that we can start with that.

But I want to acknowledge that since the initiation of this review, I have heard from teachers, trustees, students, parents and concerned community members who don't want just another review that will be swept under the rug or put on a shelf with no real action, no real resources and no real plan of implementation. The community has seen for far too long what the Liberal government failed to do—report after report, evidence after evidence that highlights systemic issues of racism and anti-Black racism within our schools and institutions, and yet nothing has been done.

The community would like to see a real plan of action this time. I have had conversations with the minister, and we have discussed what that can look like so that we can really create the change that needs to happen, finally, for those communities that have endured this for far too long.

Parents have shared with me how their children have been treated in the education system in Peel: the lack of expectations, the language used to describe their children, and the dismissiveness of their concerns as parents about the treatment of their children. The idea that the angry Black mom shouldn't be upset that her child is being called racist names in class is not okay. Those parents, those students, those educators who need to go into our education system every single day need to battle that narrative in order to have real concerns addressed.

The negative perceptions of our Black students within our education system means that they're being streamed into applied courses when they could be put into an academic course. They are being told that they should be basketball players and musicians rather than scientists, lawyers and doctors. That is what that narrative does to Black students in our education system.

As someone who worked in diversity and inclusion training prior to becoming an elected member, I would go into schools and talk to young people about their experiences. They would share with us the hurtful language that

they were experiencing: being called the N-word, being told that they were savages, being told that they simply weren't good enough. This is not okay to be happening in our education system. For people to stand by and watch it and dismiss it as not real is not okay. This government has known, and we need people now to take action.

1520

We don't need another report that isn't going to do anything for anyone. We saw, with the York Region District School Board review, some 26 recommendations given to the previous Minister of Education, who did nothing—nothing; who actually thought it was the board's responsibility, with absolutely no resources, to implement some 26 recommendations in the school system. They can't do it on their own. If this government isn't going to commit to providing the resources, then who is?

In the conversations I've had with people, it has been very clear to us that we need to distinguish, for people who are not familiar with anti-oppressive frameworks or anti-Black racism, that bullying and racial discrimination are two very separate concepts. Anti-Black racism is not a form of bullying; it is a form of discrimination that impacts a specific community. I think it is extremely important that as members who are not from the Black community, we clearly state that bullying is different from anti-Black racism.

This is not simply about bullying; this is about a specific community that through systemic, embedded discrimination is disproportionately being marginalized and is disproportionately experiencing the impacts of racism. It's important that we make sure that this review focuses specifically on the experiences of this community.

The community wants to see real resources being allocated. As we've said, there has been report after report, yet no clear allocation of resources. I know that other members are going to speak to the resources that are actually needed in our school system in order to create the types of programs that will hold people accountable.

In the over 15 conversations I've had since this review was launched, not to mention the previous conversations where we know what's going on, the number one thing I keep hearing is that people want accountability. Accountability is important because for far too long, this community has raised alarm bells. This is not new; this didn't just pipe up on November 6 for the minister to intervene; this has been going on. But no one—no one—is being held accountable for the reality that those students and teachers and administrators are facing within our education system.

I encourage the minister to create some accountability measures moving forward, and I recommend that we collect data—because without that data, without that evidence, without those numbers to quantify those experiences, people are saying, "It isn't real." Without some sort of specific mechanism that allows people to say, "This was an instance of anti-Black racism that I experienced," no one is held accountable, whether that's a teacher, whether that's a vice-principal, whether that's another school board trustee or whether that's the director himself.

People have asked for further training. Previous recommendations called for training. We're not going to lunch-and-learn our way out of this, people. We need real training that holds people accountable and so that we can measure what is being implemented and whether it is actually being followed. Without that, we might as well write another report that gets filed away, and nobody does anything.

Accountability measures; real resources; real training; looking into who we're hiring: It is a problem when our entire administration does not look like the population of the students who attend those schools. When you have directors and VPs who don't even understand what racism looks like, how can you expect that those parents can go to that VP or principal and address their concerns about racism? They simply can't. We need to do better. We need to do more.

I recognize that I've run out of time.

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

Hon. Prabmeet Singh Sarkaria: It's very simple: Schools must be safe, inclusive and welcoming places for students, staff and the entire community. That is why I rise today to speak in support of this motion from the member from Brampton Centre.

I represent one of the most diverse communities in our remarkable province. Students, families and staff deserve to have an education system that reflects our values, a system that is inclusive and tolerant and one that is accountable to parents and is transparent in all that it does.

Our government will always condemn any form of racism. Through the leadership of the Associate Minister of Children and Women's Issues, our government is working with 70 organizations who are engaged in on-going, prevention-focused initiatives specifically designed to support Black children, youth and families in target communities across the province.

Recently, disturbing allegations related to equity in the Peel District School Board have raised troubling concerns specifically related to anti-Black racism, broader discrimination and a lack of adherence to governance, leadership and human resources practices. Allegations of discrimination and prejudice against students are unacceptable. As the minister announced on November 7, the government has now officially appointed Ena Chadha and Suzanne Herbert, who will be the reviewers at the Peel District School Board. Upon completion, the reviewers will provide a final report to the minister with recommendations on how the board could ensure effective governance—governance that promotes equity, increases accountability and transparency, and safeguards the success and well-being of all students.

It is vital that school board trustees and administrators provide effective governance and ensure students learn in a safe and inclusive environment. Anything less than that is unacceptable. The Minister of Education, along with members of our Peel caucus, and I heard that sentiment personally when we held a round table yesterday with

members and Peel community leaders who have been very active on this issue.

I want to thank the member for bringing this important motion forward. I support it 100%. I am proud of the actions that this government has taken proactively and am encouraged that a public review will commence soon.

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

Ms. Laura Mae Lindo: I would like to start with a little bit of a history when it comes to the conversations I've had with the minister. I had a phone call with the Minister of Education. We met last week. And now here we are having a discussion about my colleague's private member's bill. And while I am also ecstatic that we're in a situation where we are going to take—we say with our words—anti-Black racism seriously, I want to begin with a list of the things that didn't prompt a review.

In 1992, a report by Stephen Lewis, a report by the Advisor on Race Relations to the Premier of Ontario Bob Rae—that did not prompt a review.

Addressing Hate Crime in Ontario: Final Report of the Hate Crimes Community Working Group—also spoke about anti-Black racism in schools. It didn't prompt a review.

One Vision One Voice, Review of the Roots of Youth Violence, YouthREX's report Doing Right Together for Black Youth, and Ontario's Anti-Black Racism Strategy did not prompt a review of anti-Black racism in schools. And those were just the reports that were going directly to the government of Ontario.

If I go further to things like HairStory: Rooted, a review by Black youth in care who spoke about their experiences of anti-Black racism in school—that didn't get a review.

We Rise Together by Dr. Carl James, which was literally given to the Peel District School Board, didn't prompt a review.

Towards Race Equity in Education and the report by Patrick Case and Suzanne Herbert, Review of the York Region District School Board, didn't prompt a review by this government.

The Black Community in Peel F.A.C.E.S. report also didn't prompt a review.

The reason I bring that up is because what did prompt a review was a letter by the chair and vice-chair of the Peel District School Board, Stan Cameron and Sue Lawton, which discussed the issue of anti-Black racism—sure, presumably. We've not seen the letter, I have to admit. However, these were two white people in positions of power who said that there was an issue with Black folks that prompted a review. And the way that anti-Black racism operates is that when Black people say, "I'm experiencing anti-Black racism in this institution," nobody listens. When white folks say, "There might be a problem," then we listen. That, on its own, is troubling.

1530

The other thing that I do find a little bit disconcerting—and again, I just, in a chamber of love, want to speak freely. The original statement by the Minister of Education on November 7 states, "Allegations related to equity in the

Peel District School Board have raised concerns, specifically related to anti-Black racism and lack of adherence to governance" etc.

Ten days later, on the 27th, when this review was announced, the language started to shift: "The review is intended to address concerns about equity, including anti-Black racism"—which means that anti-Black racism is now taking a back seat—"and serious issues related to governance"—"serious issues related to governance, leadership and human resources practices in the board" is the focus of the review. This is also how anti-Black racism operates. The actual concerns that prompted the review are now taking a back seat to something that non-Black community members have deemed to be more important. That is also troubling.

The other and the very last thing that I will say is that there has been a lot of talk from the Minister of Education around bullying and harassment. Bullying has been resourced by the Ministry of Education. Math tests for teachers have been resourced by the Minister of Education. But there is no budget line directed to racial equity or racial justice by the Minister of Education. So where is it that I am supposed to take this information and go back to my people, to my community, and tell them that I can truly believe that this will be different? I am begging—I am begging—the other side to stand up and tell me that there are actual resources allocated in the Ministry of Education's portfolio that will deal with racial equity, and in particular anti-Black racism, because that is what we're talking about in Peel District School Board.

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

Mrs. Nina Tangri: As my colleague had mentioned earlier, schools must be safe and they must be inclusive and welcoming places for our students, for our staff and for the entire community. Students, families and staff deserve a system that is inclusive, tolerant, accountable and transparent. Anything less is unacceptable.

The allegations related to equity in the Peel District School Board are extremely concerning. That's why the Minister of Education took swift and decisive action when the concerns about Peel District School Board came to his attention. I am glad that the minister has already appointed the reviewers to conduct this immediate review of the Peel District School Board.

This builds on the great work of my colleague the Associate Minister of Children and Women's Issues, who is working to support better outcomes for Black children, youth and families through the Ontario Black Youth Action Plan. Racism, discrimination and prejudice have no place in our schools. Not only is such behaviour wrong in a modern society, it can also have serious effects on our students' well-being. Students that have a positive sense of well-being get better results in school, with better learning outcomes, test scores and grades. They also have lower absenteeism and dropout rates and fewer behavioural issues in the classroom.

Just yesterday, the minister announced how we would be moving forward. Two reviewers, Suzanne Herbert and

Ena Chadha, have been appointed to conduct an immediate review of the PDSB. The reviewers will submit a final report to the Minister of Education, with a copy to the PDSB, by winter 2020, with an interim report submitted by the end of this year.

To the member opposite: We have listened and immediately took action, action that will bring real, meaningful results. All parties in this House agree: No child, parent, trustee or staff member should be subjected to hateful, discriminatory or derogatory remarks. Already last night, I attended a round table with my colleagues and members of the community, and we listened intently to what the community needs us to do.

I thank the member opposite for bringing this important motion forward. I support it, and I'm glad the Minister of Education has already taken action by announcing the review of the board. I look forward to taking real action.

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

Mr. Kevin Yarde: I'm just going to continue with some of the allegations. I'm not going to repeat what the members from Kitchener Centre and Brampton Centre have said.

These allegations, especially when they're raised from every level of the Peel education system, are deeply troubling. Senior staff, the chair and vice-chair of the board, and many parents have all come forward with serious allegations of discrimination. We've heard stories of complaints of racism being met with problematic responses, a hesitation from the board to act quickly, or nothing being done at all.

When a Peel District School Board trustee is heard calling McCrimmon Middle School in Brampton "McCriminal," that is highly offensive and totally unacceptable. The board must hold its members accountable for their actions, and the fact that nothing was done in this instance is further proof that we need an investigation.

We expect our school leaders to promote an environment where all students and staff are treated equally. The Peel District School Board needs this government's support to reform their accountability measures and better train educators, to create learning spaces where all students feel welcome.

Black students need to feel safe, supported and respected at school. We cannot deny one group of people their human right to get an education free of discrimination.

Our school boards need to promote equality, regardless of race, heritage, orientation or socio-economic status, to ensure the success and well-being of our children.

The Minister of Education has called for outside third-party reviews to investigate these allegations, but there has been no mention of whether their findings will be made public. We implore the minister to conduct an independent, transparent and public investigation into these allegations.

There need to be difficult conversations about race. No student should be made to feel unwelcome in any setting

because of his or her race. No Black student should ever have to deal with this again.

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

Mr. Kaleed Rasheed: As a member who represents a community in the Peel region, it is my duty to stand in this House and address the issue of anti-Black racism in the Peel District School Board.

I would like to thank the member from Brampton Centre for her dedication to her constituents and the region of Peel.

Recently, as many of you may know, allegations about a lack of equity in the Peel District School Board have raised concerns, specifically related to anti-Black racism and lack of adherence to governance, leadership and human resources practices.

Discrimination and prejudice against students—or anyone—are unacceptable in our schools and in our province.

I am proud of the leadership of the Minister of Education, for his work to make sure that students in Ontario receive the best education, where they are respected and included.

As the minister has stated, our government has promptly appointed two reviewers to conduct an immediate review of the Peel District School Board. They will provide a report with recommendations on how the board can ensure effective governance that promotes equity, accountability, transparency, and that safeguards the success and well-being of all.

This is not only our responsibility as a government to tackle this issue. We also expect our school leaders, trustees and senior administration to take action.

With this review process, our government is committed to creating an inclusive and accepting learning environment where all students feel welcome, included and respected.

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

1540

Mr. Gurratan Singh: We have to be real right now and recognize that there's a history and a pattern of racism in the Peel District School Board, specifically anti-Black racism. It's important to understand that this is not something new. This didn't happen overnight. This is something that Black students have been struggling with for a very long time.

School is supposed to be a place that's safe, where students can come to learn and grow and pursue their dreams, where they are supported. That's what makes this racism so especially egregious. How are Black students expected to learn in an environment where they're being subjected to systemic and institutional racism? It's wrong that Black students have been subjected to this racism, and it's vitally important to recognize that this will have a long-standing impact on these students, including further marginalizing them as they continue their education.

That's why this motion is so important, because we have to name what students are facing as anti-Black racism and understand the history of racism that Black students

have faced and continue to face. We need to get to the bottom of this issue so we can finally address this in a substantive and real way and, more than anything, work, fight and push to make sure that anti-Black racism has no place in our schools, our province or anywhere.

Interjections.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Jennifer K. French): Stop the clock. Can I remind all members who are coming and going to do so respectfully as there is debate going on? And when the back door is open, we're unable to concentrate on the proceedings of the House, so I'm reminding all members, please.

I'm sorry. Please resume. Further debate?

Mr. Sheref Sabawy: I rise today to speak to this important motion on the serious issues in Mississauga and Peel. I have heard these concerns last night at a round table with the Minister of Education and many of the Mississauga and Peel MPPs, with many of the community advocates, as well as trustees. I have also heard personally from my constituents in my riding. I take these allegations very seriously, and I know the Minister of Education also takes these allegations seriously.

I am sure we all agree that this is not a partisan or political issue, but a social one. Racism has no place in our education system or society at large. That's why the minister confirmed that swift action would be taken to address these serious concerns with the review of the Peel District School Board. I am proud and impressed by his leadership on this and his swift action. The Minister of Education has announced last night the appointment of Suzanne Herbert and Ena Chadha to conduct an immediate review of PDSB.

It is important that the school boards are effective, transparent and have proper governance procedures. Even more so, boards must ensure students and staff have a safe and inclusive space to learn and do their work. I support this motion fully and look forward to the reviewers' recommendations to ensure these are proper and accountable board governance and human resources practices.

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

Ms. Jill Andrew: I am honoured to stand in full support of our member and friend the MPP for Brampton Centre's motion to have a review of anti-Black racism at Peel District School Board. The review must be transparent. The review must be public. What I haven't heard from the government side is, we need to know when it's happening. There needs to be a timeline, an actual critical path, so parents, students, educators and administrators know exactly when this review is going to happen, so they know when the recommendations of the review are going to be embedded into our school system in Peel and, frankly, across the province, because racism does not only exist in the Peel District School Board.

I want to stress, as the women's critic as well, that gender socialization, the construction of gender, also makes it very difficult for not only Black children, but for Black girls as well, who are often put into these social

tropes of loud Black girl versus silent Black girl. The things we want all girls to have—assertiveness; bold, bright ideas; a strong voice—when you're a Black girl and you exhibit those in schools, anti-Black racism also manifests in the shutting down and silencing of Black girls who are bold with a big voice.

So we have a lot of layers here, but what the government needs to commit to is addressing what needs to be done in a timely fashion and looking at Black girls, Black boys, Black non-binary children—all Black children.

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

Mr. Deepak Anand: Madam Speaker, I represent the very diverse and vibrant community of Mississauga-Malton, with 78% of the population representing visible minorities. When I hear about allegations of racism against any community, just the notion that someone has been the victim of racism makes me truly feel disheartened and dispirited.

Recent concerns raised by the community regarding the allegations of anti-Black racism at the board and a lack of adherence to governance, leadership and human resources are very disturbing.

We all need to work together to throw out racism. It has no place in our society. It results in anxiety, sadness, depression, feelings of guilt and emptiness. These often translate into depression, loss of interest, eating disorders and stress-related ailments. It has social, educational and financial impacts.

We all deserve to live well and live happily. Our government believes that every Ontarian deserves to have a system that is inclusive, tolerant, accountable and transparent.

Madam Speaker, I'd like to thank our Minister of Education. I'm very pleased that our minister has taken swift action by appointing two independent reviewers, Suzanne Herbert and Ena Chadha, to lead the review process. I believe this is a great step. I would encourage every member of the community with concerns to schedule an interview with the reviewers and please speak your mind. Your valuable contribution will shape the report and will result in meaningful output.

I urge everyone, and I mean everyone, to stand up against racism and discrimination. Let's build a society where no one has to suffer, where we can all live and enjoy our lives to the fullest.

Again, to share your concerns, contact the reviewers at pdsbreviewers@ontario.ca.

I want to end my speech by quoting Martin Luther King Jr.: "An individual has not started living until he can rise above the narrow confines of his individualistic concerns to the broader concerns of all humanity."

Madam Speaker, I will be supporting the motion.

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

Ms. Marit Stiles: It's a pleasure to rise, as the official opposition education critic, in support of this really important motion from my colleague the member for

Brampton Centre and all of my colleagues who have shared their insights, their expertise, their experience in the long history of anti-Black racism in Ontario schools.

Schools should be a place where students, teachers, staff and trustees have the tools they need to address and dismantle racist practices. We can't shy away from addressing anti-Black racism, and until we do that important work, Black students will not have access to an equitable and quality education. Instead, we will continue to see Black students being undermined and targeted, sometimes by the very people empowered to make decisions about their education.

Unfortunately, instead of taking meaningful whole-of-government-approach action to tackling this systemic problem, we see the government making things worse with cuts to education, cuts to after-school programs designed to support black youth, gutting the Anti-Racism Directorate and freezing funding for the Ontario Black Youth Action Plan.

But, Madam Speaker, there is a way forward: Pass this motion, ensure that the allegations of anti-Black racism and discrimination at the Peel District School Board are fully and independently investigated, make the results public, and back up the recommendations with a funded action plan.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Jennifer K. French): I now return to the member for Brampton Centre, who has two minutes to reply.

Ms. Sara Singh: Thank you to everyone who has spoken in support of this motion.

I would like to thank the Peel caucus from the Conservative government for their input. It's not often that we get to agree on something, but it is nice that finally we can. I think this is a real opportunity for us to work together to do the right thing, but, more importantly, for us to work with the community that has been impacted by anti-Black racism, to have their voices amplified here in our Legislature and those concerns taken seriously and actual recommendations being implemented with real resources.

I think we have an opportunity here to work together to create meaningful change for Black students, not only today but for future generations of students who will enter our education system, whether here, in the Peel District School Board or anywhere else in this province.

I just want to say that the solution isn't simple. It's going to take a lot for people to unlearn what we have consciously been taught through our education system. It's going to take complex solutions to address the problem. We cannot simplify this as, "One training session is going to solve anti-Black racism." That type of rhetoric is not what the community needs. What they need is to understand how complex, how embedded and how systemic anti-Black racism is within our education system but even in the House in which we stand here today. These institutions were not built for people of colour. So it is going to take time and real solutions and real resources for communities to start to trust, to know that there is transparency

and to know that there is accountability. That cannot be done by the snapping of our fingers.

I want to thank everyone today. I look forward to the report when it's released and I look forward to continuing the dialogue with the ministry and the community to ensure that their concerns are actually being addressed.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Jennifer K. French): The time provided for private members' public business has expired.

RESERVED PARKING FOR ELECTRIC VEHICLE CHARGING ACT, 2019

LOI DE 2019 SUR LE STATIONNEMENT RÉSERVÉ À LA RECHARGE DES VÉHICULES ÉLECTRIQUES

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Jennifer K. French): We will deal first with ballot item number 88, standing in the name of Mr. Coe.

Mr. Coe has moved second reading of Bill 123, An Act to amend the Highway Traffic Act respecting electric vehicle charging stations. 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.

We will deal with this vote after we have finished the other business.

OCCUPATIONAL SAFETY AND HEALTH DAY ACT, 2019

LOI DE 2019 SUR LA JOURNÉE DE LA SÉCURITÉ ET DE LA SANTÉ AU TRAVAIL

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Jennifer K. French): Ms. McKenna has moved second reading of Bill 152, An Act to proclaim Occupational Safety and Health Day. 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.

We will deal with this vote after we have finished the other business.

ANTI-RACISM ACTIVITIES

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Jennifer K. French): Ms. Singh, Brampton Centre, has moved private member's notice of motion number 84. 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.

We will deal with this vote after we have finished the other business.

RESERVED PARKING FOR ELECTRIC
VEHICLE CHARGING ACT, 2019

LOI DE 2019 SUR LE STATIONNEMENT
RÉSERVÉ À LA RECHARGE
DES VÉHICULES ÉLECTRIQUES

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Jennifer K. French): Call in the members. This will be a five-minute bell.

The division bells rang from 1553 to 1558.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Jennifer K. French): All members will please take their seats.

Mr. Coe has moved second reading of Bill 123, An Act to amend the Highway Traffic Act respecting electric vehicle charging stations. All those in favour, please rise and remain standing until recognized by the Clerk.

Ayes

Anand, Deepak	Harris, Mike	Rasheed, Kaleed
Andrew, Jill	Hassan, Faisal	Rickford, Greg
Armstrong, Teresa J.	Hatfield, Percy	Roberts, Jeremy
Baber, Roman	Hogarth, Christine	Romano, Ross
Babikian, Aris	Kanapathi, Logan	Sabawy, Sheref
Bailey, Robert	Karahalios, Belinda C.	Sandhu, Amarjot
Barrett, Toby	Ke, Vincent	Sarkaria, Prabmeet Singh
Begum, Doly	Kernaghan, Terence	Sattler, Peggy
Bell, Jessica	Khanjin, Andrea	Schreiner, Mike
Berns-McGown, Rima	Kusendova, Natalia	Simard, Amanda
Bisson, Gilles	Lecce, Stephen	Singh, Gurratan
Bouma, Will	Lindo, Laura Mae	Singh, Sara
Bourgouin, Guy	Mamakwa, Sol	Skelly, Donna
Calandra, Paul	Mantha, Michael	Smith, Dave
Cho, Raymond Sung Joon	Martin, Robin	Smith, Todd
Cho, Stan	McDonell, Jim	Stevens, Jennifer (Jennie)
Clark, Steve	McKenna, Jane	Stiles, Marit
Coe, Lorne	McNaughton, Monte	Surma, Kinga
Coteau, Michael	Miller, Norman	Tabuns, Peter
Crawford, Stephen	Mitas, Christina Maria	Tangri, Nina
Downey, Doug	Monteith-Farrell, Judith	Taylor, Monique
Dunlop, Jill	Morrison, Suze	Thanigasalam, Vijay
Fife, Catherine	Oosterhoff, Sam	Triantafilopoulos, Effie J.
Fraser, John	Pang, Billy	Vanthof, John
Fullerton, Merrilee	Park, Lindsey	Walker, Bill
Gates, Wayne	Parsa, Michael	West, Jamie
Ghamari, Goldie	Pettapiece, Randy	Yarde, Kevin
Glover, Chris	Phillips, Rod	Yurek, Jeff
Gretzky, Lisa	Piccini, David	
Hardeman, Ernie	Rakocevic, Tom	

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Jennifer K. French): All those opposed, please rise and remain standing until recognized by the Clerk.

The Clerk of the Assembly (Mr. Todd Decker): The ayes are 88; the nays are 0.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Jennifer K. French): I declare the motion carried.

Second reading agreed to.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Jennifer K. French): Which committee?

Mr. Lorne Coe: The Standing Committee on Regulations and Private Bills, please.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Jennifer K. French): Is a majority in favour of this bill being referred to the Standing Committee on Regulations and Private Bills? Agreed.

We'll now open the doors to allow members to come or go.

OCCUPATIONAL SAFETY
AND HEALTH DAY ACT, 2019

LOI DE 2019 SUR LA JOURNÉE
DE LA SÉCURITÉ ET DE LA SANTÉ
AU TRAVAIL

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Jennifer K. French): Ms. McKenna has moved second reading of Bill 152, An Act to proclaim Occupational Safety and Health Day. All those in favour, please rise and remain standing until recognized by the Clerk.

Ayes

Anand, Deepak	Hogarth, Christine	Piccini, David
Baber, Roman	Jones, Sylvia	Rasheed, Kaleed
Babikian, Aris	Kanapathi, Logan	Rickford, Greg
Bailey, Robert	Karahalios, Belinda C.	Roberts, Jeremy
Barrett, Toby	Ke, Vincent	Romano, Ross
Bouma, Will	Khanjin, Andrea	Sabawy, Sheref
Calandra, Paul	Kusendova, Natalia	Sandhu, Amarjot
Cho, Raymond Sung Joon	Lecce, Stephen	Sarkaria, Prabmeet Singh
Cho, Stan	Martin, Robin	Simard, Amanda
Clark, Steve	McDonell, Jim	Skelly, Donna
Coe, Lorne	McKenna, Jane	Smith, Dave
Coteau, Michael	McNaughton, Monte	Smith, Todd
Crawford, Stephen	Miller, Norman	Surma, Kinga
Downey, Doug	Mitas, Christina Maria	Tangri, Nina
Dunlop, Jill	Oosterhoff, Sam	Thanigasalam, Vijay
Fraser, John	Pang, Billy	Triantafilopoulos, Effie J.
Fullerton, Merrilee	Park, Lindsey	Walker, Bill
Ghamari, Goldie	Parsa, Michael	Yurek, Jeff
Hardeman, Ernie	Pettapiece, Randy	
Harris, Mike	Phillips, Rod	

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Jennifer K. French): All those opposed, please rise and remain standing until recognized by the Clerk.

Nays

Andrew, Jill	Gretzky, Lisa	Sattler, Peggy
Armstrong, Teresa J.	Hassan, Faisal	Singh, Gurratan
Begum, Doly	Hatfield, Percy	Singh, Sara
Bell, Jessica	Kernaghan, Terence	Stevens, Jennifer (Jennie)
Berns-McGown, Rima	Lindo, Laura Mae	Stiles, Marit
Bisson, Gilles	Mamakwa, Sol	Tabuns, Peter
Bourgouin, Guy	Mantha, Michael	Taylor, Monique
Fife, Catherine	Monteith-Farrell, Judith	Vanthof, John
Gates, Wayne	Morrison, Suze	West, Jamie
Glover, Chris	Rakocevic, Tom	Yarde, Kevin

The Clerk of the Assembly (Mr. Todd Decker): The ayes are 58; the nays are 30.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Jennifer K. French): I declare the motion carried.

Second reading agreed to.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Jennifer K. French): Which committee?

Ms. Jane McKenna: Social policy, thanks.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Jennifer K. French): Is the majority in favour of this bill being referred to the Standing Committee on Social Policy? Agreed.

Open the doors, please.

ANTI-RACISM ACTIVITIES

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Jennifer K. French): Ms. Singh, Brampton Centre, has moved private member's notice of motion number 84.

All those in favour, please rise and remain standing until recognized by the Clerk.

Ayes

Anand, Deepak	Harris, Mike	Rakocevic, Tom
Andrew, Jill	Hassan, Faisal	Rasheed, Kaleed
Armstrong, Teresa J.	Hatfield, Percy	Rickford, Greg
Baber, Roman	Hogarth, Christine	Roberts, Jeremy
Babikian, Aris	Jones, Sylvia	Romano, Ross
Bailey, Robert	Kanapathi, Logan	Sabawy, Sheref
Barrett, Toby	Karahalios, Belinda C.	Sandhu, Amarjot
Begum, Doly	Ke, Vincent	Sarkaria, Prabmeet Singh
Bell, Jessica	Kernaghan, Terence	Sattler, Peggy
Berns-McGown, Rima	Khanjin, Andrea	Schreiner, Mike
Bisson, Gilles	Kusendova, Natalia	Simard, Amanda
Bouma, Will	Lecce, Stephen	Singh, Gurratan
Bourgouin, Guy	Lindo, Laura Mae	Singh, Sara
Calandra, Paul	Mamakwa, Sol	Skelly, Donna
Cho, Raymond Sung Joon	Mantha, Michael	Smith, Dave
Cho, Stan	Martin, Robin	Smith, Todd
Clark, Steve	McDonnell, Jim	Stevens, Jennifer (Jennie)
Coe, Lorne	McKenna, Jane	Stiles, Marit
Coteau, Michael	McNaughton, Monte	Surma, Kinga
Crawford, Stephen	Miller, Norman	Tabuns, Peter
Downey, Doug	Mitas, Christina Maria	Tangri, Nina
Dunlop, Jill	Monteith-Farrell, Judith	Taylor, Monique
Fife, Catherine	Morrison, Suze	Thanigasalam, Vijay
Fraser, John	Oosterhoff, Sam	Triantafilopoulos, Effie J.
Fullerton, Merrilee	Pang, Billy	Vanthof, John
Gates, Wayne	Park, Lindsey	Walker, Bill
Ghamari, Goldie	Parsa, Michael	West, Jamie
Glover, Chris	Pettapiece, Randy	Yarde, Kevin
Gretzky, Lisa	Phillips, Rod	Yurek, Jeff
Hardeman, Ernie	Piccini, David	

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Jennifer K. French): All those opposed, please rise and remain standing until recognized by the Clerk.

The Clerk of the Assembly (Mr. Todd Decker): The ayes are 89; the nays are 0.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Jennifer K. French): I declare the motion carried.

Motion agreed to.

1610

Mr. Michael Coteau: Point of order.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Jennifer K. French): I recognize the member on a point of order.

Mr. Michael Coteau: I just want to introduce Paul Lefebvre, a member of Parliament from—

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Jennifer K. French): That is not a point of order. The member knows that.

Orders of the day.

LEGISLATIVE REFORM

Resuming the debate adjourned on November 27, 2019, on the motion, as amended, regarding amendments to the standing orders.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Jennifer K. French): Further debate? I recognize the member from Timmins.

Mr. Gilles Bisson: Thank you, Madam Speaker, but I gotta say, as I did this morning on time allocation, I'm really not happy to be having this debate. I'm not pleased to be here in order to have this discussion. I think that, quite frankly, what we're about to witness, as far as what the government is trying to do with this—

Interjections.

Mr. Gilles Bisson: Maybe we'll wait a second, Speaker.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Jennifer K. French): Stop the clock, please. I'm sorry to interrupt the member. Will members please come and go quietly so that the debate can continue? You're more than welcome to stay, but if you choose not to, that's fine.

I apologize to the member. The member has the floor.

Mr. Gilles Bisson: Madam Speaker, I completely understand. Members are very busy people who have all kinds of things going on, all kinds of different meetings. I take no offence.

I want to start again just by saying that I'm really not happy to be having this debate. I know there are government members on the other side, and there are Liberal and Green members over here, who think this is the best thing since sliced bread. They think, "You know what? We're going to change the standing orders. We're going to give the government even more authority to pass legislation through this House a lot faster than currently is allowed." And in order to get a couple of questions at question period, and a little bit more time in debate, the Liberals and the Greens are going along and saying, "This is great, great stuff."

Well, I want to tell you, Madam Speaker, that I was here as an independent member twice. I was here when the NDP lost status the first time, in 1999, and I was here when we lost status the second time. I can tell you, as a New Democrat, never would we have taken the position that the Liberals and the Tories have taken in this debate. Never would we have supported negative rule changes in order to advance what was important to us, which was the same thing as the Liberals and the Greens: getting questions in question period, being able to debate. I don't begrudge the Liberals for trying, but I think they're doing it the wrong way.

We fought a hard fight. Our House leader at the time, I am proud to say, was Peter Kormos. Peter Kormos, along with Howard Hampton, our leader of the day, and Shelley Martel and the little band of seven members fought like heck in order to be counted in this Legislature, and to be seen as being able to get time in this House to ask questions, and to be able to debate.

For a long period of time, we didn't have that ability. So we did certain things, which I'm not going to get into now, that were procedural, that allowed us to get to where we had to be, in a position to get, the first time, partial status under the Conservatives, and, the second time, full status, by getting Andrea Horwath elected as the member from Hamilton.

We understood that when you are elected to this place in a party, you have a certain responsibility to represent

your constituents, but you also have to represent what's important to the party.

One of the things that New Democrats have always believed in—because for New Democrats, democracy is in the middle of our title. I'm not saying the Conservatives and the Liberals don't believe in democracy; that ain't my point. I'm talking about us, as New Democrats. But we understood then, as we understand now, that in order to preserve democracy, sometimes you have to take extraordinary steps.

We took extraordinary steps twice, when we lost party status, to be able to have the fight, to bring the media onside and do what had to be done—the first time, to get partial status, because when we lost status the first time, we were nine members, and you had to have 12 to have party status. The difference was—and we made the argument—that the government had reduced the House from 130 members to 100. Therefore, there should be a standing order change to reflect the ratio.

Eventually, the media put enough pressure on the then government, the Harris government, that they had to do something. They didn't want to. If they could have killed the NDP and laid us down on the floor, never to get up again, the Liberals and the Conservatives would have been happy. I understand that. I've been in politics long enough to understand that sometimes you do what you've got to do as a party to advance what it is that you're trying to do, and that is getting to the other side of the House.

But we, at the time, used a strategy that allowed us to get the media onside, that brought us, quite frankly, to partial status in 1999—I believe that is the right date. The Harris government finally, after the media beat them up day in and day out, said, “We better do something, because we're getting beat up and blown off the front page every day by this little ol' NDP that has got nine members.” By doing all of the things that we did in order to make the point that people needed to have a different voice in the Legislature other than the Liberals—because our argument of the day was that the Conservatives and the Liberals—it's proving to be the same case today—were absolutely not very different.

If you look at the agenda of the Liberals and you look at the agenda of the Conservatives, often the agenda is the same. You look at the Conservative government today: They're following the hydro plan that was put in place by the Liberals. They're just calling it the Conservative hydro plan now, but it's the same plan.

If you take a look at what's happening with winter road maintenance across northern Ontario, it was first the Tories who started the privatization. I have to say, in fairness to the Harris Tories, all they did was privatize the plows. We already had private plows, so ideologically I had a problem with that, but it didn't have the effect of ruining our highway maintenance system. But when the Liberals got into power, after they had been criticizing the Conservative government for privatizing plows, they privatized the entire system.

And as my good friend the member from Timiskaming—Cochrane and our member from Mushkegowuk—James

Bay and other northern members say, now when it snows, what we need is plows. The government says, “Oh, we put more plows on the road.” Sure, you did; I don't argue that. New Democrats, along with myself and other members of this House, pushed the previous governments to increase funding to winter road maintenance, and we did get more plows. This government did some small steps in that direction as well. But we are not back to where we used to be before.

My point is, we made the argument successfully in 1999 that you needed to have New Democrats in the House to oppose Conservatives, because the Liberals would oppose Conservatives in a way that was a mirror talking to a mirror. It was like two mirrors across the hall, saying: “I'm more right than you are.” “No, no, I'm more right than you are.” “No, no, I'm more centre than you are.” “No, no, I'm more centre than you are.” We all want to do the same things, but at the end of the day, we just want to put “Liberal” at the end of it or “Conservative” at the end of it, and it'll be the same thing.

The media understood that argument. So the media helped us by writing the stories that had to be written in the media. The public was writing in fairly large numbers. I look at my friend from Toronto—Danforth and I think—no, it was Marilyn Churley who was here at the time, right?

Mr. Peter Tabuns: Yes.

Mr. Gilles Bisson: The member from Danforth at the time was Marilyn Churley. We had people writing in to the Speaker, to the government House leader, to the Premier, to ourselves, saying, “You need to give the NDP some time in the House, because we're tired of listening to the Liberals having a pillow fight with the Conservatives.”

Eventually, the Conservatives—and I give Mike Harris some credit; he understood. Mike Harris gave us partial status. We didn't get the regular rotation of questions and debate that we would get as a party with full status, but if I remember correctly—I may be wrong; I might be corrected—I think we got three questions a day. We got time in on rotation on motions and debate. But what that allowed us to do is to do our job as members.

I don't argue for two seconds that Liberal members, Green members and independent Conservative members shouldn't have a voice in this House. I think they should. If anybody knows that, Madam Speaker, it's me. I sat over there: first, as a member of a nine-member caucus and then as a member of a seven-member caucus. I get it. But there's a way that you get to your objective. What I object to is that the Liberals have decided, “We're going to take the easy way out. We're going to do what Liberals always do. We're entitled. We should get this, because we're Liberals. All we have to do is do a deal with the government that gets us to where we want to go.”

So they made a deal. They said, “Okay, in exchange for one more question every three days”—because currently, the independent members get two questions, twice. In one week, they get two questions, and the following week they get two questions, and every other day, they get one

question. In exchange for a total of six questions, they allowed the government to move a bill through the House with their support—the Greens and the Liberals—to allow them to be able to pass legislation through this House in no time.

1620

I think that's wrong and I will speak up to it. I know that the Liberals don't like it, I know that the Greens don't like it and I know that the Conservatives don't like it. Maybe even the independent Conservatives don't like it. I don't know; I haven't talked to them about it. But it is our job, as the official opposition, to make sure that we do what needs to be done to represent the people of this province and make sure the government doesn't run short shrift when it comes to our rights in this democracy. Darned right we're going to stand up and do what we have to do. You're going to see some of that unfold today.

The second time after the election of 2003, New Democrats did really well. We came back not with nine; we came back with seven. I've got to tell you, those were tough years. I think Howard Hampton was great. This was no reflection on Howard Hampton. I just think we got caught in a cycle.

In the first election, John Tory, the then Conservative leader who was going to become the Premier of Ontario, went out and decided to argue that we should fund faith-based education outside of the system that we have today. People, rightfully so, said no, so he lost the election. As a result, during that election, everybody wanted to talk about what John Tory had done, which was not acceptable to most of the people on the left and the right of Ontario politics. I look at my good friend, the right-wing New Democrat. I'm not going to mention his name; I'm just pointing my finger at him. He would agree with me, as a Dutch Reformed Church person—

Mr. John Vanthof: Former.

Mr. Gilles Bisson: Former—and I'm sure there are some over there.

But my point is this: that people in Ontario understood that you couldn't go there, because in the end, it just didn't make any sense. The public did not support the Conservatives and, as a result, everybody talked about that issue.

When poor Howard Hampton and the NDP were out there trying to move the voters on issues that mattered—

Mr. John Vanthof: Hydro.

Mr. Gilles Bisson: —hydro—and it was on hydro. We were ringing the warning bells that the Conservatives had started the privatization of hydro and our hydro bills were going to go through the roof, and we couldn't get anybody to listen. They all wanted to talk about John Tory and the stupid move he made when it came to education.

Mr. John Vanthof: I lost that one.

Mr. Gilles Bisson: I remember. You remind me of that story. My good friend the now member from Timiskaming—Cochrane ran in that election and ended up losing by, what, 300 or 600 votes?

Mr. John Vanthof: It was 630 votes.

Mr. Gilles Bisson: You're not counting. He lost by 630 votes.

I'll always remember the press conference that Howard had in Hamilton, where he was trying to talk about hydro and the media kept on asking about faith-based education. Howard at one point was almost crying. It was just, "Does anybody care?" He said, "Does anybody want to talk about what is going on with the electricity system in this province and what's about to happen? We're talking about this nonsense that the Tories have moved forward."

But it had a really good effect for the Liberals, and that's why the Liberals and Tories love each other so much. It allowed the Liberals to be able to hold that election and actually do fairly well. Poor Mr. Tory ended up having to leave and eventually became mayor of Toronto, so maybe he was the smartest one of us all for quite a different reason.

We go into the election in 2003. We get into that election and we end up coming back with seven. Party status at that time was eight, because remember: We were a Legislature of 100 members. We came back. Did we go to the then Liberal government—actually, this is funny, because by that time I was the whip. Here were Peter Kormos and I trying to negotiate partial status with the Liberals, and they said, "Drop dead. No, we're not giving it to you. Too bad. Go away." That's essentially what the message was. And I understood it. I didn't like it. Did I feel warm and fuzzy inside? No, I didn't. I felt beat up. I got beat up in the election because we came back with seven seats. Then we got there and the government of the day—the government House leader at the time was Dwight Duncan from Windsor—something—I don't remember—and he was not going to entertain any conversation about us getting status.

So we worked hard. We were dilatorious, Clerk in this House at the time. Do you remember? We were so dilatorious, they couldn't make anything happen. There was a guy here by the name of—I think his name was Peter Kormos. Peter and I were the best of friends and the worst of enemies all at the same time—a brilliant man who understood how to get things done in a way that really made it uncomfortable for the government. We were extremely dilatorious, to the point that the government—there was hardly anything they could do in the House because we know that you have to have a certain amount of co-operation to make things happen because standing orders on their own are not going to allow the House to do everything that has to be done. At times, we have to work together. Because we had an ability to hold things it up, we were very effective at, let's say, giving the Liberal government some heartburn.

At the time, which was really interesting to me, the then Tories were in bed with the Liberals. We went from the Liberals supporting the Tories for us not getting status the first time to the Tories not supporting the Liberals the second time in not getting status. But did we go crawling to the Liberal Party and say, "Oh, please, please, we're entitled; we should have questions because we're the NDP"? No, we didn't do that. We fought like hell and we pushed and we were dilatorious and we did the things that we had to do, and we even drove the Clerks crazy. Some

of them don't have hair. To this day, some of those Clerks have lost their hair.

But I have to say, we did what we had to do and we worked the media hard. And the media would say—and I remember because I was the whip. I had the task of going to talk to some of the media, and Peter had the task of speaking to other media, and Howard and other members of caucus. And they would say, “Drop dead. We don't want to talk to you about getting status. You guys lost it twice. You're not going to get it.” And we pushed and we pushed and we pushed.

Then a tragedy happened, in all seriousness. Dominic Agostino died—God rest his soul—a great man, a wonderful parliamentarian, a hard-working member in his community. Unfortunately, he died about four or five months after the election, or six months or whatever it was. It was very, very tragic.

I remember that I was away at a meeting in the city, and I got a phone call to come back here in a hurry because something had happened. I was the whip; they had to talk to me. I got back, and they said, “Do you mind if we adjourn the House?” because, remember, we didn't have status at this point. They're worried we're going to say no to them adjourning the House and give them a hard time. I said, “Of course we will allow you to adjourn the House. This is a tragedy. You guys have to go away and do what you've got to do, and we have to do what we've got to do, and we've got to console the family, and we have to stand in solidarity with you on this tragic loss.”

But then New Democrats did what New Democrats do well: We worked like hell. We went out. We organized. We found a great candidate. As a matter of fact, I know her well. She sits right here: Andrea Horwath, leader of the current NDP. We went out and found the best candidate that we could in that by-election so that we could get the eighth member so that we could become a party again with official status in this House.

Andrea Horwath—the joke was that she was the million-dollar MPP, because when she got elected and we were recognized in the House as an official party, she brought questions to us as far as regular rotation, regular rotation in debates and the rest, and a caucus budget to be able to operate in.

We had staff—and I've got to say this because staff are amazing. We all have staff on all sides of the House who work hard for us. We had people who came here and volunteered for six months, seven months or whatever it was, because they believed in what the NDP was doing—people like Jeff Ferrier and others. I'm not going to name all their names; I'm just going to note Jeff because he came from Timmins and he was a communications guy. Sorry; I'm kind of biased. His dad is Bill Ferrier, who was a former MPP for my riding. But what happened was that they came in and they worked for nothing. They did what had to be done in order to help New Democrats in a pretty dark part of our history.

But we got status back and we climbed ourselves back. Did we go to the government of the day, the Liberals, and say, “Oh, please, we're entitled; we're New Democrats

and we just deserve it because”? No, we worked like heck. We rolled up our sleeves, we worked hard and we got to where we had to go.

This is where we are today. I'm not happy that the Liberals ended up losing party status. I don't wish that on anybody. Of all members in the House, I can speak to that. I've lived that battle. I've been there. I sat in the House over there when we weren't a party for two elections. I don't like this. I don't like it any more than they do. But you've got to work for what you're going to get. What I really object to is that the Liberals and the Greens decided that the best way for them to get somewhere was to make a deal with the Conservatives, even though it means that the rules of the House would change in such a way that legislation could move through this House a lot quicker than it could before.

1630

When you're prepared to put away your principles instead of doing what's right, I think the public has a right to know. That's why I'm speaking to it, and I think the public should react in the same way, because nobody is entitled to anything here. I've been here, along with the Speaker and the member—I forget the riding name—Mr. Wilson, the longest-serving member in the Legislature in this current Parliament.

We came here in 1990, and along with every other member in this House, we worked like heck to get here. Did you knock on doors? Did you do the work that had to be done to get here? And while you're here you fight like heck to represent your constituents because you understand that is, first of all, what you were sent here to do. But the other thing is, it's the way you're going to stay here. You have to let your constituents know you're doing what's right.

What I don't like about what the Conservatives are doing now but, least of all, what I don't like about what the Greens and the Liberals are doing—this is not about their constituents. This is not about Ontario. This is about the Liberal Party. When you put party ahead of the people, guess what happens? You saw it in the last provincial election. I don't know what's going to happen in the next election. I've been around here long enough to know that I am not going to predict who's going to be the government in the next rotation of our election. It could be anybody. I don't know. But my point is, we have a responsibility to say it the way it is.

That's my first part of what I wanted to speak to in this debate: the motivation behind the Greens and the Liberal Party for allowing this motion to come forward with their support to get what essentially is six questions in two weeks and an opportunity to debate some time under opposition days. I think it's—what?—five minutes or something? I'd have to go back and read the motion. No, I think it's 12 minutes—12 minutes on opposition days and a little bit of time in other debates as well. I just think that's not the way you should be motivated to do things.

Now, we get to the motion. The government, at this point, moves a motion that is going to make it a lot quicker for the government to pass legislation through the House.

I've heard the government—and I have great respect for my friend the member from—sorry. Somebody help me because I don't have the list in front of me.

Interjection.

Mr. Gilles Bisson: What's your riding?

Hon. Paul Calandra: Markham–Stouffville.

Mr. Gilles Bisson: Markham–Stouffville. I have great respect for him. We actually get along. He has his job to do; I've got my job to do. I think we understand that, and we do what we've got to do.

I respect the member from Kitchener–Conestoga, who's the son of the former Premier, Mr. Harris, who got up and said, "Oh, the NDP is making all this up." I'm not making it up. I'd invite people to go to the website and read the God-darned order paper. The order paper is pretty clear. The government is going to make it possible, in the last four weeks and a half of the House, to call midnight sittings, number one, until 12 o'clock at night. They're also going to make it possible that you can call the same order in the morning, afternoon and night. The government says, "Oh, yeah, but we can't move time allocation on the same day." You don't need to. All that does is buy you a day.

The real issue here is that the government can introduce a bill on Thursday afternoon during introduction of bills, they can come into this House and start debating on Monday, have the House sit Monday night, have the same order called twice, get six and a half hours, be in a position for time allocation and have the time allocation done on Tuesday morning. According to the current standing orders and the future standing orders, they will not be able to call the bill back on the same day, but they can refer it to committee. The time allocation motion will give the government the ability to skip, as they can now, sending the bill to committee and just ordering it back for third reading on Wednesday. If they decide to put in the time allocation motion for a five-minute debate, it will be a five-minute debate. They have a majority in the House.

So when the government says "Oh, no, no. We're not doing that. You're just making this stuff up," read the order paper. It's there. That's how the government is going to do it.

There are other things in this thing—the government was getting up today and saying that we don't agree to giving the power to the Speaker and the ability to make this House accessible for members and other people who come here. Come on. I was part of the NDP government that had translators on the floor for five years to give Gary Malkowski, a deaf member, the ability to communicate in this House. It was us that did that.

How many times in this House have we supported motions in order to accommodate people who may have—I remember there was a member from the Liberal Party who, unfortunately—I think she had cancer, and she wasn't able to walk well because of surgery.

Mr. John Vanthof: Tracy MacCharles.

Mr. Gilles Bisson: Tracy MacCharles. We had to make an accommodation for her, because she was not able to get into the House in the way that we can.

Who opposes that kind of stuff? Come on. Really?

Okay, fight me that I'm wrong, that you can't pass legislation introduced on Thursday and finished on Wednesday. You can have that fight with me; I'm prepared for that one. But don't come in here and say the NDP doesn't support issues for disabilities in this Legislature, because we do.

The government is, quite frankly, overstepping its reach when it comes to its ability to pass legislation through this House. I think the government needs to think.

For that reason, Madam Speaker, I would like, at this point, to move adjournment of the debate.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Jennifer K. French): Mr. Bisson has moved adjournment of the debate. Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? I heard a no.

All those in favour, please say "aye."

All those opposed, please say "nay."

In my opinion, the nays have it.

Call in the members. This will be a 30-minute bell.

The division bells rang from 1636 to 1706.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Jennifer K. French): All members, please take your seats.

Monsieur Bisson has moved adjournment of the debate.

All those in favour, please rise and remain standing until recognized by the Clerk.

All those opposed, please rise and remain standing until recognized by the Clerk.

The Clerk of the Assembly (Mr. Todd Decker): The ayes are 18; the nays are 54.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Jennifer K. French): I declare the motion lost.

Interjections.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Jennifer K. French): Order, please.

I beg to inform the House that, pursuant to standing order 98(c), a change has been made to the order of precedence on the ballot list for private members' public business such that on the ballot list draw of November 4, 2019, Mr. Barrett assumes ballot item number 3 and Miss Mitas assumes ballot item number 32.

I recognize the member from Timmins.

Mr. Gilles Bisson: I was waiting for you to say, "Further debate." Okay.

Well, I take it that was a no.

Hon. Sylvia Jones: A hard no.

Mr. Gilles Bisson: It was a hard no, I'm told by my good friend across the way.

Listen, it's rather unfortunate that the government has decided to not allow a pause in this whole debate so that we can go back and talk about how it is that this, quite frankly, is a step in the wrong direction. You know, the government is trying its best—

Interjections.

Mr. Gilles Bisson: I guess we'll wait. Stop the clock?

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Jennifer K. French): Stop the clock, please. I'm unable to hear the member who does, indeed, have the floor. Everyone else who is on the floor, if they would choose to stay or go, but I would like to be able to hear the member whose turn it is to speak. If

members could please make the choice. I'm pausing right now so that we can resume the debate.

I return to the member from Timmins.

1710

Mr. Gilles Bisson: Madam Speaker, as I said, the purpose of calling for adjournment of the debate was fairly simple: I was hoping that the government would stop and think that there are better ways of dealing with this. We've always favoured—as you well know. You remember that in the previous Parliament there is a committee in this House called the Legislative Assembly committee that has an ability to look at the rules of the House and decide how we can strengthen the rules so that members can have a greater say.

As I was saying earlier in my debate, I'm not opposed to the Liberals and the Greens getting time in the House to ask questions or to participate in debates. Like I said earlier, I lived through having lost status twice and being in the House with a party with no status. I understand how hard that is and how frustrating that can be. So I'm not opposed to the Liberals getting any time in debate for all of this, but what I am opposed to is the sense of entitlement on the part of the Liberals and the Greens, who think, "All we've got to do is make a deal with the Conservatives in order to weaken the democratic process of this Legislature even further, in order to achieve our aim," which is six additional questions in two weeks. Give me a break. To me, it's not the way you should be doing things.

We have a suggestion. I know that my good friend the member across the way who is the government House leader is going to want to think about this. I want to, at this point, move an amendment to the main motion. I'm going to read it, and I have copies. Once we get a page, I can send copies over to the table and others.

I want to read the following. The NDP amendment reads as follows:

Delete everything after the first "that" in the first paragraph and replace with:

"a Select Committee on Modernizing the Standing Orders be appointed to consider and report to the House its observations and recommendations with respect to proposed changes to the standing orders that would better serve the democratic interests of the people of Ontario.

"That in developing its strategy and recommendations, the committee shall focus on the following:

"—measures that reflect the government's right to carry out its agenda and opposition parties' responsibility to hold the government to account;

"That the committee shall have the authority to call for persons, papers and things, and generally still have such duties and powers as are required to carry out its mandate;

"That the committee be composed of five members from the government, one of which shall be the Chair, two members of the official opposition, one Liberal independent member and one Green independent member;

"That the committee shall meet at the call of the Chair;

"That the committee shall report back to the House by no later than February 28, 2020; and

"That in exercising his discretion under standing orders 31(c), 37(i) and 98(a)(iv), the Speaker shall recognize the independent members for the duration of the 42nd Parliament as follows:

"—during members' statements: one per day;

"—during oral questions: two questions per day, each followed by one supplementary;

"—during private members' public business: five minutes for each item of business, which may be shared."

I so move, first of all.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Jennifer K. French): Mr. Bisson has moved the following amendment:

"Delete everything after the first 'that' in the first paragraph and replace with:

"a Select Committee on Modernizing the Standing Orders be appointed to consider and report to the House its observations and recommendations with respect to proposed changes to the standing orders that would better serve the democratic interests of the people of Ontario.

"That in developing its strategy and recommendations, the committee shall focus on the following:

"—measures that reflect the government's right to carry out its agenda and opposition parties' responsibility to hold the government to account;

"That the committee shall have the authority to call for persons, papers and things, and generally still have such duties and powers as are required to carry out its mandate;

"That the committee be composed of five members from the government, one of which shall be the Chair, two members of the official opposition, one Liberal independent member and one Green independent member;

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"That in exercising his discretion under standing orders 31(c), 37(i) and 98(a)(iv), the Speaker shall recognize independent members for the duration of the 42nd Parliament as follows:

"—during members' statements: one per day;

"—during oral questions: two questions per day, each followed by one supplementary;

"—during private members' public business: five minutes per each item of business, which may be shared."

I return back to the member from Timmins.

Mr. Gilles Bisson: Thank you very much, Madam Speaker. I know that—

Hon. Paul Calandra: Madam Speaker, on a point of order.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Jennifer K. French): I recognize the government House leader on a point of order.

Hon. Paul Calandra: I just wanted to question whether the motion was even in order, given that it substantially changes the original motion that was tabled by the government.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Jennifer K. French): After conference with the Clerks: It is an acceptable motion, because it deletes all of the active parts and substitutes a viable alternative.

I return to the member from Timmins.

Mr. Gilles Bisson: Thank you very much, Madam Speaker. As a substantive motion, it's fully amendable, and I will speak to it later.

But I would like the government to think about accepting our proposal that you refer this matter to committee, that you give the independent members the ability to ask questions and participate in debate for the next two weeks, until this matter is resolved according to the motion.

With that, I'd like to move adjournment of the House.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Jennifer K. French): Monsieur Bisson has moved adjournment of the House. Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? I heard a no.

All those in favour will please say "aye."

All those opposed will please say "nay."

In my opinion, the nays have it.

Call in all members. This will be a 30-minute bell.

The division bells rang from 1717 to 1747.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Jennifer K. French): All members please take their seats. Monsieur Bourg—

Mr. Gilles Bisson: Monsieur Bisson.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Jennifer K. French): I know.

Monsieur Bisson has moved adjournment of the House.

All in favour, please rise and remain standing to be recognized by the Clerk.

All those opposed, please rise and remain standing until counted by the Clerk.

The Clerk of the Assembly (Mr. Todd Decker): The ayes are 17; the nays are 47.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Jennifer K. French): I declare the motion lost.

I return to the member from Timmins.

Mr. Gilles Bisson: Madam Speaker, I'm decimated that we lost that vote.

I just want to explain, by way of the amendment to the main motion, what it is that we're trying to do here. The government is proposing rule changes that are currently on the order paper. I would really encourage members and I would really encourage the public, those who are interested in this kind of stuff, to go online or go to the order papers on their desks and read what these standing orders changes actually do.

Part of what they do—because there's a number of things that the motion on the order paper does—is that essentially it gives the government an ability to pass—

Interjections.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Jennifer K. French): Stop the clock, please. I apologize to the member for interrupting. I can't hear the member, who does indeed have the floor. Could the side conversations please stop or relocate? Thank you.

I return to the member from Timmins.

Mr. Gilles Bisson: "Free Sol": That was another chant.

Hon. Steve Clark: Sol for House leader.

Mr. Gilles Bisson: Well, that's not a bad idea, actually. I'm all for that. Hey, that would be cool, man. Jeez, I like these guys. I like the way they think.

Mr. Sol Mamakwa: Sometimes.

Mr. Gilles Bisson: Sometimes. But anyway—

Ms. Sara Singh: It might be terrible, yes.

Mr. Gilles Bisson: Maybe it was a bad idea, Sol. I don't know.

I was just saying that the government, by way of the changes to the standing orders, are trying to say this is all about how we could work better together, and it's about warm fuzzies, and everybody's going to be smiling, and it's all great stuff, right?

But the reality is, governments don't change standing orders out of the goodness of their hearts. I've been a member of a government. You're members of the government. Some of the Liberals—all of the Liberals who are here were members of government. We all understand that when a government brings forward standing orders changes, it's about trying to increase their hand, and it's about giving themselves more ability to do whatever it is they're trying to do.

In these particular standing orders, the government is doing a couple of key things that are going to allow them to speed up legislation.

For example, currently, you can't call the same bill in the morning and in the afternoon. You can call the same motion, if it's a motion, but you can't call the bill in the morning, in the afternoon and at night. The government is going to give itself the ability to do that. That means to say that to get to the six-and-a-half-hour threshold—the government's going to have a better ability to move the bill through the process of arriving at the six-and-a-half-hour threshold by way of just that one standing order change—which is but one.

Then they're also going to give themselves the ability to have midnight sittings. They can do midnight sittings by way of a substantive motion now. They don't need the standing orders to make that change. All you have to do is call a motion to have the House sit at night. All they would have to do is to basically run the clock in the morning and in the afternoon. They would probably get that done—six and a half hours—in about a day and a half, and they could have a night sitting, or as many night sittings as they want, by way of a substantive motion in the House. So they can speed up the legislation that way, because of the ability to call it morning, afternoon and night.

But the other thing they're doing is that they're giving themselves the last—almost five weeks—of the Legislature to be able to move a motion to sit until midnight, without any debate. In other words, it becomes a routine motion, which means to say there's no debate, and it's not amendable.

It's pretty clear, what the government is trying to do here. They know they've got some heavy sledding that they're going to be doing over the next two and a half years to the election. They're going to have legislation that they're going to want to be able to slip through the House as quickly as possible, and get as many days out of the media as they can, when it comes to these initiatives. They will bank up these initiatives, and they will do them in the last five weeks of the House. That's what they're going to do.

Mark my words: I'll be giving this speech sometime after the House comes back in February. These new standing orders, if they are passed—I'll be in a position where I'll be able to speak to exactly what the government's intention is.

Now, the government is saying, "But this is all about giving the Liberal independents and giving the Green independent more time in the House." Well, they've done that. I see it in the standing orders changes. But that's why we thought that by referring the entire matter to the committee, to be able to look at standing orders changes, to do whatever it is that you want to do—I don't argue that the government shouldn't have the right to pass legislation. I don't argue that the government has to be stopped. I'd like to be able to stop them, but I can't. You're the government. You have the majority. You have the right to carry through your agenda. But we have a responsibility, as the opposition, to hold you to account and to give the public the opportunity to have their say by way of committee. You're going to be taking that away.

So we thought one good compromise would be to refer this whole matter to committee in order to deal with doing standing orders changes that achieve the government's goals in some way but that also protect the public and the rights of the opposition, and finding some kind of a compromise—but, that being said, that we maintain the parts in the standing orders changes that give the independent Liberals and the independent Greens the ability to be able to ask questions—two a day—that give them an ability to participate in opposition day motions, and give them an opportunity to have more time to be able to debate matters in this House. So, it achieves what the Liberals and the independent Green would want, but it also gives us a chance to get to where we need to be.

As I said earlier, I find it reprehensible that the Liberal independents and the Green Party have decided that rather than fighting, the way that we did as New Democrats, to get partial status, or fighting by-elections to get full status, they say, "Well, we're just entitled. All we've got to do is go to the government and make a deal with them."

I would use the words "deal with the devil," but that would not be fair to my friend across the way. I know the member across the way, the government House leader, and he's an honourable man. I don't argue for two seconds that I would make that analogy. If anybody has a better analogy as far as words, give it to me.

They made a deal with the government in order to achieve their goals because they're Liberals. They're just entitled. It's always like, "Oh, we don't have to work for anything; we're Liberals. You give us what we want and we'll support you in your plan to short-shrift the ability of the public to have their say when it comes to being able to present at committee, and for legislation to be able to pass through the House quicker." I bet you that, in the back of

their minds, they're thinking, "Well, maybe we'll be government"—maybe they will; I hope not—"and we can live with these rules. We're like the Tories: We don't really believe in the democratic process in the same way as others. We're just going to pass our legislation and do it that much quicker, and we'll blame it on the Conservatives." Well, they're not going to be able to blame it on the Conservatives because they're voting for this motion.

I just say to the government across the way: We know what you're up to—it's pretty clear—but what the Liberals and the independent Green are up to is, I think, quite frankly, quite sad when it comes to what it is that the Liberals and the Greens have done to try to get a deal. I think they should have looked at what happened before, because it's not the first time that a party has lost party status. In fact, I was a member of a party, the New Democratic Party, in two separate parliamentary sessions where, in fact, we did lose party status. But we fought in order to get partial status and full status by utilizing the rules to our effect, working with the media, getting the public to become allies with us in our quest to be able to get partial status and eventually win a by-election. That's the way you do these things.

Did I like the fact that we went from government, being almost 80 members, to, two elections later, coming back with nine members? Of course not. It hurts; let me tell you. I've been there, right? But we also understood that it was a choice of the people. We were not entitled to anything. We have to fight for everything we do as members in this House—that side of the House and this side of the House—and New Democrats understand that.

So we had to fight. We did what we needed to do to get partial status the first time and to get full status the second time by way of a by-election. I just say to my independent Liberal and Green friends: It's rather sad that you've done that. It's rather sad that, rather than to fight and do what needs to be done the same way that we did, you instead tried to take the shortcut because it was easier for you. Politics sometimes is not about doing what's easy but sometimes doing what's hard. What's hard—and they're in a tough spot; they're down to five members, and you need 12 to have status, so that's a big hill to climb. I get it. But the way that they do that is by, quite frankly, doing it the hard way, and that is getting the public onside, the media onside and pushing to get things done.

I see you, Madam Speaker, wanting to stand up, so I will—

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Jennifer K. French): I'm sorry to interrupt the member.

Debate deemed adjourned.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Jennifer K. French): It being 6 o'clock, this House stands adjourned until 10:30 on Monday, December 2, 2019.

The House adjourned at 1800.

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF ONTARIO
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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	

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COMITÉS PERMANENTS DE L'ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE**

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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

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Vice-Chair / Vice-président: Jeremy Roberts
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Jeremy Roberts, Amarjot Sandhu
Sandy Shaw, Donna Skelly
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Vice-Chair / Vice-président: Daryl Kramp
Robert Bailey, Jessica Bell
Goldie Ghamari, Chris Glover
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Sheref Sabawy, Amarjot Sandhu
Mike Schreiner, Jennifer (Jennie) Stevens
Daisy Wai
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Taras Natyshak, Rick Nicholls
Marit Stiles, Vijay Thanigasalam
John Vanthof
Committee Clerk / Greffière: Jocelyn McCauley

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Lorne Coe, Parm Gill
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Kevin Yarde
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Catherine Fife, John Fraser
Goldie Ghamari, France Gélinas
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