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11 décembre 2019

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Clerk: Todd Decker

Président : L'honorable Ted Arnott  
Greffier : Todd Decker

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Hansard Reporting and Interpretation Services  
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Salle 500, aile ouest, Édifice du Parlement  
111, rue Wellesley ouest, Queen's Park  
Toronto ON M7A 1A2  
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# CONTENTS / TABLE DES MATIÈRES

Wednesday 11 December 2019 / Mercredi 11 décembre 2019

## ORDERS OF THE DAY / ORDRE DU JOUR

### Security from Trespass and Protecting Food Safety Act, 2019, Bill 156, Mr. Hardeman / Loi de 2019 sur la protection contre l'entrée sans autorisation et sur la protection de la salubrité des aliments, projet de loi 156, M. Hardeman

Mr. Dave Smith.....	6815
Ms. Teresa J. Armstrong.....	6815
Hon. Lisa MacLeod.....	6816
Miss Monique Taylor.....	6816
Mr. John Vanthof.....	6816
Ms. Goldie Ghamari.....	6816
Miss Monique Taylor.....	6819
Mr. Jeremy Roberts.....	6820
Mr. John Vanthof.....	6820
Mr. Rudy Cuzzetto.....	6820
Ms. Goldie Ghamari.....	6820
Mr. Taras Natyshak.....	6821
Mr. Vincent Ke.....	6823
Miss Monique Taylor.....	6823
Mr. Amarjot Sandhu.....	6824
Mr. John Vanthof.....	6824
Mr. Taras Natyshak.....	6824
Second reading debate deemed adjourned.....	6825

### Susan Swift

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott).....	6825
Mr. Gilles Bisson.....	6825

## INTRODUCTION OF VISITORS / PRÉSENTATION DES VISITEURS

Hon. Bill Walker.....	6825
Ms. Judith Monteith-Farrell.....	6825
Hon. Kinga Surma.....	6825
Ms. Jessica Bell.....	6825
Mr. Jeremy Roberts.....	6825
Ms. Teresa J. Armstrong.....	6825
Hon. Caroline Mulroney.....	6825
Ms. Andrea Horwath.....	6825
Hon. Christine Elliott.....	6825
Ms. Peggy Sattler.....	6826
Mr. Aris Babikian.....	6826
Miss Monique Taylor.....	6826
Hon. Raymond Sung Joon Cho.....	6826
Ms. Catherine Fife.....	6826
Mr. David Piccini.....	6826
Ms. Sandy Shaw.....	6826
Mr. Percy Hatfield.....	6826

## ORAL QUESTIONS / QUESTIONS ORALES

### Teachers' labour dispute

Ms. Andrea Horwath.....	6826
Hon. Stephen Lecce.....	6826

### Teachers' labour dispute

Ms. Andrea Horwath.....	6827
Hon. Stephen Lecce.....	6827

### Éducation en français / French-language education

M. Guy Bourgouin.....	6828
Hon. Stephen Lecce.....	6828

### International trade

Mr. Vijay Thanigasalam.....	6828
Hon. Doug Ford.....	6828

### Government appointments

Mr. Taras Natyshak.....	6829
Hon. Victor Fedeli.....	6829

### Hydro One

Mr. Randy Hillier.....	6830
Hon. Greg Rickford.....	6830

### Death registration

Mr. Roman Baber.....	6830
Hon. Lisa M. Thompson.....	6830
Hon. Doug Downey.....	6830

### Youth suicide

Mr. Sol Mamakwa.....	6831
Hon. Greg Rickford.....	6831

### Job creation

Mr. David Piccini.....	6831
Hon. Victor Fedeli.....	6831

### Anti-racism activities

Mr. Kevin Yarde.....	6832
Hon. Stephen Lecce.....	6832
Ms. Jill Andrew.....	6832

### Mental health and addiction services

Mrs. Gila Martow.....	6833
Hon. Michael A. Tibollo.....	6833

### Public health

Mme France Gélinas.....	6833
Hon. Christine Elliott.....	6833

### Nuclear energy

Mr. Stephen Crawford.....	6834
Hon. Greg Rickford.....	6834
Hon. Bill Walker.....	6834

### Highway tolls

Ms. Jennifer K. French.....	6834
Hon. Caroline Mulroney.....	6835

**Consumer protection**

Mrs. Robin Martin.....	6835
Hon. Lisa M. Thompson .....	6835

**Tenant protection**

Ms. Jessica Bell.....	6836
Hon. Steve Clark .....	6836

**INTRODUCTION OF VISITORS /  
PRÉSENTATION DES VISITEURS**

Mr. Tom Rakocevic .....	6836
Mr. Randy Pettapiece.....	6836
Mr. Kaleed Rasheed.....	6836

**Supplementary estimates**

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott) .....	6836
-------------------------------------	------

**MEMBERS' STATEMENTS /  
DÉCLARATIONS DES DÉPUTÉS****Student Choice Initiative**

Ms. Jessica Bell.....	6836
-----------------------	------

**Ontario Health Team—Northumberland**

Mr. David Piccini.....	6837
------------------------	------

**Alex Patterson**

Mme France Gélinas .....	6837
--------------------------	------

**Battle of Crysler's Farm**

Mr. Jim McDonell.....	6837
-----------------------	------

**Tenant protection**

Ms. Suze Morrison.....	6837
------------------------	------

**Rural Rascals, Cockwombs and Legends**

Mr. Randy Hillier.....	6838
------------------------	------

**Reg and Liz Samis**

Mr. Randy Pettapiece.....	6838
---------------------------	------

**Season's greetings / Meilleurs voeux**

Mr. Michael Mantha .....	6838
--------------------------	------

**Road safety**

Mr. Sam Oosterhoff .....	6838
--------------------------	------

**Government's record**

Mr. Mike Harris .....	6839
-----------------------	------

**REPORTS BY COMMITTEES /  
RAPPORTS DES COMITÉS****Standing Committee on Regulations and Private  
Bills**

Mr. Will Bouma .....	6839
Report adopted.....	6839

**Standing Committee on Regulations and Private  
Bills**

Mr. Will Bouma .....	6839
Report adopted.....	6839

**Standing Committee on Public Accounts**

Ms. Catherine Fife.....	6839
Debate adjourned .....	6840

**Standing Committee on Public Accounts**

Ms. Catherine Fife.....	6840
Debate adjourned .....	6840

**INTRODUCTION OF BILLS /  
DÉPÔT DES PROJETS DE LOI****Ontario Climate Crisis Strategy for the Public  
Sector Act, 2019, Bill 165, Mr. Tabuns / Loi de  
2019 sur la Stratégie du secteur public de l'Ontario  
relative à la crise climatique, projet de loi 165, M.  
Tabuns**

First reading agreed to.....	6840
Mr. Peter Tabuns .....	6840

**Great Lakes Protection Amendment Act, 2019, Bill  
166, Mr. Barrett / Loi de 2019 modifiant la Loi sur  
la protection des Grands Lacs, projet de loi 166, M.  
Barrett**

First reading agreed to.....	6840
Mr. Toby Barrett .....	6840

**Legislative Assembly Amendment Act, 2019, Bill  
167, Mr. Calandra / Loi de 2019 modifiant la Loi  
sur l'Assemblée législative, projet de loi 167, M.  
Calandra**

First reading agreed to.....	6840
Hon. Paul Calandra .....	6840

**Combating Antisemitism Act, 2019, Bill 168, Mr.  
Bouma / Loi de 2019 sur la lutte contre  
l'antisémitisme, projet de loi 168, M. Bouma**

First reading agreed to.....	6841
Mr. Will Bouma .....	6841

**MOTIONS****Consideration of Bill 159**

Hon. Paul Calandra .....	6841
Motion agreed to .....	6841

**Committee sittings**

Hon. Paul Calandra .....	6841
Motion agreed to .....	6841

**Consideration of Bill 123**

Hon. Paul Calandra .....	6841
Motion agreed to .....	6841

**Legislative reform**

Mr. Mike Schreiner .....	6842
Mr. Gilles Bisson .....	6842
Hon. Paul Calandra .....	6842
Mr. Randy Hillier .....	6842
Motion agreed to .....	6842

## PETITIONS / PÉTITIONS

### Public sector compensation

Mr. Jamie West ..... 6842

### Plasma collection

Mr. Toby Barrett ..... 6843

### Teachers' professional development

Ms. Marit Stiles ..... 6843

### Land use planning

Ms. Goldie Ghamari ..... 6843

### Assistive devices

Mr. Joel Harden ..... 6843

### Spine surgery

Mr. Dave Smith ..... 6844

### Documents gouvernementaux

Mme France Gélinas ..... 6844

### Government's agenda

Mr. Sam Oosterhoff ..... 6844

### International baccalaureate program

Ms. Bhutla Karpoche ..... 6844

### Government's agenda

Mr. Will Bouma ..... 6845

### Long-term care

Mr. Michael Mantha ..... 6845

### Real estate industry

Mrs. Gila Martow ..... 6845

## ORDERS OF THE DAY / ORDRE DU JOUR

### Foundations for Promoting and Protecting Mental Health and Addictions Services Act, 2019, Bill 116, Ms. Elliott / Loi de 2019 sur les bases nécessaires à la promotion et à la protection des services de santé mentale et de lutte contre les dépendances, projet de loi 116, Mme Elliott

Hon. Christine Elliott ..... 6846

Hon. Michael A. Tibollo ..... 6847

Ms. Bhutla Karpoche ..... 6850

Mr. Mike Schreiner ..... 6852

Hon. Doug Downey ..... 6853

Mme France Gélinas ..... 6854

Mr. John Fraser ..... 6855

Third reading agreed to ..... 6855



LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY  
OF ONTARIO

Wednesday 11 December 2019

ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE  
DE L'ONTARIO

Mercredi 11 décembre 2019

*The House met at 0900.*

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

ORDERS OF THE DAY

SECURITY FROM TRESPASS  
AND PROTECTING FOOD SAFETY  
ACT, 2019

LOI DE 2019 SUR LA PROTECTION  
CONTRE L'ENTRÉE SANS AUTORISATION  
ET SUR LA PROTECTION  
DE LA SALUBRITÉ DES ALIMENTS

Resuming the debate adjourned on December 10, 2019, on the motion for second reading of the following bill:

Bill 156, An Act to protect Ontario's farms and farm animals from trespassers and other forms of interference and to prevent contamination of Ontario's food supply /  
Projet de loi 156, Loi visant à protéger les fermes et les animaux d'élevage en Ontario contre les entrées sans autorisation et d'autres actes susceptibles de les déranger et à prévenir la contamination de l'approvisionnement alimentaire en Ontario.

**The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott):** When we last debated Bill 156, the member for Timiskaming–Cochrane had the floor and had made his presentation. So now, we're going to do questions and comments in response to the speech that was given by the member for Timiskaming–Cochrane.

**Mr. Dave Smith:** Listening intently to the member from Timiskaming–Cochrane's speech yesterday, there were a couple of things that jumped out to me. One of his comments was that we do things because of the 1%. I want to quote Plato on that: "Good people do not need laws to tell them to act responsibly...." He's absolutely correct: Good people do not need laws to tell them to act responsibly.

Unfortunately, what we are looking at with this law is, we don't want to limit someone's ability to protest, but we want to make sure that, in the actions of their protests, they are not doing something unlawful, that they are not going onto the farmers' property and they're not endangering the livestock, that they are not putting the farmers at risk.

In May of 2019, the Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs came out with a statement that said, "Owning a farm business can be very stressful. If you are struggling with the impact of these stresses, you are not alone." That was around a mental health initiative that we

were putting out because we recognized that having a farm is something that is very stressful. There is a lot of pressure that's put on you. And when you have activists who are coming onto the property and adding to that level of stress, that's something that needs to be taken a look at.

Every person should feel comfortable in their home. Every person should feel comfortable at their workplace. What this legislation does for us is it allows us to say, "We recognize that those who are on farms, those farmers and those families, need to feel safe in their home. They need to feel safe in their workplace."

We're trying to find a balance so that people have the ability to continue to protest but they're not doing something that might affect the food supply, and I think this bill finds that. I was a little bit disappointed in the member, who was a dairy farmer, who didn't recognize that.

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

**Ms. Teresa J. Armstrong:** I was here yesterday on House duty for both the minister's lead and our critic for agriculture, from Timiskaming–Cochrane. I respect our critic, and I also respect the Minister of Agriculture as well, because they both had that experience in farming and the food production of Ontario.

This bill is a very important bill because we know that the one main concern that farmers have is the biosecurity of their animals and the chain of that production as it goes along, to make sure that that isn't compromised. We also know that farmers, as our agriculture critic said, have a lot of pride in what they do. Farmers do really, really great jobs in making sure we get the food from the farm to the table.

Where I think there are concerns is around if someone does come onto someone's property, that the farmer is responsible for that reasonable force. That needs to be strengthened. It needs to be discussed. We don't want to put farmers or protesters in a situation where there is escalation.

There are some provisions in there about having the livestock zones with signs, but, again, when this goes to committee, those discussions need to be had around the table to make sure that we get it right. We don't want a test case going to court, having people's lives dragged through the court, or unintended consequences that could occur from this provision in this legislation.

So, yes, we certainly want to make sure we protect biosecurity, but we do have concerns around some of the things that we need to tighten up.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls):** Further questions and comments? I recognize the Minister of Heritage, Sport, Tourism and Culture Industries.

**Hon. Lisa MacLeod:** Thanks very much, Speaker. It's great to be up.

I saw my colleague from Carleton stand up, and I know she'll have an opportunity, I think, to speak later. I just want to say she has been doing a great job in standing up for her rural constituents in Carleton—a lot of farmers inside the largest agricultural city in the world, which is the city of Ottawa.

I do represent an urban riding, but I do have a few small farms because we are a large agricultural city, and this issue has come up time and time and time again with urban farmers.

I want to make special mention of my friend, a great community leader, Peter Ruiter, who has an urban farm on Prince of Wales Drive in the city of Ottawa. I was decorating my Christmas float about a month ago, and Peter said to me, "Lisa, we're going to need your help to make sure that our livestock, my cows, and my family are protected from people who trespass on my land." I said to him I would bring that, raise it, to the Minister of Agriculture, and I'm so proud of Ernie Hardeman, our agriculture minister, for recognizing that this does need to happen.

We have to stand up on behalf of those farmers, who, by the way, feed our cities. Whether you agree with farming or not—I have no idea how you could not agree with farming—you should at least understand that those people who live and work on the farm deserve to feel safe and secure. That is their home, it is their livelihood, and they should not be under threat. That's why I'm happy that we're here today to speak to this piece of legislation and, quite frankly, to support this legislation.

If I may, in my final seconds here, just reiterate how kind and compassionate people are in the rural and farming communities. I'm grateful to have had the opportunity to represent Nepean–Carleton for 13 years, and now Nepean for a year, and to meet many of these farmers who are doing great work and who really do care about what they do and the communities that they live in.

Thanks very much, Speaker, for this opportunity.

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

**Miss Monique Taylor:** Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker, and good morning.

I was here yesterday when the member from Cochrane did his hour lead on this bill for New Democrats, and I listened intently. I know we say that word a lot here in this House, but I truly did sit and listen to the member, to hear his thoughts on this very important bill, because we know that we need to ensure that we have food security. That is important to every single person in this province, to make sure that there cannot be any hindrance by any outside interference when it comes to the farming community, and to make sure that they have a safe space.

He also raised some very good questions about things that could be worked on in the bill. I believe all members of this House take what this member says to heart, and truly listen to the voice that he brings to the table. He was a farmer. He has lived through this life. He understands the

farming community. He understands the food security needs. But he also understands the consequences that could possibly happen without meaning to do so.

**0910**

There were some things that he raised about the transactions, possibly, that could come between the farmer and the protester, and how that could go bad very quickly. I don't think anybody in this House truly wants that to happen.

So I think it's a conversation that needs to happen, to be able to work together to make sure that we do get it right for the farmers in this province and for the food security that we all count on here in Ontario.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls):** I now return to the member from Timiskaming–Cochrane for his final comments.

**Mr. John Vanthof:** Thank you, Speaker. Once again, it's a good opportunity to talk about agriculture and farming and Bill 156—anti-trespassing. I made it clear in my comments yesterday: We support everything in this bill that protects biosecurity and protects farm families in their place of business and home. We fully support that.

What we brought up is that there are some instances in this bill where, after it passes second reading and goes to committee, we should take a long, hard look at the unintended consequences. One of those is with the retroactive trespassing provisions where you can be charged two years after, under this bill. This could be seen as anti-whistle-blower.

As a farmer, as someone from rural Ontario, I'm very concerned that all the hard work that farmers and the processing sector have done to defend their reputation, which is stellar, could be tainted when something that's perceived as anti-whistle-blower legislation is taken to the Supreme Court of Canada, and it could very well lose. I made it very clear in this House yesterday that you can't buy trust.

Now, the Minister of Agriculture and his parliamentary assistants mentioned how every farm leader in the province fully supports this bill, but if this bill is challenged, if that specific section is challenged and loses in court, then the opponents of agriculture will be able to point at every one of those farm leaders and say, "But you supported this."

I'm asking the government, when this passes second reading, to work with the farm community and make sure that this bill is rock-solid and that it cannot be challenged, because there are sections where it appears, or you could make it appear, that agriculture has something to hide, and it doesn't. We need to make sure the wording of the bill does not leave that crack open.

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

**Ms. Goldie Ghamari:** Mr. Speaker, it's an honour to rise in this House today and speak to Bill 156, the Security from Trespass and Protecting Food Safety Act, 2019.

I would like to begin, Mr. Speaker, by thanking the Minister of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs for introducing this critical piece of legislation. If passed, this bill

will protect farm animals, it will protect our food supply and it will protect farmers, and so many others as well, from risks created when trespassers enter places where farm animals are kept, and from other unauthorized interactions with farm animals.

Ultimately, Bill 156 looks to protect against the risks of exposing farm animals to disease and stress, as well as the risk of the possible introduction of contaminants into the food supply, something that affects every citizen of this province and abroad. Safety has always been on top of the agenda for our government, Mr. Speaker, and this bill intends to keep farmers, their families, agri-food workers and farm animals safe. It does so by reducing the likelihood of trespassing on farms and processing facilities. These are unique risks and challenges that are associated with the agriculture industry, and I'm proud to be part of a government that took on this challenge by addressing the various issues that accompany trespassing onto these premises.

I want to take a moment to talk about the importance of agriculture, not only in my riding of Carleton, as the minister mentioned earlier, but all across Ontario. Farms help strengthen rural communities and farms feed families. I know first-hand the sense of community farmers bring, and I see genuine gratitude from their neighbours and from members of their community who know how important their work is. It is a job of long hours, early hours, late hours, hard work and commitment. It is a trade that Ontarians rely upon. Our families rely upon our farmers to feed them and their children. Agriculture is vital to the success of our province, and I am proud to stand here today and speak to this bill that is centred around farmers, their livestock and their craft.

It's our government's responsibility to protect Ontarians and their livelihoods. This includes the men and women who work in the agricultural sector and their livestock. Owning and working with livestock is a difficult, time-consuming job that requires patience, hard work and discipline. After all, farmers are dealing with animals, with living and breathing beings, so it's only right that farmers and others in the agriculture industry are able to reap the rewards of their labour and feel protected, knowing that their government, our government, has put forth legislation protecting that for which they work so hard.

We believe that every Ontarian has the right to feel safe at home and at work. For so many farmers, work and home are the same place. Their income, their livelihood—their legacy, in fact, Mr. Speaker—all exist at home, and Bill 156 is here to protect that.

I know that in modern society, things are different. People are speaking up for what they believe in, and I respect that. Activism for animal rights is becoming increasingly popular in our society, and it is also something that our government puts as a priority. In fact, when I was in law school, in my third year of law, I took a course called *Animals and the Law*. It was a very interesting course. It spoke about the dynamics between animals as living beings and animals as viewed as property under property rights within Ontario legislation.

It's great to see legislation like the Provincial Animal Welfare Services Act, along with the Security from Trespass and Protecting Food Safety Act, that looks to modernize the way we view and treat animals while still respecting those who work with them and deal with them, such as our hard-working farmers. This is why, again, we've introduced other legislation such as Bill 136, which I just mentioned, the Provincial Animal Welfare Services Act, 2019.

Now, with Bill 156, we can go even further to demonstrate how our government cares about the safety of animals, including the welfare of livestock. As I said earlier, farmers and agricultural practices face unique issues that have often been ignored.

Mr. Speaker, being from Carleton, I know plenty of hard-working, passionate farmers, ones who put their trade, including the safety and well-being of their livestock, above all else. Sometimes others do not recognize this.

It's interesting, because very recently I went to a tour of Beking's Poultry Farm. The owners live in Richmond, which is located in my riding of Carleton, but their poultry farm is located about 40 minutes away, close to Kemptville, actually, in Minister Clark's riding. It was interesting because his chickens were in the middle of molting, so some of them had feathers, and some of them didn't. Half of their bodies were bare. It's just a natural process that chickens go through, and yet he specifically asked me and my staff not to take any photos of the chickens because he was concerned that if those photos went on social media, activists—or people who aren't familiar with how chickens grow and their life cycle, and the molting cycle—would view those chickens as either abused or diseased, even though that's not the case.

So, it's interesting, when you experience it first-hand, the concern and sometimes the trepidation that farmers feel with having their livestock put on social media, because of the fact that many people who aren't familiar with how these animals grow could view that as something negative, even though molting chickens is a normal thing. It's actually a healthy thing.

That's an example of how aggressive animal rights activism is an issue that's plaguing many livestock farmers across Canada, including Beking's Poultry Farm and others.

#### 0920

Farmers know the responsibility on their shoulders to uphold the highest standards of animal welfare and food safety, the standards that we expect in Ontario. Our farmers rely on their livestock for their livelihood, so of course, farmers are going to ensure that their animals are taken care of in the best possible way, because they know what's best.

And the reality is that while many good people are shining light on real cases of animal abuse and neglect, there are others who consider any form of animal husbandry to be mistreatment. This could involve trespassing on farms and interference with livestock. In many of these cases, criminal activity is often overlooked, and charges

against those who have committed trespassing offences are often dropped.

Nous croyons que chaque citoyen mérite de se sentir en sécurité dans toutes les régions de l'Ontario. Les agriculteurs sont tellement importants pour l'Ontario, et nous voulons les protéger.

How can we sit by, Mr. Speaker, when so many farmers are working so hard to uphold these standards of care and treatment for their animals, yet are still having their work put in jeopardy by those who trespass illegally onto their properties?

It's a very dangerous situation to have someone enter a farm and tamper not only with the livestock but also with food products that serve a magnificent proportion of Ontario. If passed, the Security from Trespass and Protecting Food Safety Act will implement escalating fines of up to \$15,000 for a first offence and up to \$25,000 for subsequent offences, compared to a \$10,000 maximum fine under the current Trespass to Property Act. This ensures that farmers and consumers will have peace of mind that no one in this province is able to tamper with livestock and our food supply without swift and just consequences.

If passed, this bill will improve protections and working conditions for the agri-food sector. It will ensure that Ontario remains open for business and open for jobs. This bill will also give our judicial system the much-needed tools to ensure that there are real, substantial consequences for those who choose to break the law by disrupting farming and food production.

It's also important to note that, if passed, this bill will allow exemptions to be provided to allow those enforcing animal legislation, as well as emergency personnel, federal and provincial inspectors, municipal bylaw officers and other authorized people to access the property.

The health and welfare of animals and agri-sector employees are ultimately at the heart of this bill. Our government has built around that mentality to ensure a fair and rational approach to protecting Ontario's farmers and livestock.

I'm proud of the approach that our government has taken when drafting Bill 156. It's a rational solution. It was formulated after listening intently to people from across Ontario and, in fact, across Carleton, as well, who work in the agricultural sector and have been affected by these issues.

Bill 156 recognizes the unique risks of trespassing on farms and agri-food processing facilities, and of interference with livestock transport. By considering these risks, Bill 156 enhances the security of farmers, their families and our food supply while protecting the right for people to participate in legal protests. People have the right to participate in legal protests; that's a given. It's a constitutionally protected right under the charter. But this does not include creating safety risks on farms, interfering with livestock in transport or trespassing onto private property.

Farmers are worried about their personal safety and the safety of their staff, as well as truck drivers. Farmers and others in the livestock industry respect the right to peaceful

protest. But unfortunately, especially in my riding of Carleton, increasingly, they find their homes, property, land and vehicles encroached upon by individuals seeking to tamper with their practices—individuals who are not very familiar with agriculture, who are not aware of what it means to be a farmer in Ontario, in Carleton, in Canada.

Mr. Speaker, it's unfortunate that a lot of people think that in Canada, we have factory farming, but, the reality is that over 97% of Canada's farmers have small farms, and they're family-owned farms, and they've been in the business for generations. Factory farming does not exist in Canada. Factory farming is something that happens in the States, but there's nothing like that here. Unfortunately, though, because of social media and how things are spread, there is this improper illusion that this is how farming happens in Canada, but that's not the case at all.

I've had the pleasure of going to several farms in my riding. I've been to Schouten Dairy Farm. I've been to the Fosters' cattle farm. I mentioned I've been to Beking's Poultry Farm. I've been to the Acres lamb farm. I've been to other farmers who have small farms—the Green Brothers, Abby Hill Farms; they have some farm animals there. There are so many other cattle and dairy farmers.

At one point, I remember, Rideau Pines Farm had a sow and piglets, and they had a big pen and it was just the cutest thing ever. People don't see this. They just see factory farming in the States and they assume that's what is happening here in Ontario, but that's not the case at all. Our farmers take such good care of their animals and have the utmost respect for them.

Just as you would want your home to be protected, Mr. Speaker, this proposed legislation will ensure that no person will enter animal protection zones on farms, animal processing facilities or other prescribed premises without the prior consent of the owner or occupier of the facility. For so many farmers, these farms are their homes; they live and work in the same place. Just as I would not want someone entering my home without my consent, they deserve that same protection, as do all Ontarians.

Monsieur le Président, nous nous engageons à faire en sorte que les agriculteurs se sentent en sécurité à la maison et au travail. Ceux qui empiètent sur leur propriété devraient être tenus responsables.

This is a realistic approach to ensure that people do not trespass in areas where they could interfere with livestock. This is not only for the safety of the farmers and the animals, but also for anyone who could enter the premises. It is a learned skill to be able to properly work and interact with livestock. It is a skill that the hard-working men and women in the agricultural sector have years of experience perfecting, and it takes specific knowledge about the trade in order to operate safely for both the good of the worker and the animals.

Individuals who enter a farm or processing facility without authorization are unlikely to be aware of safety protocols, and may unknowingly introduce a variety of risks. These serious risks include endangering farmers, employees and their families; stress or trauma to animals; risks to public health; risks to biosecurity; and risks to our

food supply. These are the key areas that this bill is looking to protect.

I know that the minister and many others from the Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs, including his parliamentary assistants, have worked diligently to create a piece of legislation that accurately reflects and assists the needs of Ontarians.

We have heard many concerns from farmers who are frustrated that not enough is being done to ensure that unauthorized trespassing is addressed. During consultations, our government received more than 900 stakeholder letters, and over 30 rural municipalities have passed or supported council resolutions calling for increased protections. These letters primarily focused on concerns over the growing amount of trespass incidents, expressed frustration over convictions not being pursued in the judicial system, and called upon the government for assurance of a more rigid process to prevent and address incidents. With this overwhelming response, it is clear that this is something that is important to the people and the critical agricultural industry in Ontario.

Merci à tous ceux qui ont participé aux consultations. C'est grâce à vous que nous sommes en mesure de régler les problèmes qui sont vraiment importants en Ontario. C'est grâce à votre expérience que nous continuerons à travailler pour que l'Ontario soit un meilleur endroit pour cultiver et pour travailler.

**0930**

Various stakeholders expressed that they are not only exposed to peaceful protests, but they find themselves exposed to illegal activity. Farmlands have been illegally breached and animals have been stolen, which not only creates a food safety issue, but endangers human lives as well.

Ontario farmers follow high standards of care, including biosecurity protocols protecting animals from disease. When someone trespasses onto a farm or food processing plant and is unaware of the proper biosecurity protocols, they put the health of animals, the safety of food and the livelihood of farmers at risk. Food security is something that this government takes very seriously, and we are putting forward this legislation to ensure that the integrity of our food systems will not be put in jeopardy.

Ultimately, our government conducted extensive consultations and held more than 20 round tables, meetings and conference calls with various stakeholders, municipalities and representatives of animal advocacy organizations to discuss concerns with trespassing and the integrity of our food systems.

In my own riding of Carleton—actually, one of the first public town hall meetings that I had was called Carleton Conversations, and it was on the topic of agriculture. This was well before I was even elected. I distinctly remember that we had over 80 farmers attend. Imagine that, Mr. Speaker. I was a candidate at that point, not even elected—the election was probably almost a year away—and I held a public town hall meeting on agriculture and over 80 farmers showed up. To this day, we still continue those Carleton Conversations, because it's so important.

Ultimately, how are we as a government supposed to represent the people that we are here to serve if we don't listen to them? That's why I'm proud to be in support of this bill, because this bill is evidence of our government having consulted with Ontarians, listened to them and taken their feedback to bring some positive change.

We have already heard so many positive responses from stakeholders that are directly involved in the agriculture industry and who have lived experience with these issues that we have discussed today. This positive feedback from these important stakeholders, who were ignored by previous administrations, who were ignored for 15 years, is a fantastic indicator that our government has tackled the issues that matter most to people.

The Security from Trespass and Protecting Food Safety Act is part of our government's commitment to protecting the health and safety of our agri-food sector, farm animal welfare and food safety. I'm proud to support this bill. This bill is fair and balanced. It prioritizes the safety and security of farmers, their families and our food supply, while protecting the rights for people to participate in legal protests. This legislation is just one of the many examples of how our government for the people is listening to Ontarians and getting results.

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

**Miss Monique Taylor:** I would like to thank the member from Carleton for her input on this bill. You can hear very clearly that she understands the farming community in Carleton, that she has been working with them for years, and that she understands that there is a need. We agree completely. As I said, I take great stock in what the member from Timiskaming–Cochrane has to say on this bill. So I see a pattern of us agreeing on the fact that there is an issue that needs to be dealt with, and nobody is disagreeing with that. We need to ensure we have food security, that biosecurity is protected, that farmers are protected, that protesters are protected and have the right to do so.

Our position on this is that we're concerned that there could be unintended consequences, and I'm quite sure that the member from Carleton wouldn't want to see her farmers fall into something of an unintended consequence either. That's why it's important that we have these debates. That's why it is important that we go to committee. Maybe this is a bill that needs to travel. Maybe people need to come together to have a different perspective. Farmers are not the ones who write this legislation, right? So we want to make sure that we get it right and that the farmers understand, too, what consequences could happen just from the particular wording. Maybe that's what needs to be changed. The concept is exactly what everybody wants. It's just how we get to the right place so that there are no unintended consequences.

Thank you to the member from Carleton for your input, for sharing with us the stories of the farms that you've visited and the knowledge that you've been able to gain, and how important it is to bring that to this House. That's how good laws are made: by discussion, by consultation,

by making sure that all points are considered, to ensure that there are no unintended consequences.

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

**Mr. Jeremy Roberts:** It's wonderful to rise today to provide some comments on the remarks that my colleague from Carleton delivered.

Carleton is a neighbouring riding to Ottawa West–Nepean, although I represent a more urban part of the city. The member from Carleton is right: Her riding has a very, very large, vibrant and robust farming community.

A lot of people don't know this, but Ottawa at one time was, and still remains today, one of the largest cities, geographically, in Canada. The mayor of Ottawa has this wonderful map where you can see within the boundaries of Ottawa the cities of Toronto, Winnipeg, Edmonton, Calgary and Vancouver, all within those boundaries of Ottawa, and it's because we have such a large rural population, which, of course, includes our wonderful farmers.

Mr. Speaker, as someone who isn't a farmer myself, when I'm looking at this sort of legislation, I like to take a look at what people from the actual farming community are saying. I've got some quotes here. I've got one from Eric Schwindt. He's the Ontario Pork chair. He says, "Over the past year, we have seen protesters move beyond peaceful protest to illegal activity. Recent actions including trespassing onto our farms—our homes—and stealing animals have created not only a food safety issue but also that of human safety. Farmers need the support of government through the creation of new legislation to protect farm families and our food supply."

I'm not going to have time to get into it, but I see supportive quotes here from the Chicken Farmers of Ontario, the Ontario Federation of Agriculture's president, and the list goes on. This suggests to me that we have some good, robust stakeholder support.

I appreciate hearing from the member of Carleton, who has her finger on the pulse of the Ottawa farm community.

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

**Mr. John Vanthof:** Once again, it's an honour to stand in the House.

I listened very intently to the member from Carleton and her 20-minute presentation, and I was impressed by the thoughtfulness, by how accurate it was, in my opinion. She did a really good job. You could tell that she had actually had really good conversations with the farm community, and I commend the government for that. I hope that you continue to do that.

The one part that wasn't mentioned, and I'm sure not intentionally—biosecurity is extremely important on farms. I had this discussion, after my remarks yesterday, with the minister, about how the retroactive trespassing part of this bill impacts biosecurity. He disagreed with me. He said, "Well, it does."

Here is going to be the challenging part: If someone gets hired on a farm or in a processing plant, that plant or that farm has biosecurity protocols. So, regardless of how you got the job, to work on that farm or in that processing

plant, you have to work by their biosecurity protocols. Whether you work there for six months and whether you take a picture or not, you have to work under those protocols. If you take a picture and no longer work at that plant and then are charged with trespassing—that person can make the argument that that has nothing to do with biosecurity because they followed the biosecurity protocol under which they got hired. You need to hear that here so that you don't hear it in court, and so that you don't throw farmers' reputations under the bus. They have nothing to hide, but this legislation could make it appear to be so.

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

**0940**

**Mr. Rudy Cuzzetto:** I'd like to thank the member from Carleton for her great speech this morning in support of Bill 156, the Security from Trespass and Protecting Food Safety Act.

Balancing the right to protest with the health and safety of farmers is important, but this does not include creating a safety risk for farmers or interfering with livestock in transportation. Ontario is committed to the highest standards of animal safety and food safety. Farmers should feel free and safe in their homes and their barns—and safety for their employees and for their families.

Bill 156 will not impede on the people's right to peaceful protesting and freedom of expression. That is very important because, not being a farmer myself but knowing farmers, being safe on their own farm and the safety of their animals is very important. I would not know what to do if I was a farmer and I had protesters on my farm or in my barns at night. I would not know what to do.

But there still should be freedom of protesting. We are in a democratic country, so people should be free to protest as well.

This bill covers everything in general. I'm really in support of this bill, and Bill 156 would be a great bill for us.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls):** Now I return to the member from Carleton for her final comments.

**Ms. Goldie Ghamari:** I want to thank the members from Hamilton Mountain, Ottawa West–Nepean, Timiskaming–Cochrane and Mississauga–Lakeshore for their comments.

I also want to thank the member from Hamilton Mountain for her kind words. I was listening intently. I agree that you always want to see if there are any unintended consequences with any legislation that's being passed. It's great to have this kind of debate. I would encourage the member to reach out to her constituents and see if there are any comments or anything there, and share that with us and share that with the government.

Ultimately, protecting agriculture is a non-partisan issue. It's something that we are all supportive of. We all support our farmers. We all support our agriculture industry. So, I look forward to working together with everyone on all sides of the House.

With respect to the member from Timiskaming–Cochrane, I wanted to thank him as well for his thoughtful

and kind comments. Farming and agriculture is a very big part of my riding. Prior to being elected, I was an international trade lawyer, so I actually represented a number of farms, including some dairy farms, on a lot of trade matters. So, even though I'm not a farmer myself, it's an industry that I have been intimately familiar with.

Actually, I used to work for someone named Peter Clark, who represents—

**Mr. John Vanthof:** I know Peter very well.

**Ms. Goldie Ghamari:** Yes. Peter is actually my mentor and represented—he still does, I think—Dairy Farmers of Ontario. I worked for him for six years. The first time we did a trade case, he put about 10 binders this thick in front of me and said, “Get to work.”

Having said that, agriculture is very important. I understand how important it is. I understand the risks. I look forward to continuing to work with everyone to support our farmers in the best possible way. That's why I'm happy to support Bill 156.

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

**Mr. Taras Natyshak:** Good morning to my colleagues in the House. Happy Wednesday. It's two more days before we recess for the winter, and I'm sure we're all anxious to go back to our communities and visit our families and celebrate the holidays. So, I'll take the opportunity to wish you, Speaker, and my colleagues in the House a wonderful Christmas holidays and throughout into the new year.

I rise today pretty optimistic, Speaker, if you can imagine, for a guy like me, who tends to be a little bit pessimistic, I'll admit.

**Mr. John Vanthof:** Yes.

**Mr. Taras Natyshak:** I know. It comes as a shock to my colleagues.

I rise today because in reviewing the bill and in listening to my colleagues, I think there is an opportunity here to get something right. If we take our time and we follow the process set forward in the standing orders, in the processes of this House, and we do our jobs with our constituents in mind and our responsibilities in our hearts, I think we can get close to dealing with this issue.

I say that, Speaker, because clearly, this is within the purview of the provincial government. This is our responsibility. Some people may not like it. Some people may think it's too little, too late. Some people may think it's about time. I tend to think that it is worthy of our time in here and something that we should take a lot of time to look at and to address, to make sure that we get right.

I don't want to cast any illusions that I have any experience in farming or agriculture, although I come from a rural riding, much as you do, Speaker, being my neighbour in Chatham-Kent. We know the importance of agriculture to our communities and to our country. The farmers have fed this country for generations, and continue to not only feed us nutritionally but economically as well. So we know the importance that farms have to our economy, and we know the responsibilities that we have, to put forward common-sense regulations and mechanisms for protection

that not only protect farmers but protect consumers as well.

This bill deals with an important matter around biosecurity. What I do know about farming, Speaker, is that—first of all, I know that in this House, we should be listening to those with experience in agricultural production. That's why I value my colleague from Timiskaming—Cochrane—is that right?

**Mr. John Vanthof:** Yes.

**Mr. Taras Natyshak:** It's only been eight years. I should know your riding.

I value his input, as do other colleagues, I believe. Speaker, I know you do as well, because he comes to this House with a tremendous amount of lived experience, and a way of explaining those experiences in relation to the legislation that we're reviewing that really makes some sense.

I know that we should be listening to people like my colleague, but also to those outside. We've heard from members of the OFA, the chicken farmers, the pork farmers, all sources of agriculture, and they're saying that this is something that is needed.

Why is it needed? What I do know about agricultural production is that, above all, what helps them in their daily business, to operate their business, is certainty, predictability, bankability. They live and die at the whim of elements that are outside of their control. They're always trying to mitigate those elements, whether it be the environment, the economy, regional challenges or infrastructure. So many challenges are thrown at our agriculture industry, and yet they still are determined to persevere, to make a living, to provide a good-quality product for consumers. And we have to thank them and respect them for that.

What I believe is at the heart of this is to add to that predictability and bankability. I would argue that it's never been harder for those in the agriculture industry, at least in Ontario, to make a living. The costs of inputs have gone up dramatically. The price that they are getting for their product is challenged by trade challenges and other products coming in, imports coming in. It lowers those margins razor-thin. They have to look at and protect every measure that they can.

According to a recent Stats Canada report, net farm income in Ontario decreased by an astonishing 75% in 2018 compared to 2017. Speaker, that was largely due to an increase in expenses, interest charges and machinery fuel, which vastly outpaced farm revenue. Meanwhile, provincial funding from the Ministry of Agriculture, which provides support for farmers, has been frozen or cut for several years, including a 25% cut in 2019-20 alone. So it keeps getting harder for farmers to make a living.

What that does for us as consumers is make us more vulnerable. If we are more reliant on importing our food as a sovereign nation and less reliant on the domestic production of agriculture and food sourced in this country, I have said it before and I will say it again: Our sovereignty as a nation is at risk. So it's incumbent upon us to do everything that we can to protect that source and to understand the challenges that agricultural producers have.

0950

This has some mechanisms built within the bill that we believe can help. The vast majority of producers out there, as my colleague stated in his one-hour lead yesterday, are thoughtful, concerned, considerate producers. They understand—and I don't know if I'll quote him verbatim—that a comfortable cow is a producing cow.

Is that what you said?

**Mr. John Vanthof:** Close.

**Mr. Taras Natyshak:** Something like that.

What we know is that the better maintained the facility, the better the quality of care that they provide livestock, the better the animal husbandry—which is a term that's kind of interesting—

**Mr. John Vanthof:** When you think about it, it's kind of weird.

**Mr. Taras Natyshak:** It's kind of interesting, but it is a term that we often use—the better the product will be. So we have to trust that that has been embedded.

But a lot of that has come through partnership and collaboration with various levels of government, to ensure that there are rules that protect and set forward how livestock is treated, how the processing process is unravelled and how that food eventually ends up on our plate—and it protects consumers as well.

This bill certainly addresses the importance of biosecurity, but there's an educational component of this bill that I don't really see, but I think it should be added. I think there should be a really large push to inform citizens. I know the agricultural community will be following this quite closely, but if we don't reach out to the broader sectors of our province, those urban areas, to let them know how important protecting biosecurity is within the food chain and the supply chain, then I think we are missing an opportunity to really impact this bill.

The penalty side, the stick side, certainly will be known. I believe there are fines up to \$25,000—\$15,000 for a first offence, and \$25,000 for trespassing and for interaction under the bill. Certainly people will know of that. Will it be enough of a deterrent? We're not quite certain. But I think the knowledge and getting that education, that component out there, will be something that is really important and that we need to look at.

My colleague talked about some of his concerns. We think that in order to get this right, it will have to require the government to really take it seriously and to decide whether this is something that they want to challenge. We can see quite clearly, because there is precedent, that there will a path under the provisions for what my colleague calls “retroactive trespassing,” where someone can be charged with trespassing two years after they actually were on the premises and took some sort of illegal action under the provisions of the bill. We clearly see that because of precedent in other areas, other jurisdictions—the United States and, I believe, in Canada—where that just hasn't been upheld. So you'll have to decide.

This is our responsibility as opposition members, to caution you that that is something that you're going to be heading towards. But it's something that we can avoid at

committee. We look forward, through the process, to hearing from legal experts and hearing from the farming community as to where maybe a possible cut-off can be, somewhere where we can compromise on that, because we understand that there has to be the stick approach, the carrot and the stick. That provision may be void and null, and you'll have to go back to it at some point anyhow.

Speaker, as I said, I am not a farmer. In Essex county—I don't know about Chatham-Kent, but in Essex county—the livestock producers aren't as vast as they used to be. I'm going around my map of Essex county, and I know that the Jobin dairy farm—a wonderful family; a generational dairy farm—suffered a catastrophic loss to their farm a couple of years ago. Their barn burned down. The community rallied, and they built one of the most beautiful facilities, a world-class facility. The engineering, the mechanics—it's incredible. They are proud, and we are proud to have them in our community.

The Fuerths own Ewe Dell farms in Woodslee—a great producer of lamb, and a great, long-standing family.

Dan Diemer's farm: Dan's farm was generational.

**Mr. John Vanthof:** I know Dan.

**Mr. Taras Natyshak:** You know Dan, of course. His farm was sold. There's a new gentleman who owns it. He is from Ireland. He came in and upgraded that facility. It operates. It's incredible.

Wagner's orchards: I know they have some beef cattle too, as well. But there aren't too many in Essex county. Of course, you would know that most of our farms are cash crop farms. That's just—

*Interjection.*

**Mr. Taras Natyshak:** Yes, because it's too expensive.

**Mr. John Vanthof:** It's great land.

**Mr. Taras Natyshak:** It's great land. It's too expensive to get in. So we have to understand the challenges that those who remain are under.

But, Speaker, I am no expert. What I do in my off time—as many of you know, I am an avid outdoorsman. Yes, I fish and I hunt. I enjoy it and it's a part of—

**Mr. John Vanthof:** We're shocked.

**Mr. Taras Natyshak:** Whatever. Look, it's a part of my history. It's a part of my family history. Some of the memories that have been created in hunting with my family are a special thing.

What I see are some parallels between this legislation and what we currently have in Ontario as standing legislation that addresses anti-hunter harassment.

What that means is, as a legal hunter—I have all of my certifications. All of my firearms are stored safely. I've taken every course you can take. I have permission from landowners when I go and hunt. I follow all the rules, because it's easy to follow the rules and I want to follow the rules. I want to make sure that I'm acting within the rules and conserving the wildlife that we have out there.

**Mr. Sol Mamakwa:** Semi-pro hunter.

**Mr. Taras Natyshak:** My colleague calls me a semi-pro hunter, and he's right. I am a semi-pro compared to him. But I try, Speaker, because I love it. Sometimes it's

not about actually hunting; it's about just being there, in nature.

I haven't experienced it personally, but I know people who have followed all the rules and been harassed for hunting, something that is a part of our heritage in Ontario. The rules that were set forward for hunting don't permit the hunter to arrest a harasser. I think that when they devised the legislation, they gave it some serious thought. That conflict, that confrontation that could happen in the middle of a bush with someone who is an anti-hunting activist, who has all the right in the world to protest hunting—and we certainly want to protect everyone's right to protest. We understand that is a part of civil society in a democratic society.

But for a person to come into a bush that is private property, that the hunter has permission to hunt in, that is well within the boundaries of the law—the government of the day still found it fit to simply require the hunter to acknowledge that they're being harassed, to document that they're being harassed in whatever way they can, whether it be contemporaneous notes—now everybody has got a cellphone. Again, the thing is that we don't want to have those conflicts ensue anywhere in Ontario.

I am concerned that by giving farmers not only the ability, but telling them that they can do this, that this is a part of their right, we may be putting them in jeopardy. I believe that that onus should be on the province, on the government, to ensure that enforcement is there in a timely way. Even the Ontario Federation of Anglers and Hunters, when they reviewed the anti-hunter-harassment legislation—they give hunters some counsel in that they tell hunters to immediately call the MNR, call the OPP, if they feel they are being harassed. They don't say, "Take matters into your own hands," because you've got firearms and you've got conflict.

I want to make sure that we're not putting farmers in that position. I know that there are some provisions within the bill that exclude farmers from liability should that conflict arise. I don't know if that will withstand a Supreme Court test or a constitutional test either. It's going to be a really, really scary area. And I think we can do better. I think we can give farmers the confidence that we believe so heavily in their industry that we're going to ramp up enforcement, ramp up the support mechanisms that would allow them, should they feel threatened, should people breach these animal protection zones—that someone will be there to deal with it. We can do that. There's no reason why we can't in rural Ontario.

**1000**

I want to talk about the whistle-blower provisions. There are some areas in civil society where whistle-blowers have played a really critical role, some more recently. The Boeing 737 MAX: That was a whistle-blower. That person was ignored by the CEO of Boeing. He was ignored by the FAA. He was ignored by the NTSB. And what happened? Two of those brand new planes went down. Had the system worked and had that whistle-blower been ensured the protection, potentially, lives could have been saved.

Speaker, there was a video the other day that I saw of a scuba diver who was underwater at a pipe that was releasing bloody effluent into a river just off of Vancouver Island. That effluent was coming from a salmon processing farm. They were processing wild salmon and farmed salmon. That effluent was tested, and it was found to contain some harmful things that could affect the natural stock of salmon within the Fraser River. Had that person not gone down to review what was coming out of that pipe, we wouldn't know about it.

And here's the catch, Speaker: It's not illegal for that farm to release that bloody effluent. It isn't. It's well within the rules. The point here is that the province of British Columbia has a lot more work to do to protect natural stock. Had they not known that this was being released, and had the broader public not been aware of it and raised some concerns, potentially, it could have gone unknown and we could decimate a really critical part of our ecosystem.

Talking about biodiversity, talking about food security—we as New Democrats certainly believe that the bill has merit. It is timely, and it's one that has some of the right stuff. The process here is that it passes second reading and goes to committee. New Democrats very much look forward to that process. We hope that it's taken seriously in that the government recognizes that we can get this right. I have heard that it shouldn't be a partisan issue—we truly believe that it shouldn't—and that may be the recipe for getting this bill right the first time so that we don't have to turn back, and so that farmers are protected, so that consumers have the support and understand that this government is doing everything they can to protect civil society, the right to protest and the right to farm in peace and safety.

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

**Mr. Vincent Ke:** I'm proud to stand in favour of Bill 156, the Security from Trespass and Protecting Food Safety Act.

Our hard-working farmers deserve to be protected and safe. They're working really hard to produce food for us and our families to enjoy.

Three weeks ago I met with the Ontario Pork association. The chair, Eric Schwindt, is really worried about the illegal activities from some of the protesters now. He said: "Over the past year, we have seen protesters move beyond peaceful protest to illegal activity. Recent actions including trespassing onto our farms—our homes—and stealing animals have created not only a food safety issue but also that of human safety. Farmers need the support of government through the creation of new legislation to protect farm families and our food supply."

So I'm very happy to see that our government brings this bill and, if passed, I'm sure it will protect the farmers and their safety.

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

**Miss Monique Taylor:** Once again, I feel privileged to be part of this debate and to actually work for the betterment of our agri-community and our farmers in Ontario. I

truly believe that this is something that we all agree is an issue that needs to be dealt with. We need to ensure that we have food security, that there is biosecurity, that people trust the food they are being given by our agricultural community, that our farmers are safe in their own homes, on their own farms, and that people still have the right to protest.

We're in agreement on many things, but there are a few things that we're hoping the government will listen to New Democrats on. And truly, we believe it's for the best interests of the farmers as well as protesters. Ensuring that we get this legislation right, I believe, is a step in the right direction to truly ensuring that the farmers are getting what they're looking for under this legislation.

We've stated some things that could be unintended consequences. We want to make sure that doesn't happen. For someone to be able to do an arrest and to be able to use force as long as they think it's not unreasonable force—what is the definition of “unreasonable force”? I think that we can find somebody in trouble where it shouldn't happen. If we have the proper enforcement in place, as the member from Essex said—like the MNR making sure that the government takes responsibility against trespassers and not putting it into the hands of a farmer who just wants to protect their land and their livestock. I think there is work to do, but we're going in the right direction.

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

**Mr. Amarjot Sandhu:** It is my honour to rise today and speak in favour of Bill 156, the Security from Trespass and Protecting Food Safety Act, 2019.

Mr. Speaker, our government introduced this legislation because we believe that farmers should feel safe in their homes and their barns. As a government, it is our responsibility to protect farmers, agri-food businesses, farm animals and our food supply from the risk of trespass activities. This is part of our commitment to protecting the health and safety of our agri-food sector, farm animal welfare and food safety.

Our proposed new legislation, if passed, would support Ontario's agri-food sector by recognizing the unique risk of trespass on farms and agri-food processing facilities, and interfering with livestock transport.

Our government is being proactive with this legislation to avoid issues we have seen worldwide with trespass. This proposed legislation is fair, and balances the safety and security of farmers, their families and our food supply, while protecting the right for people to participate in legal protests.

Not only will this help farmers, but other stakeholders as well, Mr. Speaker. The proposed legislation would address the unique risks and challenges associated with the agri-food industries that are not contemplated in existing legislation, including the federal Criminal Code and the provincial Trespass to Property Act. These include the risks trespassing poses to the safety of those involved in the sector, spreading disease and causing stress to farm animals, and contaminating our food supply. The health

and safety of individuals and farm animals are at the heart of the proposed legislation.

Mr. Speaker, if passed—

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

**Mr. Amarjot Sandhu:** Thank you, sir.

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

**Mr. John Vanthof:** Once again, I'm happy to speak on Bill 156 and comment on the comments made by the member for Essex. He made some comments regarding the ability, under this act, for a farmer or a processing plant operator to make a private arrest until police come.

**1010**

I spoke to that in my comments as well. The Minister of Agriculture—I spoke to him after—said, “Well, that exists under the old trespass act, too.” That is pulled word for word. But the difference here is that—we're having this discussion, which I appreciate, but we're telegraphing to farmers, everyone is telegraphing, “This is giving you a lot more power.” Unless the government does something to educate farmers on what a proper citizen's arrest is, we are running into some possible big-time troubles.

For example, we have security in this building, and they are very unobtrusive and they are very well trained. They know exactly how to lower a situation and when to act and when not to act. But I have been a farmer my whole life. I don't know how to de-escalate a situation. Actually, I'm pretty good at escalating them.

Also, there's one more thing: Even if a citizen's arrest is made successfully and you have to wait for the police, one of the problems on farms is that it takes a long time for the police to come, because there are only so many resources—in many cases, paid for by the municipality. I asked the minister, “So who's going to pay for those extra costs?” He believes that there are going to be less costs with this bill. I believe there are going to be more costs, and we have to discuss who's going to pay for that.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls):** Thank you very much. Now I return to the member from Essex for his final comments.

**Mr. Taras Natyshak:** Thanks to my colleagues from Don Valley North, Hamilton Mountain, Brampton West and Timiskaming–Cochrane.

As I listened to my colleague from Timiskaming–Cochrane, who has years of experience as a dairy farmer, who brings a lot of that lived experience in his speeches in this House—I look at his hands and his lack of a right thumb and I wonder, “How is John Vanthof going to make a citizen's arrest on the farm?” and I get this image of him running around the farm with a set of handcuffs jingling all over. I don't want him to have to do that, Speaker. I don't want to have to put him in jeopardy. He's got arthritis everywhere. He's got a bum knee. It is the case within many of our—

*Laughter.*

**Mr. Taras Natyshak:** And it sounds funny, Speaker, but our farmers are getting older. It is not their responsibil-

ity to have to put themselves in harm's way. It is our responsibility here. We have the jurisdiction of the provincial police, the Ministry of Natural Resources, the Ministry of Agriculture. There are enforcement officers that have the training, the use-of-force continuum. That's stuff that is necessary if you're going to give that ability to someone to enforce the law, I would like to see some overtone from the government to actually address that. It's the real way you would handle that.

I'm not discounting the need to detain someone who is causing chaos or wreaking havoc or disrupting the food supply. I'm not saying that isn't important. In fact, it might be essential. I just don't think that the onus should be on the farmer.

We can do this in here, and I hope it's addressed at committee. I thank the members for their attention this morning, and I appreciate the time.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls):** The time for debate has now expired.

*Second reading debate deemed adjourned.*

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls):** It's close to 10:15. This House will stand recessed until 10:30.

*The House recessed from 1014 to 1030.*

#### SUSAN SWIFT

**The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott):** I would ask for the House's attention. After 32 years with the Legislative Assembly, Susan Swift, the director of the legislative library and research service, will be retiring at the end of January.

A lawyer by training, Susan was assigned to a number of committees focusing on justice policy and was a researcher on the committee on alternate dispute resolution.

In 2003 Susan became the director of the legislative research service, and in 2012 she became the director of the combined legislative library and research service.

She has been very proud to share her experience on the delivery of research services with developing Parliaments in South Africa, Myanmar and the Shan State.

Joining Susan in the gallery this morning are Sue Johnston, Sarah Davies, Catherine Swift, Susan Viets and Eileen Lewis.

Please join me in thanking Susan for her years of service and in wishing her all the very best in her retirement. Thank you.

*Applause.*

**Mr. Gilles Bisson:** I don't want to introduce a visitor, but on behalf of all the members here, I want to thank you and your people for the years of service and the great support that you give members. We're going to miss you. You're quite, quite good. Thank you.

#### INTRODUCTION OF VISITORS

**Hon. Bill Walker:** It's my pleasure to introduce members of the Canadian Nuclear Association, as well as Lisa McBride, president of Women in Nuclear, and to remind

everyone of the nuclear reception in room 230 this evening. Welcome to Queen's Park.

**Ms. Judith Monteith-Farrell:** I'd like to welcome Tim Heney, the amazing CEO of the Thunder Bay Port Authority, to this House this morning.

**Hon. Kinga Surma:** It is my honour to welcome three constituents of Etobicoke Centre, Linda Babcock, Clayton Babcock and Kris Jones, who are sitting in the gallery on this side, and to commend them for the courage and thoughtfulness they have demonstrated through their own tragic experience.

I look forward to hearing the Attorney General and the Minister of Government and Consumer Services speak about how the Babcocks' courage has helped spare other families from unnecessary grief and suffering.

Thank you so much for being here with us today.

**Ms. Jessica Bell:** I'd like to introduce Cole Rundle, a resident of University-Rosedale and a volunteer in our constituency office. Welcome to Queen's Park, Cole.

**Mr. Jeremy Roberts:** It's a great privilege to introduce a number of guests from the Canadian Cancer Survivor Network, headquartered in my riding: Alexander Wyatt, Jackie Manthorne, Owen Brady, Jennifer Hazel, Palmerino Leone and Julianna Leone. Welcome to Queen's Park.

**Ms. Teresa J. Armstrong:** I'd like to welcome guests here today: Khalil Ahmed, Amin Mohamed and Inrtesar Alavi—and he's visiting Canada from India. Welcome to the Legislature.

**Hon. Caroline Mulroney:** It's my pleasure to introduce leaders from the Ontario Marine Transportation Forum: Ian Hamilton, Steve Salmons, Tim Heney, Bruce Hodgson, Guillaum Dubreuil, Marc Gagnon, Wayne Smith and Michael Riehl.

I know my parliamentary assistant had the chance to meet with them this morning and had an informative discussion.

Welcome to Queen's Park.

**Ms. Andrea Horwath:** I'm pleased to welcome members from the Ontario Marine Transportation Forum visiting Queen's Park today—in particular, Ian Hamilton, the president and CEO of the Hamilton Oshawa Port Authority, and Tony Valeri, former member of Parliament and vice-president of corporate affairs at ArcelorMittal, as well as a number of others from the Hamilton area—and the Oshawa area, of course, as they've joined forces—folks like, for example, Jim Howlett; Keanin Loomis, who's also the director of our chamber of commerce in Hamilton; David Bradley, who I'm sure everybody in this chamber would know; Jeremy Dunn; Janet Knight; Bill Fitzgerald; Emily Graham; and Larissa Fenn.

Then others from ArcelorMittal Dofasco—Tony Robinson and Danielle Lewis; and then, of course, others from Stelco in Hamilton—Sujit Sanyal, Lloyd Estrabillo and Trevor Harris; as well as Lydia Mary Cartlidge from the Hamilton Oshawa Port Authority.

It's going to be an excellent reception this afternoon, and I look forward to chatting with folks.

**Hon. Christine Elliott:** I'm pleased to welcome the Lung Association to Queen's Park today. George Habib,

Peter Glazier, Monica Kocsmaros and Jessica Sopher are in the gallery. I appreciate their advocacy on so many issues that are important to Ontarians. We are going to continue to make lung health a priority.

Thank you, and welcome to Queen's Park.

**Ms. Peggy Sattler:** I am delighted to welcome two guests from London West who are here today: Andrew Thorne, who is a keen political observer—he usually watches question period on TV; it is his first time watching it live today—and also my husband, Neil Bradford. Welcome to Queen's Park.

**Mr. Aris Babikian:** It is my pleasure to introduce Dr. George Vincent, orthopaedic surgeon and associate professor of surgery at the University of Toronto. Dr. Vincent is an orthopaedic surgeon in the St. Joseph's Health Centre. Welcome.

**Miss Monique Taylor:** It's my daily introduction of autism advocates. Today with us in the gallery we have Michau van Speyk. Welcome back to Queen's Park, Michau.

**Hon. Raymond Sung Joon Cho:** I'm very happy to welcome future leaders. They are grade 10 students from my riding's Whitefield Christian Collegiate. The names are: Reegas Alfred, Demiana Armanios, Myla Atkins, Jethro Baarbe, Madison Brown, Jamie Chareunsouk, Elsa Cheung, Areum Du, Joshua Fisher, Immanuel Gnanaseelan, Adam Hudson, Samuel McAnally, Ryan Sewram, Alisha Smith, David Solc, Samuel Springer, Prashan Thavarajah, Mark Wang, and their teacher, Ms. Dorcas Jew.

I also have Mr. Michael Malcolm, student achievement officer, from the Ministry of Education.

Welcome to Queen's Park.

**Ms. Catherine Fife:** On behalf of my colleague from Spadina-Fort York, I'd like to welcome Bruce and Ian McRae to Queen's Park.

**Mr. David Piccini:** I'd like to welcome to the Legislature today a good friend, Sean Graham, who is with us from Cobourg. Welcome to the people's House.

**Ms. Sandy Shaw:** I'd like to welcome to the House a representative from the Ontario Marine Transportation Forum, and one of my constituents, Peter Curtis. Welcome to Queen's Park.

**Mr. Percy Hatfield:** I'd like to welcome my friend and neighbour, Steve Salmons, who is the CEO of the Windsor Port Authority; also, from PortsToronto, Alan Paul; the director of government affairs and sustainability at Fednav, Marc Gagnon; and Bruce Hodgson, who is the director of marketing development for the St. Lawrence Seaway Management Corp.

Welcome to Queen's Park. I'll be meeting with you later.

1040

## ORAL QUESTIONS

### TEACHERS' LABOUR DISPUTE

**Ms. Andrea Horwath:** My first question is to the Premier. Today, students, teachers and families across the

province are taking to the streets to protest the Premier's attacks on education and his cuts to the classroom. The Premier successfully created a crisis in education with these reckless cuts, and now he sits silently while schools across Ontario are closed.

Will the Premier break his silence today and tell parents and students what he is prepared to do to end the strike?

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

**Hon. Stephen Lecce:** I'm very proud to confirm and announce in this Legislature that our government and the trustees' association reached another agreement with the Education Workers' Alliance of Ontario, which provides predictability to every parent in this province, which they deserve. We worked hard. We were constructive. We made students the centre of our focus, and we got a voluntary settlement, which is good for all the parties.

Speaker, how we got there is by remaining focused on students, not on ourselves, by remaining mission-critical and by negotiating in good faith. We hope to do that with OSSTF over the coming days. We've offered dates through the media; we hope they will accept them. We also hope they will accept private mediation without precondition, because our students should not be in the middle of this debate.

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

**Ms. Andrea Horwath:** Across Ontario, parents and students are seeing the damage of the Ford government cuts. Here in Toronto, the government's heartless cuts slashed \$106 million in operating funding from the Toronto District School Board, directly caused the cancellation of over 300 classes this year, and could lead to the eventual loss of over 1,100 teachers.

The education minister wants people to be reasonable. The Premier promised that not a single teacher would lose their job. Does he think it was reasonable to turn around and fire 10,000 teachers?

**Hon. Stephen Lecce:** It is unreasonable for OSSTF to say to parents that they will continue striking unless they get an additional 750 million of tax dollars in this province.

Just to contextualize what our government could do, what the people of this province could do, with \$750 million: We could help hire 7,500 mental health workers; we could help build 64 new elementary schools or 28 new secondary schools in this province.

Speaker, the priority of this government is to invest in our students. The teachers' union, and OSSTF specifically, has a \$1.5-billion demand of the government, and if we don't meet that increase in compensation for workers, who we value—the second-highest-paid in the nation; \$92,000 paid, on average, in this province—they're going to continue to strike.

I think that's unacceptable. We're going to remain focused on investing in our kids.

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

**Ms. Andrea Horwath:** How about protecting our public education system and not going so low as to pit one

segment of Ontario against another, in their drive to cut public services? That is disgraceful.

In Brant Haldimand Norfolk, Conservative cuts could mean at least 56 fewer teachers in the classroom. Over 40 classes have already been cut this year alone. That doesn't sound reasonable to the kids who have been kicked out of their classrooms, and it sure isn't reasonable to the teachers that have been kicked to the curb.

Why does the Premier think it's reasonable to force students to accept these cuts? And why does he think it's reasonable for his Minister of Education to pit one Ontarian against another in their cruel race to the bottom?

*Interjections.*

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

The Minister to reply.

**Hon. Stephen Lecce:** The focus of this government is to keep kids in class. We just negotiated another agreement with the EWAO, which demonstrates that we can get deals with labour in this province. We're really proud of the work that they did as well, to get it done.

In the context of our teachers, I want to be clear: These are our friends and family, and our caucus members. We value their contribution.

I believe we should be paying and spending a significant amount in the context of ensuring that we get good teachers in the front of class. However, what is unfair to the taxpayers is for them to say that they will continue to escalate, continue to strike and keep kids out of class if they do not get an additional \$750 million.

Since 2003-04, we have 12% more teachers. Since that period, we have less than 1% more students. Just to contextualize, in 2018-19, the number of teachers in the system increased by 2,140, a 1.6% increase, the largest year-over-year increase in the number of teachers in over a decade.

We're going to continue to invest in our educators but, most importantly, in our students.

#### TEACHERS' LABOUR DISPUTE

**Ms. Andrea Horwath:** My next question is also to the Premier. But before I deliver it, I do want to also personally, and on behalf of my caucus, as the leader of the official opposition, thank Susan Swift for her excellent tenure here at the Legislature and all of the great work she has done for all of us.

Speaker, no one believes the Ford government when they say that they're standing up for education. Parents told this government during the consultation that they didn't want these cuts. Teachers told them at the bargaining table that the cuts would hurt our kids. Students marched out in the thousands to tell them that they didn't want these cuts.

The Premier owes them an answer today, Speaker. Why did he ignore them all?

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

**Hon. Stephen Lecce:** We are listening to all parents of this province, which is why, under the Premier's leadership, this government is investing over \$1.2 billion

more—it's on track to spending \$1.2 billion more this year than last year alone in the defence of public education in this province. For students in English and French, Catholic and public, in the north and south, east and west and every region, we're seeing more investment in the front of class.

The contrast is that there are those in this House—and certainly, those at the table—who insist on increasing spending for compensation, for pay and benefits, whereas the priority of this government is to be fair, is to increase compensation by \$750 million. It is reasonable. However, some would prefer us to double that number.

My point, Speaker, is that it is fair for taxpayers to offer \$750 million, but it's also important and fair to the future of this country that we invest in our students, in mental health, in math supports, in STEM, giving them every tool to achieve their potential in this province.

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

**Ms. Andrea Horwath:** Well, Speaker, I'd like to go back to the Premier, and hopefully I'll get a response, because his government's education cuts are hitting communities across Ontario. Families from the Hastings and Prince Edward District School Board are fighting back against Conservative cuts that could lead to at least 73 fewer teachers in their classrooms. In Grand Erie, Conservative cuts have led to the loss of 98 classes this year, a number that could grow to over 900 fewer classes in a few years' time.

How can this Premier and this government look these families in the eye when they go home over the holidays and tell them that this attack on their children's future is reasonable?

**Hon. Stephen Lecce:** This Progressive Conservative government is investing more in public education than any government in the history of this province. We are investing an additional \$1.2 billion in the public accounts—more this year than last year. We are investing \$24 billion in school boards across our province. We have doubled the mental health funding. We are spending over \$3 billion in special ed, because we value the dignity of every child, including those with exceptionalities in school. We're providing more supports for math: a \$2-million, four-year math strategy to lift math scores after 10 years of consecutive declines under the former Liberal government.

The contrast could not be more clear: The priority of our members is to invest in students, not in compensation.

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

**Ms. Andrea Horwath:** The problem is that virtually nobody involved in the education system—from the students to the parents to the educators and educational workers—believes a single word that this minister is saying, nor do they agree with his characterization of what this government is doing to our education system.

The government has been clear: It's not about kids in the classroom. If it was, the Premier wouldn't be kicking them out of the classroom and forcing them into the online learning courses that will not work for many of them.

This government has been laser-focused on one thing, and that is making classroom cuts and blaming anybody

but themselves for the fallout. Teachers, students and parents have all been clear: Cancel the cuts, stop hurting everyday families and let teachers and students get back to work in the classroom. Will the Premier of this province do that?

*Interjections.*

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

To the minister to reply.

**Hon. Stephen Lecce:** Thank you, Speaker. My message to OSSTF is to cancel the strike that is needlessly hurting students in the classes of this province. This government is investing more in public education than any government in our history.

Just yesterday, I was proud to announce, as a proof point that we are working in good faith to get deals to keep kids in class, that we got another deal with the Educational Workers' Alliance of Ontario, following the deal with CUPE. This is progress for families. Families should not be in the middle of this debate.

I appreciate that there are principled positions on all sides, but the kids shouldn't pay the price for the difference at the table. A \$750-million demand in compensation is unreasonable, it is unfair and we will fight hard every day to invest more in children, not in compensation.

1050

## ÉDUCATION EN FRANÇAIS

### FRENCH-LANGUAGE EDUCATION

**M. Guy Bourgouin:** Monsieur le Président, bonjour. Ma question est pour le premier ministre.

Le nombre d'élèves inscrits dans les écoles francophones en Ontario est en croissance. Avec la réduction du nombre d'enseignants dans les écoles, nous savons qu'il y aura de moins en moins d'adultes disponibles pour aider nos enfants à réussir. On manque déjà d'enseignants. On manque de suppléants et d'éducateurs. Et votre gouvernement veut encore couper des centaines de postes dans les écoles. On sait aussi que cette pénurie aura un effet papillon dans le système d'éducation francophone.

Les francophones ont reçu déjà plusieurs attaques de votre gouvernement. Alors pourquoi vous acharnez-vous à attaquer notre éducation?

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

**Hon. Stephen Lecce:** Mr. Speaker, I want to be clear that our government is investing more in French-language education than any government in history—an additional \$16 million, as reported in the budget, in the public accounts. It is a commitment that we have to linguistic duality in this province. We are proud, and I am proud, to work in partnership with the Minister of Francophone Affairs as we work to ensure that French-language educators are able to be retained in this province. We're working with our stakeholders within this sector to ensure we have access to high-talent French-language educators.

Nous allons continuer notre travail avec nos partenaires francophones en Ontario.

We believe in this partnership; we believe in our students. We have a plan to help ensure we have French-language educators in the front of class. I'm going to continue to work by investing more in French language than any government in the history of this province.

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

**M. Guy Bourgouin:** Ce n'est pas une coupure dans notre système, d'avoir de moins de professeurs quand on a des écoles qui grandissent?

Encore au premier ministre: hier, le ministre de l'Éducation a dit que votre gouvernement est tout à fait « raisonnable » lors des négociations. Pourtant, il y a seulement quelques jours, nous avons appris que les parents rejettent massivement la hausse du nombre d'élèves par classe. Alors, le ministre n'a pas écouté les parents, n'écoute pas les élèves et n'est certainement pas à l'écoute des enseignants.

Si le ministre est si « raisonnable », alors pourquoi des milliers de parents et d'enseignants sont dehors aujourd'hui pour défendre l'éducation publique en Ontario?

**Hon. Stephen Lecce:** Mr. Speaker, the fact is, this government is investing more in French-language education.

To the point on the shortage of French-language teachers: We appreciate that full well. It's an issue, a phenomenon, that existed before our government. We are working with the Ontario College of Teachers, we're working with faculties of education and we're working with the Minister of Colleges and Universities to incent future teachers entering the trade, entering this sector, and ultimately working in the front of class.

Speaker, in the context of our investments in education, we are investing, per the economic statement, an additional \$200 million in public education to support French-language and English-language education in every region of our province. We're going to continue to stay focused on our students, investing more in their futures, and we're going to fight hard at the table to keep them in class.

## INTERNATIONAL TRADE

**Mr. Vijay Thanigasalam:** My question is to the Premier. Premier, we know that Ontario's strong relationship with our neighbour to the south cannot be understated. If Ontario were a country, we would be the US's third-largest trading partner. Two-way trade between Ontario and the US amounted to US\$301 billion last year. We are the number one customer to 19 US states and second to nine others.

Under your leadership, our province is turning around economically. Our government has a plan that is working. We are showing the world that Ontario is open for business once again.

Premier, can you tell the Legislature more about the important economic role Ontario has in North America, and your recent visit to Maryland?

**Hon. Doug Ford:** I want to thank the member from Scarborough—Rouge Park. He does an incredible job. I

saw that he was at the annual Christmas carol sing over at St. Dunstan of Canterbury church recently. I want to wish everyone a merry Christmas over there.

Mr. Speaker, over the last 16 months, I've talked to over 26 governors in person—meeting all the governors, building a relationship—and I can tell you that the message is very clear that Ontario is open for business and open for jobs. We're the envy of North America. When I sit down with these governors, we're leading the economic growth in jobs anywhere in North America.

Before we got elected, Mr. Speaker, we lost 300,000 manufacturing jobs because of the NDP and the Liberals. Now, since we've been elected, there are 271,400 more people working, 271,000 families that can pay their bills.

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

**Mr. Vijay Thanigasalam:** Thank you, Premier, for that answer and for your continued strong leadership on this front.

In light of all the great news and statistics associated with our close economic partnership with the US, Buy American provisions are still of great concern. I know our government has made it a priority, in close partnership with the federal government, to advocate for an exemption for Ontario businesses and workers on this front.

As the Prime Minister noted during your recent meeting, Ontario continues to play an important role in promoting Canada's trade interests and strengthening the historic ties with US partners for the benefit of the people of our province and all Canadians.

Premier, can you speak further about strengthening partnerships with our province and our US counterparts under your leadership?

**Hon. Doug Ford:** I want to thank the MPP for that question. I had an opportunity to go to Maryland and Washington last week and had an opportunity to sit down with the chair of the governors' association, Governor Hogan. He's an absolute champion. They call him Likeable Larry; I know the reason why they call him Likeable Larry now.

For the very first time, Mr. Speaker, the governors of the United States of America are coming to Ontario. Why are they coming to Ontario? Because, as my member mentioned, we're the number one trading partner to 19 states and number two to nine other states. We do \$391 billion a year in two-way trade. We're responsible, both countries, for millions and millions of jobs on both sides of the border. We have a strong relationship and the largest unprotected border in the world. We have to make sure that we nurture these relationships and continue growing in our relationship. That's why I look forward to having the governors up here in February.

#### GOVERNMENT APPOINTMENTS

**Mr. Taras Natyshak:** Speaker, through you to the Premier: Throughout the week, the Premier has refused to answer my questions about lucrative agent general patronage posts that he single-handedly created in Dallas and

Chicago. Yesterday we learned that the two remaining appointees to Dallas and Chicago haven't even set up their offices after six months on the job.

Ever since the Premier created these patronage posts, there have been questions about how much Ontario families are paying to give the Premier's friends these lucrative jobs, and whether they'll actually do any work. The key question is: Why is the Premier refusing to talk about his buddies who he supposedly sent to Dallas and Chicago?

**Hon. Doug Ford:** Economic development.

**Hon. Victor Fedeli:** Speaker, we've talked about our agents general in Dallas and Chicago. They've been working through a very thorough and mandatory security process because their offices are located with the federal government in the consul general's office. This is exactly the process that has been required of all agents general throughout the world.

These agents general are bringing a message all across the United States that Ontario is open for business, open for trade, and that we've taken \$5 billion out of the cost of doing business in Ontario. This is the message they're delivering: that we have reduced WSIB premiums by more than \$2 billion, that we did not go ahead with the Liberal tax of \$308 million. Those things that we have done to reduce the cost of doing business by \$5 billion have created 271,600 jobs in the province of Ontario.

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

**Mr. Taras Natyshak:** Conspicuous in his silence, the Premier clearly would rather not talk about the jobs that he's handing to friends, insiders and relatives. In fact, when we checked the June 20 government announcement of their appointments, we learned that the Premier had retroactively edited the news releases to remove all references to the relatives of the lacrosse-playing friends of Dean French who were so unqualified that the Premier had to turf them only days after their appointments.

Speaker, the question is: Why did he have his office quietly change the original news releases?

**Hon. Victor Fedeli:** Our agents general are very hard at work both in market and still here in Ontario while they work through this necessary and very thorough process. They'll be permanently in market in the very near future, at which time they're going to continue with the message of being open for business, open for jobs and, indeed, open for trade.

**1100**

A couple of new things happened yesterday, and bills got passed to give them even more tools that they can talk about. For instance, businesses locating in northern Ontario no longer pay the aviation fuel tax of 6.7 cents. It's been reduced to 2.7 cents, particularly helping our northern and First Nations communities. The small business tax credit is reduced by 8.7%.

By the way, Speaker, these are all things that the NDP voted against, but that should come as no surprise. They voted against a \$90-million payment for providing free dental service to our low-income seniors. Who does that, Speaker?

## HYDRO ONE

**Mr. Randy Hillier:** To the Minister of Energy: During the 2018 election campaign, the Progressive Conservatives and I campaigned on a promise to reduce electricity by 12%. In November, the Ontario Energy Board approved a time-of-use increase for Hydro One. This increase conflicts with and contradicts the mandate given to this government by the people of Ontario. Once again, my office is being contacted by residents and small businesses that are concerned and worried that this increase will affect their standard of living and their bottom line.

Speaker, to the minister: As the largest shareholder of Hydro One networks, why are you allowing Hydro One to act in a manner that both frustrates and obstructs your mandate and makes a mockery of your commitment?

**Hon. Greg Rickford:** There is no question that we inherited a mess, and the steps that we've taken over the past year and a half are a testament to our resolve to reduce costs system-wide, to work more effectively, and to renew the corporate culture of public utilities and publicly traded utilities that Ontario ratepayers and Ontario taxpayers have a significant investment in.

Moving forward, Mr. Speaker, we will have the kinds of partnerships with Hydro One, OPG and our local distribution companies that are focused on reducing costs in the system, so that we can provide relief for ratepayers after more than a decade and a half of building up one of the most complex and expensive systems known the continent over.

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

**Mr. Randy Hillier:** Again to the Minister of Energy: The government also made a commitment to improve and expand broadband rural Internet services. We all know that the greatest obstacle to this expansion is the uncertain, convoluted, costly and lengthy approval process of attaching fibre optic cables to Hydro One's poles.

In September, I met with Hydro One executives and provided options for this process and received a commitment to reform their approval process and actually become partners in facilitating rural broadband expansion. But Hydro One's commitments appear to be empty as well.

For more than a year, Hydro One and the OEB have been frustrating and obstructing the government's mandate.

Speaker, my question to the minister: When will the minister direct Hydro One to cut their red tape and facilitate broadband expansion in rural Ontario?

**Hon. Greg Rickford:** It's not that long ago, Mr. Speaker, that that member was voting for all of the important steps that we've taken.

On this particular matter, discussions have taken place with Hydro One. We're making historic investments in broadband here in this province, across rural and northern Ontario in particular, so that people can have the kind of service that they should expect and that other people in other parts of the province do.

In moving forward, Mr. Speaker, I can assure the member opposite that those decisions of the past—the Ontario

Energy Board is going to be renewed, our governance restructured, so these kinds of decisions that are affecting our ability to move broadband forward will be removed.

## DEATH REGISTRATION

**Mr. Roman Baber:** My question is to the Minister of Government and Consumer Services.

I want to begin by thanking the Babcock family for being here today. I would like to express our government's deepest sympathies and condolences for your loss. We recognize that what was already a very difficult time in your lives was made more difficult by a lengthy and exhausting legal process.

Mr. Speaker, can the minister please tell the House about the Babcock family's courage in raising their issue with our government?

**Hon. Lisa M. Thompson:** I thank the member from York Centre for this very sensitive and important question. I'd also like to express my heartfelt appreciation to the Babcock family for their advocacy in particular on this very sensitive and important issue.

When a family is grieving, there should never be a situation when government bureaucracy stands in the way. In most cases, to register a death, a certificate is completed by a physician, nurse practitioner or coroner. Sadly, in Laura's case, this was not possible.

The Babcock family bravely and selflessly raised this issue with our government. That's why my ministry, along with the Attorney General and the Premier, explored changes to make death registration less burdensome to the victim's family in cases like the Babcocks'.

We have a duty, all of us in this House, to hear the concerns of Ontarians and get things right. I am pleased to say that the Premier and the MPP from Etobicoke Centre visited with Laura's family last month and delivered Laura's death certificate.

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

**Mr. Roman Baber:** The situation that the Babcock family went through is heartbreaking, and the legal process made it that much more difficult. Can the minister tell us about the steps our government took to ensure that no other family will have to endure a lengthy legal process, so that they are able to put paperwork behind them and focus on family?

**Hon. Lisa M. Thompson:** To the Attorney General.

**Hon. Doug Downey:** I, too, want to extend my deepest gratitude to the Babcock family for raising this issue with our government and for being here with us today.

Earlier this week, we announced changes to the Vital Statistics Act that would amend the death registration process to ease the burden for families faced with registering the death of a loved one in the absence of their remains. Laura's Law, as we have named it, in honour of Laura Babcock, would provide a simpler method for families to obtain a death certificate in these tragic circumstances. This change will provide tools to the courts to facilitate the registration of death in these cases and ensure that families

have the necessary support. Laura's Law will ensure that, in the future, the death registration process is less burdensome for families who experience a similar unthinkable tragedy.

I'd like to thank the member from Etobicoke Centre for her assistance, and the Premier, of course, and my colleague the Minister of Government and Consumer Services.

#### YOUTH SUICIDE

**Mr. Sol Mamakwa:** My question is to the Premier. On November 27, Kerri-Lynn Bunting died by suicide in the community of Constance Lake First Nation. She was 13 years old. On November 28, Rydell Mekenak died by suicide in the community of Webequie First Nation. He was 12 years old.

Premier, these young people died, and why? Because they lost hope. They lost hope in us responding to the needs of their communities. I speak about lack of clean drinking water, lack of safe housing in our communities, infrastructure and safe schools. Premier, I ask you, what are you prepared to do to give hope to these young people?

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

**Hon. Greg Rickford:** I want to thank the honourable member for his question with respect to the unfortunate passing of these two young people.

The Indigenous Healing and Wellness Strategy unit has advanced a significant resource for NAN to improve their capacity to respond to these particular situations, Mr. Speaker. We'll continue to mobilize resources and support Nishnawbe Aski Nation in their request to help in these particular matters.

While our thoughts and prayers are with this community, I can assure the honourable member that, moving forward, we will continue—redouble our efforts—to ensure that young people in these Indigenous communities have hope, have an opportunity to think about economic prosperity, for corridors that will open their communities to new jobs and the economic, social and health benefits that come with these kinds of significant investments in their communities and to their communities.

1110

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

**Mr. Sol Mamakwa:** We need more than thoughts and prayers from this place. The issue of youth suicide in our communities is a long-term problem. Colonization and its ongoing effects contribute to the crisis of youth suicide. The continued neglect by colonial governments such as this place means young people fall through the cracks, like Rydell, Kerri-Lynn, and Devon Freeman, who died by suicide while in the child welfare system but was not found for seven months. The crisis of First Nations youth suicide and the approaches used to address it are not sufficient and do not reflect their unique needs.

Premier, there needs to be dedicated resources and a specialized strategy to address suicide among First Nations youth. Will Ontario make this commitment today?

**Hon. Greg Rickford:** Again, I thank the honourable member for his question. I want to assure him that much of that work is under way. We have benchmarks for success in terms of reducing the frequency in communities by having hub services, wraparound services, for teens in crisis, in the school facility in their community.

For example, I'm thinking of Pikangikum, where we've made significant progress coordinating across different ministries to ensure that we are present in those communities, offering services and programs that can help to prevent, and treat teenagers, in particular, who are experiencing some form of crisis.

Moving forward, we need to talk more seriously about the economic opportunities of these communities, opening up these communities so that people have a chance for a good job and the hope of the kind of economic prosperity that most communities in other parts of the province have a good shot at.

#### JOB CREATION

**Mr. David Piccini:** My question is to the Minister of Economic Development, Job Creation and Trade.

Minister, earlier this week, you rose in the House to talk about Ontario's growth in job numbers in the month of November. In fact, since June 2018, 271,600 new jobs have been created in the province of Ontario, due in part to the swift action our government has taken to restore Ontario's competitiveness and ensure that this province is open for business and open for jobs.

We know that in a highly competitive global environment, unlocking the economic potential of trade will be critical to Ontario's success. Growing trade and foreign direct investment will help create jobs and economic prosperity for all Ontarians.

Can the minister provide the House with an update on what actions our government is taking to restore Ontario's competitiveness and reduce the cost of doing business in this great province?

**Hon. Victor Fedeli:** Thank you very much, Speaker, and to the member from Northumberland–Peterborough South.

Our government is absolutely committed to creating and protecting good jobs for the people of Ontario. As I said earlier, we have taken \$5 billion out of the cost of doing business. We were told a couple of years ago that the former government made Ontario the most expensive jurisdiction in all of North America in which to do business. The Premier made a commitment right away to reduce the cost of doing business.

We reduced the Workplace Safety and Insurance Board premiums first by 30% last year, and by 17% this year. That's \$2.2 billion that will be reduced. We have introduced a corporate income tax cut of \$3.8 billion through the Ontario Job Creation Investment Incentive. We did not proceed with the previous government's tax of \$308 million, and we're going to be reducing the cost of red tape by \$400 million.

That's how you create 271,600 jobs.

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

**Mr. David Piccini:** Thank you, Minister. It's great to hear that our plan to restore Ontario's competitiveness is working, and job creators are once again looking to Ontario to invest and grow their business.

My question is back to the minister. Regional economic development is important in growing local economies and strengthening the small business community. It's critical to rural communities like mine that were ignored by the previous government. As a member in a northern riding, I'm sure you no doubt have heard the same concerns from constituents of yours.

Minister, could you please explain how our government is taking action to support regional economic development in the north and in other rural communities like mine?

**Hon. Victor Fedeli:** We know that in rural and northern Ontario, there are unique challenges, and that's why we've come up with unique solutions as well. The small business tax credit will reduce the cost of doing business in Ontario. That's a reduction of 8.7%. The northern Ontario aviation tax credit reduces the cost of aviation fuel in the north from 6.7 cents to 2.7 cents. Those are big numbers, Speaker, when you add them all up.

When I think of the red tape reductions, I think of Debbie, who cuts my hair every second Friday back in North Bay. There are red tape reductions for Debbie's shop. When I think of our red tape reduction bill, I think of Kayvan Rouhani, who owns Happy Jack's dry cleaners. There are provisions in this to help Happy Jack's reduce costs.

Speaker, there are reductions in red tape costs for truckers, and mining and forestry companies—all of which, by the way, the NDP voted against. They voted against the small business tax credit. They voted against the northern Ontario aviation fuel tax credit. They voted against all of those savings for our small businesses.

#### ANTI-RACISM ACTIVITIES

**Mr. Kevin Yarde:** I'd like to thank our member from Kiiwetinoong for his question and concerns regarding youth suicide in his community.

My question is to the Minister of Education. Community members in Peel are worried that this government just doesn't understand what's necessary to address anti-Black racism in our schools. They have criticized the minister for not hiring Black reviewers, because they know you need to have people with the expertise and lived experience at the table. Now we're hearing that the two people hired to do outreach for the review are not Black either. According to the Toronto Star, community leaders and experts in anti-Black racism are "aghast at the reviewing team's wholly inadequate outreach efforts."

My question to the minister is, can he explain why he thinks it's unnecessary to have Black staff conduct the much-needed outreach into Black communities for this review of anti-Black racism?

**Hon. Stephen Lecce:** Thank you to the member opposite for the question. I reached out to each of the members

opposite from Peel region, as well as members of our government, in the days leading up to my decision to appoint reviewers. We moved very quickly, perhaps with the quickest decision points made in the context of sending in reviewers to a board that had made some requests—both complaints from parents and families. Any form of discrimination and prejudice is unacceptable in our schools. It's why we moved quickly.

Mr. Speaker, in addition, Patrick Case, the assistant deputy minister in the supporting student potential secretariat from my ministry, is the lead of this review. Mr. Case is not only a leader within the Black community, a human rights lawyer and a person of impeccable integrity, but someone who is involved in every single review. This individual brings his own lived experience as someone who fights strongly for equity and equality within our schools. We have confidence in him to lead the process, to ensure we actually come forth with recommendations that can change the culture within the schools of Peel.

**The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott):** Supplementary question? Member for Toronto—St. Paul's.

**Ms. Jill Andrew:** Speaker, may I just say that Patrick Case is a phenomenal leader. He is a community leader in the Black community, but he is not an independent reviewer. You're not listening to the community.

In order for a review of anti-Black racism in our schools to have any credibility—the question goes to the Minister of Education—the minister needs to get the fundamentals right. Black reviewers need to be at the table. Black community outreach staff need to be in place to connect with said Black community. The review needs to be accessible to students and parents who have experienced anti-Black racism. They need to know where to sign up. Black community members shouldn't be confused about where to sign up, Speaker. All communication must be transparent. It is currently opaque, especially with these rushed timelines.

Speaker, how are we supposed to trust that the Minister of Education's review will accurately reflect what Black students, parents and staff have been experiencing at the Peel District School Board when he cannot get these basic, fundamental components right?

1120

**Hon. Stephen Lecce:** Thank you to the member opposite for the question. Obviously, it is the aim of the government to ensure inclusivity and respect for every student in Ontario. In Peel region, when the allegations from students and parents, administrators, the chair and vice-chair and trustees, among others, emerged to my desk, we took immediate action to call in reviewers. One of the reviewers is involved in the York Region District School Board on another issue of anti-Black racism.

The point is, I have asked my assistant deputy minister, Mr. Patrick Case—who will be a reviewer, who will be present in those meetings, in every single one of them without exception—to ensure that there is lived experience at the table and to ensure that he, who is leading this process in conjunction with the other two reviewers, delivers results and recommendations that fundamentally

transform the culture of governance and decision-making in Peel, so that we can ensure that there's no child who feels so isolated and discriminated against again.

#### MENTAL HEALTH AND ADDICTION SERVICES

**Mrs. Gila Martow:** My question this morning is to the Associate Minister of Mental Health and Addictions.

Mr. Speaker, we're all looking forward to what our government's next steps will be to address the long-standing gaps that have prevented so many Ontarians from receiving the necessary services and supports they require to overcome their mental health and addiction challenges. I know that the minister is working every day, alongside the Deputy Premier and the Minister of Health, so that Ontarians can be fully supported on their journey toward mental wellness.

Could the minister please provide an update to the members of this Legislature on what Ontarians can expect to see when our mental health and addictions strategy has been established?

**Hon. Michael A. Tibollo:** I'd like to thank the member from Thornhill for that excellent question. As the member stated, our government is working tirelessly to ensure that we create a connected and integrated mental health and addictions system that works for all Ontarians, no matter where in the province they reside. Whether someone is living in remote communities in northern Ontario or one of the Indigenous communities, or is one of our brave first responders, we will ensure that all Ontarians will be able to get the help they require when and where they need it. Our strategy will ensure that Ontarians, across their entire lifespan, will be able to find the help they need for their unique challenges.

We realize there is no one-size-fits-all solution to mental health and addictions in the province. That's why we are working collaboratively across government to ensure we get this right.

I look forward to continuing to work alongside my colleagues from partner ministries to ensure that nobody in Ontario is left behind.

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

**Mrs. Gila Martow:** I want to thank the minister for his response. I'm proud to see that our government is making mental health and addictions a priority.

We all share the responsibility to ensure that Ontarians receive the services and supports they require to overcome their mental health and addictions challenges. Previous governments failed to address the numerous gaps in our mental health and addictions system, so it's reassuring to hear that we are creating a strategy that will allow people across the province, no matter where they live, to locate and receive the services and supports for their unique mental health and addictions needs.

Mr. Speaker, we must all work together to create a connected and integrated mental health and addictions system. Could the minister please inform the members of this

Legislature what our government's next steps will be to address mental health and addictions in Ontario?

**Hon. Michael A. Tibollo:** I thank the member again for that important question.

First and foremost, I cannot stress enough the importance of Bill 116. Bill 116, if passed, would see the creation of a dedicated Mental Health and Addictions Centre of Excellence. If passed, Bill 116 would also enable the implementation of our mental health and addictions strategy.

Bill 116 also proposes to give us the tools we require to hold opioid manufacturers and wholesalers accountable for their role in the ongoing opioid crisis. It would also help us recover health care costs paid by the province due to opioid-related disease, injury or illness. Should Bill 116 pass, our government intends to invest any award from litigation against the manufacturers and wholesalers of opioids directly into front-line mental health and addictions services.

For too long, previous governments failed to take meaningful action to address mental health and addictions in Ontario. We're committed to doing something about it.

#### PUBLIC HEALTH

**M<sup>me</sup> France Gélinas:** Ma question est pour le premier ministre. On January 1, this government's cuts to public health will come into effect. Despite the Premier hiring an adviser with a six-figure salary to hold consultations on the future of public health in Ontario, can the Premier tell us why the government is still going ahead with cuts to public health, even as they hold consultations on the future of public health?

**The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott):** The question is going to be responded to by the Minister of Health, the Deputy Premier.

**Hon. Christine Elliott:** I thank the member very much for the question. In fact, we are undertaking a full consultation on both public health and emergency medicine with Mr. Jim Pine, who is travelling to communities across Ontario to understand what their needs are, recognizing that there are different geographic needs in different parts of the province, of course.

We have spoken with a number of public health units. They are very pleased with the way things are moving forward. They understand, particularly in the case of the Ottawa Public Health officer, that they're able to make those changes that we have suggested without any impact on front-line care, that no patient will not be receiving assistance. They will still be able to do their work in public health and do so under the different circumstances coming forward next year.

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

**M<sup>me</sup> France Gélinas:** When will this government learn that the cut-first-consult-later approach is not working? It didn't work in long-term care, it didn't work in education, it didn't work for children with autism and it is not working for public health and the municipalities that are trying to deliver these critical services.

In fact, because of the Conservative government's cuts to public health, municipalities are now facing really tough decisions. Last week, Chatham-Kent municipal council said that the Premier's cuts to public health and other municipal services will cost them \$2.3 million, forcing them to consider raising property taxes. And yesterday, Barrie's city council approved increased property taxes because of the provincial cuts.

Why is the Premier downloading their irresponsible public health cuts to municipalities?

**Hon. Christine Elliott:** Mr. Speaker, I think it's really important to note that there are no cuts to public health. We are modernizing our public health services, which has been recommended for several years by the Auditor General of Ontario, who has recognized that there is often an overlap in services, there is not great coordination of services among public health units and there are situations where it's very difficult to find a public health officer. So what we're doing is modernizing the system, with the assistance of Mr. Pine.

As you've raised in example, Ottawa Public Health was able to find efficiencies in next year's budget by eliminating vacant positions and reducing advertising expenses and internal administration.

What we need to focus on is: What are the particular issues in public health in each geographic area of Ontario? That is what we're focusing on.

We recognize that the provincial government also has a role to play. That is why we brought forward the dental program for low-income seniors, a \$90-million-a-year program that's going to benefit low-income seniors across the province—

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

The next question.

## NUCLEAR ENERGY

**Mr. Stephen Crawford:** My question is to the Minister of Energy. Recently, our Premier signed a memorandum of understanding with Premier Higgs and Premier Moe to work together on developing small modular reactor technology right here in this province.

Mr. Speaker, we have seen the environmental and economic benefits that developing nuclear technology brings to Ontario. In addition, the nuclear power industry is responsible for creating 60,000 direct and indirect jobs in this province. Thousands of these jobs are in full-time positions in the Oakville corridor.

Will the minister please tell us why it is so important that we continue to support the nuclear power industry in Ontario?

**Hon. Greg Rickford:** I want to thank the all-star member from Oakville, who's absolutely right. His constituency is the epicentre of small modular reactor technology.

Mr. Speaker, the opportunities are limitless. The on-grid power generation potential market value exceeds \$100 billion a year and, importantly, would replace fossil fuel plants in our system here in Ontario. Off-grid, it's

more than \$30 billion of potential market value, with applications across northern communities and isolated and remote mining and forestry opportunities.

Then, of course, there's the export potential. This is the key: Ontario has chosen, under this Premier, to lead small modular reactor technology. By moving ahead with the memorandum of understanding with our provincial partners, we're certain we have the potential to exceed more than \$150 billion in export market potential with made-in-Ontario small modular—

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

1130

**Mr. Stephen Crawford:** My supplementary question is to the Associate Minister of Energy.

Mr. Speaker, it is apparent that nuclear energy is an important part of Ontario's economy and energy supply mix. Investing in small modular reactor technology is a critical next step to becoming an international leader in non-emitting power for off-grid communities. Furthermore, SMRs are a promising potential source of safe and reliable power for our entire country, and will help us achieve Canada's climate targets.

Will the minister please tell us more about the potential of SMRs and the multitude of ways in which they can be used?

**Hon. Greg Rickford:** Associate Minister of Energy.

**Hon. Bill Walker:** I'd like to thank the honourable and hard-working member from Oakville for his question. I'm happy to shed some light on just how important the nuclear industry is for the people of Ontario.

The nuclear industry has become a strategic asset for Canada at home and on the international stage. In my area alone, Bruce Power's eight units provide over 4,000 full-time, high-paying jobs to highly skilled women and men. The important work that these hard-working Ontarians do day in and day out adds billions of dollars into Ontario's economy annually. All the while, Bruce Power produces safe and reliable energy for our province that produces zero carbon emissions and life-saving isotopes.

Now there's an opportunity for small modular reactors. This is why our government continues to stand up for our nuclear industry as they continue to innovate and lead on the world stage.

## HIGHWAY TOLLS

**Ms. Jennifer K. French:** My question is to the Premier.

Speaker, there's big news in Durham region. Highway 418 is finished, and folks will be able to connect from the 401 to the 407 and 115. It will, like the 412, be a toll road.

Back in the day when PC candidates were campaigning in the election, they promised to make taking the tolls off the 412 and 418 their first order of business if elected. Well, Speaker, spoiler alert: They became the government and the tolls are still there.

Will the Premier commit, as the Durham candidates did on the campaign trail when they needed the votes, to removing the tolls from the 412 and the 418?

**Hon. Christine Elliott:** To the Minister of Transportation.

**Hon. Caroline Mulroney:** Mr. Speaker, as the member opposite knows, our government campaigned on a promise to make life more affordable for the people of Ontario and for the people of Durham region. The MPPs from the Durham region—or as we call them in our caucus, the Durham four, which includes the President of the Treasury Board, the Minister of Finance, the chief government whip and the member for Durham—have been advocating very much to ensure that we are taking steps to make sure that residents of Durham have the opportunity to be heard on the issue of tolls.

That is why our government is undertaking a study to assess the economic impact of tolls in the region of Durham and on motorists' behaviour in the area. We look forward to receiving the outcome of this study, and it will inform our next steps on this matter.

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

**Ms. Jennifer K. French:** Back to the Premier: Since the election, students, commuters, boards of trade, community groups, chambers of commerce, municipalities and I have all made the case for the removal of tolls from the 412 and 418. Now the government wants us to applaud a shiny new study to see there if there's a case for the removal of the tolls from the 412 and the 418.

I don't think this government has any intention of removing the tolls or doing right by the folks in Durham. I think this is about kicking the can down that wide open, underutilized road, once again backpedalling on commitments made to the folks across Durham region.

When I got elected, I tabled Bill 43 to do what I promised: to remove the tolls from the 412 and 418. Now the 418 is opened, and just as the Liberals promised and just as the Liberals planned, it will unfairly cost the folks of Durham.

Durham region deserves transportation and transit that will keep up with our growth and potential. Will you commit to removing the tolls from the 412 and the 418, yes or no?

**Hon. Caroline Mulroney:** Once again, the members from the Durham region are excellent advocates for their constituents on this issue as well as others, and I want the people of Durham to know that I am listening to the MPPs from the Durham region.

Toll increases were cemented into the Liberal plan to build these highways, and—

*Interjections.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott):** I apologize to the Minister of Transportation for interrupting. The House must come to order so I can hear the Minister of Transportation respond to the question.

Minister of Transportation.

**Hon. Caroline Mulroney:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Toll increases were cemented into the Liberal plan to build these highways, and they were part of their plan to toll them for the next 25 years.

We are looking into options moving forward, and I have directed the ministry to undertake a study on the economic impacts of these tolls.

The people of Durham have our word that we are listening, and we could not ask for better advocates than the Durham four.

## CONSUMER PROTECTION

**Mrs. Robin Martin:** My question is for the Minister of Government and Consumer Services. Consumer spending drives Ontario's economy, accounting for approximately 55% to 60% of GDP annually. The people of Ontario need stronger protections when they spend their hard-earned money, whether they're making day-to-day purchases or making investments in their futures.

The economy has changed and so have consumer spending practices. It's quite clear that Ontario's consumer protection framework needs significant change to keep up with how the people of this province buy goods and services.

Speaker, can the minister explain to this House what our government is doing to strengthen protection and promote trust and confidence for the people of Ontario?

**Hon. Lisa M. Thompson:** Thank you to the member from Eglinton–Lawrence for your excellent question. Our government recognizes Ontario's consumer protection framework has not kept pace with the way people make purchases or how businesses work today, including the shift to the online market.

That is why we're proposing changes to improve and update consumer services and protections across this province, through the Rebuilding Consumer Confidence Act. Our legislation proposes a wholesale review of the Consumer Protection Act. We need to make sure that every element of the legislation works for consumers and businesses throughout Ontario.

Our government is also embarking on an extensive round of consultations that will focus on increasing consumer protection for every person across this province, because we need to be looking closely at our legislation to make sure it reflects the realities of today.

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

**Mrs. Robin Martin:** I want to thank the minister for her answer. The way that people make purchases and how businesses operate has changed, especially with the rise of e-commerce over the years. Consumer protection allows individuals to have the trust they need to make knowledgeable and informed decisions. Ontarians should be able to rely on legal protections. Consumer protection laws need to be updated so that they remain fair and provide consumers the protection and confidence they need.

Can the minister elaborate further on the proposed changes in the Rebuilding Consumer Confidence Act and explain more about the role that consultation will play in the review of consumer protection legislation?

**Hon. Lisa M. Thompson:** I'd be pleased to speak to the consultations. Thank you to the member from Eglinton–Lawrence for, again, that important question, because

it's important that Ontarians know that we're looking at this very seriously.

Our government will be conducting a thorough review of the Consumer Protection Act for the first time in 15 years. This review is being centred around holding consultations with stakeholders and consumers. These consultations will enable us to continue to implement stronger protections for the people of this province.

The legislation covers a wide variety of protections for consumers, protections for those who travel, use elevators or credit cards or who buy tickets to their favourite games or concerts.

We want to hear from everyone in early 2020 to help shape Ontario's new consumer protection framework. Our government is focused on updating the regulations so that it is clear to businesses what practices are unacceptable, and so that there are clear deterrents for bad actors who try to take advantage of consumers in this province.

#### TENANT PROTECTION

**Ms. Jessica Bell:** My question is to the Premier. Every week, I hear from desperate tenants whose landlords are trying to raise their rent more than the legal limit, tenants like Leonard. Leonard is 72. He lives at 103 Avenue Road. Leonard lives on \$1,600 a month from his pension, and \$1,500 of that goes to rent. He has \$100 left.

For food, Leonard lives on protein shakes and one small meal a day. Now his corporate landlord wants to increase his rent by 9%, well above the legal limit. Leonard is terrified that if his increase is approved, he will be homeless.

How can the Premier stand by and let seniors like Leonard fall into homelessness?

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

**Hon. Steve Clark:** I want to thank the honourable member for putting the question on the floor this morning.

Obviously, if the matter is before the Landlord and Tenant Board, I'm not going to speak to the specifics of the case. But I have listened to a lot of concerns of both landlords and tenants in the province—that was part of our Housing Supply Action Plan. We took very seriously the 2,000 submissions we received across the province on the five themes of the Housing Supply Action Plan, which included the rent piece.

Speaker, we are very carefully reviewing what we've heard from both landlords and tenants. I've been in constant contact with the Attorney General about resources required for the Landlord and Tenant Board. We're going to have more to say in the coming year as we move forward on the next phase of our Housing Supply Action Plan.

We take these concerns very seriously. Again, if the member wants to pass along those individual concerns to me, they're always welcome.

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

This House stands in recess until 3 p.m.

*The House recessed from 1141 to 1500.*

#### INTRODUCTION OF VISITORS

**Mr. Tom Rakocevic:** I'm proud to welcome a good friend, Sean Delaney, who is publisher of the Emery Village Voice and a great gentleman.

**Mr. Randy Pettapiece:** I'd like to introduce George Goettler, who is in the visitors' gallery today. He's attending university here, and he's from, in my riding, Dublin. With him is Matthew Rae, who is my legislative assistant.

**Mr. Kaled Rasheed:** I would like to welcome Amber Mahmood, my LA's sister. She is visiting Queen's Park today. Welcome.

#### SUPPLEMENTARY ESTIMATES

**The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott):** I understand that the President of the Treasury Board has a point of order.

**Hon. Peter Bethlenfalvy:** I have a message from the Honourable Elizabeth Dowdeswell, the Lieutenant Governor, signed by her own hand.

**The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott):** I would ask the members to rise.

The Lieutenant Governor transmits supplementary estimates of certain sums required for the services of the province for the year ending March 31, 2020, and recommends them to the Legislative Assembly.

Members can take their seats.

#### MEMBERS' STATEMENTS

##### STUDENT CHOICE INITIATIVE

**Ms. Jessica Bell:** Last month, the Ontario Divisional Court struck down the Premier's Student Choice Initiative. The court found fault with the government's clear interference in colleges and universities.

The Student Choice Initiative had a huge impact on services in my riding, because the University of Toronto is in University-Rosedale. The student newspaper, the Varsity; the campus radio station; downtown legal services; LGBTOUT, the oldest LGBTQ student organization in Canada; Bikechain; the Student Refugee Program; the food bank; and the students' union—the very existence of all of these services was threatened by the Student Choice Initiative. It came as a relief when the court struck it down in a unanimous decision.

But now, this government is appealing that decision. We don't know how much this appeal will cost Ontarians in legal fees or what legal grounds the government will use to justify it, but what we do know is that this appeal is another power grab by a Premier who wants to silence any opposition.

It is time to stand up for students and for colleges and universities. That is what I intend to do. For those who believe in true student choice and student democracy, I encourage you to do the same. Contact this Premier and ask them to back down and stop the appeal.

### ONTARIO HEALTH TEAM— NORTHUMBERLAND

**Mr. David Piccini:** Our government is delivering on our commitment to end hallway health care and deliver a more integrated, patient-centred public health care system.

It was an honour to have Minister Elliott, our Minister of Health, in my riding on Friday to announce that Ontario Health Team—Northumberland was approved as one of the first 24 Ontario health teams in the province. I would like to offer my congratulations to OHT Northumberland on their tremendous success and also congratulate the Peterborough and Durham Ontario health teams as well.

To put the achievement of OHT Northumberland into context, the county of Northumberland has 85,000 residents, which I believe means that this OHT will be one of the smallest in Ontario, and will be a leader in the implementation of a successful model of care in small-town rural Ontario.

I'd like to thank members of the team, including Alderville First Nation; Campbellford Memorial Hospital; Northumberland Hills Hospital; Community Care Northumberland; Community Health Centres of Northumberland; all three of our family health teams—Lakeview, Northumberland and Trent Hills; Northumberland county; Rebound Child and Youth Services; and the Bridge Hospice, in addition to patient and caregiver representatives Kaye Jackson and Scott MacPherson and primary health care physicians Dr. Fraser Cameron, Dr. Erin Pepper and Dr. Phil Stratford.

Some 97% of primary care physicians in Northumberland county have signed on as members of the OHT. This is going to be a legacy piece for our government and the beginning of what will be better patient-centred care in Northumberland county.

### ALEX PATTERSON

**M<sup>me</sup> France Gélinas:** Last night in Pennsylvania, USA, the prestigious Jefferson Awards were presented. The Jefferson Awards Foundation is North America's longest-standing and most prestigious organization dedicated to celebrating public service. It was created by Jacqueline Kennedy Onassis while they were working to establish a Nobel Prize for public and community service.

Last night, Mr. Alex Patterson, a resident of Nickel Belt, was a proud recipient of the 2019 Jefferson Award for public service. Mr. Patterson has been a member of the board of directors of the foundation of our hospital for over 15 years.

You see, Speaker, 15 years ago his baby was born. His baby was sick and had to be flown out to London to be cared for because none of the hospitals in Sudbury had the equipment necessary to care for his son. Well, Mr. Patterson decided to change this, and he has, over those 15 years, raised millions of dollars to buy equipment so that Sudbury can care for babies and so that what his family went through, nobody else in northern Ontario would have to go through.

He was nominated for the Jefferson Award by his union, the United Steelworkers Local 6500, of which he has been an active member. I want to personally thank Mr. Patterson for everything he has done for our community and for our hospital. Alex, I'm really, really proud of you. You deserve the Jefferson Award, and many more.

### BATTLE OF CRYSLER'S FARM

**Mr. Jim McDonell:** Just after my arrival here at Queen's Park in 2011, I received an email titled, "The other November 11." It was an invitation to lay a wreath on the anniversary of the Battle of Crysler's Farm.

Two hundred and six years ago, on November 10, 1813, the night was cold and rainy. The Americans were camped by Cook's Tavern, and our side was at Crysler's Farm. Despite the odds in numbers, Lieutenant Colonel Morrison decided they would not pull back, but rather fight.

The weather was grey and damp, with a cold east wind blowing. Picket firing at 8 a.m. raised the alarm. The British gunboats moved into position. The Americans made their move, but Morrison and the troops were ready. The Battle of Crysler's Farm had commenced: 1,600 US troops under General John Boyd against 600 British and local militias under Colonel J.W. Morrison.

It was a bloody day for the Americans: 107 killed, 237 wounded and about 100 captured. Our side suffered 22 killed and 148 wounded, with nine missing. One of the biggest battles of the war was over, and, as the Friends of Crysler's Farm Battlefield would like to say, it was the battle that saved Canada.

This victory in the War of 1812 was crucial in preventing the capture of Montreal by US forces. The services of the militias of Stormont, Dundas and Glengarry counties deserve an honoured place in history, for they fought and bled for their country. To honour those who fought so bravely that day, the Stormont, Dundas and Glengarry Highlanders have been awarded the battle honours for Crysler's Farm on the soon-to-arrive regimental colours.

### TENANT PROTECTION

**Ms. Suze Morrison:** I rise today to highlight the lack of oversight in Ontario over the use of above-the-guideline rent increases, specifically how tenants get those rent reductions that they are legally entitled to when these temporary rent increases expire.

Speaker, an above-the-guideline rent increase, or AGI, is a temporary rent increase that a landlord can apply to the Landlord and Tenant Board for, usually for significant maintenance on a building. Landlords are able to pass on the expense of those repairs to their tenants and raise the rent above the regulated amount. But when these orders expire, tenants are owed a reduction in their rent correspondingly. But, Speaker, this is not as easy as it sounds to get these reductions implemented.

1510

I spoke with a tenant living at 2515 Bathurst Street, in Eglinton—Lawrence, who didn't receive any notice from

her landlord that her AGI had expired. She was proactive, though, and reminded her landlord, then notified other tenants in the building, but was still in the dark about how to apply these reductions.

To make matters worse, tenants were getting conflicting information from the landlord and from the Landlord and Tenant Board. Some tenants were told by the landlord that the reduction didn't take effect because the government hadn't ordered it. Others called the Landlord and Tenant Board and were told to apply the rent reduction in increments, and yet others were told to apply the rent reduction in full. Speaker, these tenants are just trying to get what they are legally owed, and no one will even give them a straight answer.

The Liberals failed to create a streamlined process to protect tenants from paying more rent than they owe, and now the Conservative government is letting a broken system continue to fail renters. I urge this government to fix this broken system.

#### RURAL RASCALS, COCKWOMBLES AND LEGENDS

**Mr. Randy Hillier:** Last week a new book was published by a well-known rural Ontario journalist. The author's name is Ian Cumming, and he hails from eastern Ontario's Glengarry county. The book is a compilation of short stories of the many colourful characters Ian has encountered throughout his decades of travel through the back roads, farms and fields of Ontario.

The book's name is *Rural Rascals, Cockwombles and Legends*. I know that many of my colleagues and friends read Ian Cumming's weekly columns in the *Ontario Farmer*. I'm also sure that they would enjoy this compilation of Ian's greatest hits.

Speaker, I trust you will enjoy reading the copy I left with you, and I have also presented a copy to the legislative library. For those who wish to get their own copy or are maybe looking to find a great Christmas gift, feel free to contact Ian.

And, Speaker, with the much-improved decorum in the House this session, it appears we have a cockwomble-free zone here in the Legislature.

Once again, congratulations to Ian Cumming and his book *Rural Rascals, Cockwombles and Legends*.

And through you, Speaker: May I wish everyone in this House and who is listening a very merry Christmas.

#### REG AND LIZ SAMIS

**Mr. Randy Pettapiece:** Today I rise to congratulate two of my constituents, Reg and Liz Samis of the township of Mapleton. Recently, they received the Green Legacy Agricultural Award of Excellence. This award recognizes agricultural producers who "have demonstrated strong environmental leadership by promoting the value of trees on farms and re-examining their farm practices to engage in up-to-date methods that support good land stewardship." Speaker, Reg and Liz have done just that.

In the last 40 years, Reg and Liz have planted over 25,000 trees on the farm properties they own. They have shown first-hand the role that tree planting plays in improving farm operations, including protecting top soil and waterways, preventing runoff and livestock from contaminating water and increasing crop yields. As Liz said, "It is each farmer's job to evaluate their own farm and find solutions that benefit both the environment and their operation."

The Samises have also been strong, active leaders within the community as well. Partnering with the local scouts and guides, they are inspiring the next generation of tree planters and instilling in our youth the importance of environmental stewardship.

Congratulations to Reg and Liz for this much-deserved recognition and for their years of service to agriculture in Ontario.

#### SEASON'S GREETINGS MEILLEURS VOEUX

**Mr. Michael Mantha:** Today being our last day—tomorrow, we're rising—we're all going to go back home. This is my last opportunity to wish everyone a merry Christmas.

Je veux dire joyeux Noël au monde d'Algoma-Manitoulin. Soyez sages. Soyez prudents. Faites attention à votre voyageage sur nos chemins.

I want to just let the House know that 2019 was a tough year for the member for Algoma-Manitoulin. I've lost a hero, a Santa, and I've lost my girl.

I lost my hero in Eddy Lefrançois. He was an ALS champion, tireless, and did things that were never expected of that man.

Joe Gillogly, a resident of Elliot Lake for a very long time—in his last few days and few months he was living in Gore Bay—was the best Santa that we had ever seen.

And Emily Rose Richer—my girlfriend. She was my girl. I said goodbye to her yesterday.

The reason why I say this is, I want everybody back home to not do like I did—no what-ifs and should-haves and could-haves. If you think you want to drop by just to say hi to someone, do it. Don't wait, because you never know when they're going to be taken away from you. Bury your quarrels. Forget that fight with your brother, your sister, your aunt, your uncle. It's Christmastime. It's time to love. It's time to enjoy and embrace.

Have a merry Christmas, Algoma-Manitoulin, and everybody across this province.

*Applause.*

#### ROAD SAFETY

**Mr. Sam Oosterhoff:** I rise in the House today to share how our government has been working towards road safety across the province of Ontario, and, in Niagara West, at a particularly busy intersection in the town of Grimsby.

A street configuration known for accidents, the Grimsby diamond, a stretch of on- and off-ramps from the QEW to Christie, Ontario and Maple streets in Grimsby, has poor sightlines and confusing signage. Growing levels

of traffic have contributed to a number of accidents in the diamond, and local residents and municipal leaders have been calling for enhanced safety measures.

As my predecessor, Tim Hudak, wrote in 2016, as an opposition member: “The number of traffic accidents at this intersection continues to go up, all with some degree of property damage, many with personal injury and, in one case, a fatality. Urgent action is required to ensure another fatal accident does not” occur in this place.

Speaker, I’m proud to say that working with the Minister of Transportation and her staff has brought results for my riding of Niagara West. Our government has taken action. The Ministry of Transportation has agreed to install red flashers at each of the five unsignalized intersections. As well, MTO traffic specialists will be meeting with town of Grimsby staff before Christmas to discuss the benefits and logistics of reconfiguring the lane markings on the street crossings at this intersection.

It’s just one more example of how our government is ready to listen to local concerns and put the interests of the people of the province first.

I’m proud to assure the people of Niagara West that I will continue to fight for local issues and find resolutions that help the people of our beautiful riding.

#### GOVERNMENT’S RECORD

**Mr. Mike Harris:** I rise today to congratulate everyone here in the House. Working together since this Legislature returned to sit in October, we have accomplished a number of very important things for the people in the province of Ontario.

First and foremost, I want to congratulate the Minister of Finance on the fall economic statement delivered on November 6. In that statement, we learned that Ontario is actually beating its targets for deficit reduction and revenue generation, and because of those successes, we have been able to invest \$1.3 billion into important programs.

But that’s not all, Mr. Speaker. In this sitting of this House, we invited all parties to work with us to update the standing orders by which this Parliament operates. The new standing orders will allow this assembly to work even harder, with the ability to call more night sittings. These changes will modernize the rules of the Legislature, enhance debate and increase opportunities for all MPPs to engage in the legislative process.

I am pleased to note that when this House returns in February, we will honour our nation’s heritage and traditions: Following prayers on the first sitting Monday of each month, the Canadian national anthem and the royal anthem will be sung in this chamber. God save the Queen.

#### REPORTS BY COMMITTEES

##### STANDING COMMITTEE ON REGULATIONS AND PRIVATE BILLS

**Mr. Will Bouma:** I beg leave to present a report from the Standing Committee on Regulations and Private Bills and move its adoption.

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

Bill Pr14, An Act respecting the Special Ability Riding Institute.

Bill Pr22, An Act to revive Olympic Floor Cleaning Inc.

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

*Report adopted.*

1520

##### STANDING COMMITTEE ON REGULATIONS AND PRIVATE BILLS

**Mr. Will Bouma:** I beg leave to present a report from the Standing Committee on Regulations and Private Bills and move its adoption.

**The Clerk-at-the-Table (Ms. Tonia Grannum):** Your committee begs to report the following bill, as amended:

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

*Report adopted.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott):** The bill is therefore ordered for third reading.

##### STANDING COMMITTEE ON PUBLIC ACCOUNTS

**Ms. Catherine Fife:** I beg leave to present a report on Darlington Nuclear Generating Station Refurbishment Project, section 3.02, 2018 Annual Report of the Office of the Auditor General of Ontario, from the Standing Committee on Public Accounts and move the adoption of its recommendations.

**The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott):** Ms. Fife presents the committee’s report and moves the adoption of its recommendations.

Does the member wish to make a brief statement?

**Ms. Catherine Fife:** As Chair of the Standing Committee on Public Accounts, I am pleased to table the committee’s report today entitled Darlington Nuclear Generating Station Refurbishment Project, section 3.02 of the 2018 Annual Report of the Office of Auditor General of Ontario.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank the permanent membership of the committee: France Gélinas, the Vice-Chair; Jill Andrew; Toby Barrett; Stan Cho; Stephen Crawford; John Fraser; Goldie Ghamari; Norm Miller; Michael Parsa; and Nina Tangri.

The committee extends its appreciation to officials from the Ministry of Energy, the Ministry of Northern Development and Mines, and Ontario Power Generation.

The committee also acknowledges the assistance provided during the hearings and report-writing deliberations

by the Office of the Auditor General, the Clerk of the Committee and the staff in the legislative research service.

I move adjournment of the debate.

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

*Debate adjourned.*

#### STANDING COMMITTEE ON PUBLIC ACCOUNTS

**Ms. Catherine Fife:** I beg leave to present a report on Ontario Works, section 3.11, 2018 Annual Report of the Office of the Auditor General of Ontario from the Standing Committee on Public Accounts, and move the adoption of its recommendations.

**The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott):** Ms. Fife presents the committee's report and moves the adoption of its recommendations.

Does the member wish to make a brief statement?

**Ms. Catherine Fife:** As Chair of the Standing Committee on Public Accounts, we've clearly been very busy. I'm pleased today to table the committee's report today, entitled Ontario Works, section 3.11 of the 2018 Annual Report of the Office of the Auditor General of Ontario.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank the membership of the committee. They are all very hard-working members of this Legislature.

This committee also extends its appreciation to the officials from the Ministry of Children, Community and Social Services and service managers from the city of Toronto, the city of Windsor, the region of Peel and the District of Thunder Bay Social Services Administration Board.

The committee also acknowledges the assistance provided during the hearings and report-writing deliberations by the Office of the Auditor General, the Clerk of the Committee, and staff in the legislative research service.

I move adjournment of this debate.

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

*Debate adjourned.*

#### INTRODUCTION OF BILLS

##### ONTARIO CLIMATE CRISIS STRATEGY FOR THE PUBLIC SECTOR ACT, 2019

##### LOI DE 2019 SUR LA STRATÉGIE DU SECTEUR PUBLIC DE L'ONTARIO RELATIVE À LA CRISE CLIMATIQUE

Mr. Tabuns moved first reading of the following bill:

Bill 165, An Act to require the establishment of the Ontario Climate Crisis Strategy for the Public Sector / Projet de loi 165, Loi exigeant l'établissement de la Stratégie du secteur public de l'Ontario relative à la crise climatique.

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

*First reading agreed to.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott):** Would the member for Toronto–Danforth care to explain his bill?

**Mr. Peter Tabuns:** This bill takes advantage of the fact that we own considerable assets, that the public sector in Ontario controls considerable assets, and that we can move quickly to dramatically reduce our greenhouse gas emissions. As you're well aware, we face a climate crisis, extreme weather, floods, droughts, wildfires. We need to act, and we need to act quickly. This bill can help us do that.

#### GREAT LAKES PROTECTION AMENDMENT ACT, 2019

##### LOI DE 2019 MODIFIANT LA LOI SUR LA PROTECTION DES GRANDS LACS

Mr. Barrett moved first reading of the following bill:

Bill 166, An Act to amend the Great Lakes Protection Act, 2015 / Projet de loi 166, Loi modifiant la Loi de 2015 sur la protection des Grands Lacs.

**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. Toby Barrett:** Yes. I'll read from the explanatory note. The bill amends the Great Lakes Protection Act, 2015, to change its title to the Great Lakes Protection and Promotion Act, 2019, and to add the promotion of tourism and other economic activities in the Great Lakes St. Lawrence River Basin that respect the ecological health of the basin as the purpose of the act.

When carrying out activities under the act that affect the Great Lakes St. Lawrence River Basin, the minister may consult with the government of any jurisdiction other than Ontario that borders on the basin if the minister is of the opinion that it is desirable to so consult to achieve one or more purposes of the act.

#### LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY AMENDMENT ACT, 2019

##### LOI DE 2019 MODIFIANT LA LOI SUR L'ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE

Mr. Calandra moved first reading of the following bill:

Bill 167, An Act to amend the Legislative Assembly Act and to make consequential amendments to other Acts / Projet de loi 167, Loi modifiant la Loi sur l'Assemblée législative et apportant des modifications corrélatives à d'autres lois.

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

*First reading agreed to.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott):** I'll ask the government House leader to briefly explain his bill.

**Hon. Paul Calandra:** This is a bill that makes some minor changes to the Legislative Assembly Act and, as the

bill says, to other acts. Again, I suspect that all members of the House will be in accordance.

### COMBATING ANTISEMITISM ACT, 2019

#### LOI DE 2019 SUR LA LUTTE CONTRE L'ANTISÉMITISME

Mr. Bouma moved first reading of the following bill:

Bill 168, An Act to combat antisemitism / Projet de loi 168, Loi sur la lutte contre l'antisémitisme.

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

*First reading agreed to.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott):** Would the member for Brantford–Brant care to explain his bill?

**Mr. Will Bouma:** The Combating Anti-Semitism Act, 2019, would, if passed, require the government of Ontario to be guided by the working definition of anti-Semitism and the list of illustrative examples of it, adopted by the International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance plenary on May 26, 2016, when it interprets acts, regulations and policies designed to protect Ontarians from discrimination and hate amounting to anti-Semitism.

The bill also amends the Legislation Act, 2006, to adopt that working definition.

## MOTIONS

### CONSIDERATION OF BILL 159

**Hon. Paul Calandra:** I move that, pursuant to standing order 74, the order for second reading of Bill 159, An Act to amend various statutes in respect of consumer protection, be discharged, and the bill be referred to the Standing Committee on Justice Policy.

**The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott):** Mr. Calandra has moved that, pursuant to standing order 74, the order for second reading of Bill 159, An Act to amend various statutes in respect of consumer protection, be discharged, and the bill be referred to the Standing Committee on Justice Policy.

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

*Motion agreed to.*

1530

### COMMITTEE SITTINGS

**Hon. Paul Calandra:** I move that, during the winter adjournment, standing committees be authorized to meet as follows:

—Standing Committee on Finance and Economic Affairs meet for pre-budget consultations for up to eight days;

—Standing Committee on Justice Policy meet to consider Bill 159, An Act to amend various statutes in respect of consumer protection, for up to five days;

—Standing Committee on General Government meet to consider Bill 145, An Act to amend the Real Estate and Business Brokers Act, for up to five days; and

—Standing Committee on Social Policy meet to consider Bill 141, An Act respecting registration of and access to defibrillators, for up to three days.

**The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott):** Mr. Calandra has moved that, during the winter adjournment, standing committees be authorized to meet as follows:

—Standing Committee on Finance and Economic Affairs meet for pre-budget consultations for up to eight days;

—Standing Committee on Justice Policy meet to consider Bill 159, An Act to amend various statutes in respect of consumer protection, for up to five days;

—Standing Committee on General Government meet to consider Bill 145, An Act to amend the Real Estate and Business Brokers Act, for up to five days; and

—Standing Committee on Social Policy meet to consider Bill 141, An Act respecting registration of and access to defibrillators, for up to three days.

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

*Motion agreed to.*

### CONSIDERATION OF BILL 123

**Hon. Paul Calandra:** I seek unanimous consent to move a motion without notice regarding Bill 123, An Act to amend the Highway Traffic Act respecting electric vehicle charging stations.

**The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott):** The government House leader is seeking unanimous consent of the House to move a motion without notice regarding Bill 123, An Act to amend the Highway Traffic Act respecting electric vehicle charging stations. Agreed? Agreed.

Government House leader.

**Hon. Paul Calandra:** I move that when the order for third reading of Bill 123, An Act to amend the Highway Traffic Act respecting electric vehicle charging stations, is called, one hour shall be allotted to the debate, with 25 minutes for the government, 25 minutes for the official opposition and 10 minutes for the independents; at the end of which time the Speaker shall interrupt the proceedings and shall put every question necessary to dispose of this stage of the bill without further debate or amendment.

**The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott):** Mr. Calandra has moved that when the order for third reading of Bill 123, An Act to amend the Highway Traffic Act respecting electric vehicle charging stations, is called, one hour shall be allotted to the debate, with 25 minutes for the government, 25 minutes for the official opposition and 10 minutes for the independents; at the end of which time the Speaker shall interrupt the proceedings and shall put every question necessary to dispose of this stage of the bill without further debate or amendment.

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

*Motion agreed to.*

## LEGISLATIVE REFORM

**Mr. Mike Schreiner:** I seek unanimous consent to put forward a motion without notice during motions regarding the order of the House dated December 4, 2019, concerning changes to the standing orders.

**The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott):** Mr. Schreiner is seeking unanimous consent to put forward a motion without notice during motions regarding the order of the House dated December 4, 2019, concerning changes to the standing orders. Agreed? Agreed.

Again, I'll recognize the member for Guelph.

**Mr. Mike Schreiner:** I move that the order of the House dated December 4, 2019, concerning changes to the standing orders be amended by adding after the words "standing order 81(c) is deleted" and the following substituted: "81(c) Without unanimous consent, no government bill shall be called during orders of the day during an evening meeting of the House if that same bill has been called on both the morning and afternoon meetings of the House on that same sessional day."

**The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott):** Mr. Schreiner has moved that the order of the House dated December 4, 2019, concerning changes to the standing orders be amended by adding after the words "standing order 81(c) is deleted" and the following substituted: "81(c) Without unanimous consent, no government bill shall be called during orders of the day during an evening meeting of the House if that same bill has been called on both the morning and afternoon meetings of the House on that same sessional day."

I recognize the member for Guelph.

**Mr. Mike Schreiner:** I wanted to move this amendment during standing orders debate but was unable to because two amendments were already tabled at the time. This motion, if passed, addresses my concerns that the government could move a bill too quickly by calling it for debate in the morning, afternoon and evening.

**The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott):** Does the member for Timmins wish to make a submission with respect to his motion?

**Mr. Gilles Bisson:** Yes, and I don't want to be long—just a couple of minutes—but I want to put it on the record.

I want to repeat again that I'm very unhappy that the government has changed the standing orders in the way that they have. We've had the debate, so I will not repeat all of the points. I think the best way that the independents, both Green and Liberal, could have opposed this and gotten to where we had to go was to be unified in their opposition to the government's changes to the standing orders.

Obviously, I think the Green Party got some pressure for having supported the government, in the end, for doing this. That's fair. That's what democracy is all about. This is an attempt in order to be able to be seen as resolving this issue for their political consideration. But I just want to point out that this does little to change what's happened in the standing orders.

I'll end on this particular point: What it originally did, the way the standing order was written, was that you could

call an evening session, an afternoon session and a morning session on the same motion that was before the House, when it came to a bill. All this does is that the government can't call it in the morning. So all you're really saving is an hour and 15 minutes.

We're going to support it because it's a step in the right direction, but it certainly does not mitigate what the government has done when it comes to the changes to the standing orders.

**The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott):** I recognize the government House leader.

**Hon. Paul Calandra:** I thank the opposition House leader for his support of this. This motion did come forward as we continued discussion on the standing orders, after the NDP had made the decision to move in a different direction. This was a motion that was brought forward, but, as you know, there were two other amendments on the floor, which prevented the Green Party from being able to bring forward this amendment.

I do appreciate colleagues' unanimous support of this today so that we can do what was meant to be done, and again thank the member from the Green Party and the independent Liberals for doing that.

**The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott):** Any further debate?

**Mr. Randy Hillier:** Speaker, I'm pleased to see the motion brought forward by the member from Guelph. I'm pleased to see the robust and good-quality conversation and discussion on the standing order changes. I'm pleased to see this. I think this will be an effective addition to the standing order changes.

**The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott):** Any further debate?

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

*Motion agreed to.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott):** Motions?

**Mr. Gilles Bisson:** Can I move one to rescind the standing orders, to as they were? Oh, sorry—

**The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott):** No, you can't.

## PETITIONS

## PUBLIC SECTOR COMPENSATION

**Mr. Jamie West:** I have 10,000 signatures from voters. The statement is entitled, "Petition.

"To the Legislative Assembly...:

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

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

"Whereas Bill 124 will strip workers of their charter-protected right to free collective bargaining; and"—I'd also like to thank the member from Nickel Belt;

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

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

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

I’m proud to affix my name. I will possibly have to help page Leela with these.

#### PLASMA COLLECTION

**Mr. Toby Barrett:** The petition is to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario.

“Whereas the global increasing demand for plasma-derived therapies has caused shortages that have negatively impacted treatment plans for patients in Canada as well as other countries;

“Whereas paid plasma is just as safe as unpaid plasma for the manufacture of plasma-derived therapies, according to Canadian Blood Services;

“Whereas paid plasma is more effective at securing supply and more efficient in terms of the costs, according to the Health Canada expert panel final report;

1540

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

“Repeal the Voluntary Blood Donations Act to permit commercial plasma collection centres to pay donors for their plasma donations.”

#### TEACHERS’ PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

**Ms. Marit Stiles:** It’s a great pleasure to present these petitions that have been signed by hundreds of teacher candidates from York University and Trent University. The petition reads as follows:

“It Doesn’t Add Up

“To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“Whereas the government has imposed new legislation requiring all teacher candidates registering with the Ontario College of Teachers to take a math proficiency test, teacher candidates enrolled in bachelor of education programs across Ontario petition” to repeal “the newly imposed legislation in subsection 18(1)(c).”

They are petitioning “for a retraction and a reconsideration” of this subsection.

I’m pleased to support this petition. I will be signing it and passing it to page Laura to table with the Clerks.

#### LAND USE PLANNING

**Ms. Goldie Ghamari:** I have a petition in front of me that was delivered to my constituency office. It has 2,974 signatures, and it was presented to me and mobilized by the people of North Gower, which is one of the rural

communities in my riding. I’m proud to present it today to the Legislature. The petition reads as follows:

“Petition in Support of Preventing the Erosion of Rural Canadian Lifestyle in North Gower

“To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“Whereas the city of Ottawa has approved a development proposal to build a 30-metre high mega-warehouse at 1966 Rogers Stevens Drive, North Gower, K0A 2T0, with no consideration to the rural lifestyle, traffic issues, population or environmental impact, and by approving major variances to zoning, height restrictions, noise and light pollution; and

“Whereas the population of North Gower, a small rural community in the city of Ottawa, is approximately 2,200 people, and the community and surrounding rural areas, which will be severely negatively impacted by this decision, were not provided with any opportunity for meaningful consultation until after the project had been approved;

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

“For the Minister of Transportation to immediately halt any further action on the North Gower mega-warehouse until proper and meaningful consultations with the community have taken place.”

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

#### ASSISTIVE DEVICES

**Mr. Joel Harden:** I’m honoured to read a petition from the Disability Justice Network of Ontario. It’s about “Reform Assistive Devices Program Campaign.” I’ve read this petition before, so I’m going to truncate it somewhat so all of my colleagues have an opportunity to read their petitions. I’ll go straight to the petition asks. It reads:

“We, the undersigned, are concerned residents in Ontario with disabilities or who are allies of” those with “disabilities. We urge the government of Ontario to take the following actions as it pertains to the Assistive Devices Program (ADP) in Ontario:

“—license all vendors that sell and/or repair assistive devices in Ontario;

“—have all vendors that sell and/or repair assistive devices be subjected to annual reviews by the Ministry of Children, Community and Social Services;

“—mandate and enforce timely access to assistive devices funded partially or in full by the province of Ontario, including addressing the backlogged files as it relates to” the “Assistive Devices Program;

“—mandate and enforce timely access to repairs as it relates to assistive devices funded partially or in full by the province of Ontario, including addressing the backlogged files as it relates to” the “Assistive Devices Program;

“—mandate and enforce clearer supports as it relates to the transition between pediatric and adult services;

“—mandate and enforce adequate staffing for the Assistive Devices Program, in order to address the backlog.”

I am proud to sign the petition and give it to page Emily for the Clerks' table.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls):** Thank you very much to the member from Ottawa Centre. Brevity is a sign of wisdom, so thank you very much for that.

#### SPINE SURGERY

**Mr. Dave Smith:** I have a petition from the citizens of North Bay.

“Whereas many people are either personally affected, know someone personally affected, or care for one or more patients who are suffering and are either unable to get spine surgery in Canada or forced into unacceptable spine surgery wait times, and many of these patients have ongoing severe pain, progressive neurological decline and poor quality of health; and

“Whereas recent published literature demonstrates significantly higher rates of spine surgery in New York state versus Ontario; and

“Whereas Ontario also performs 20% to 30% less spine surgery per capita than other provinces in Canada; and

“Whereas the supply of spine surgery in Ontario is unable to meet the demand, the medical need amongst the population, especially for patients who need spine surgery but are not yet in imminent life-threatening conditions;

“We, the undersigned, call on the Ministry of Health to re-evaluate its policy surrounding access to spine surgery in Ontario and allow for a shuffling of resources and allocations so that operating room times can increase and/or spine surgeries per capita can increase. Help end the needless suffering.”

I'll sign my name to this petition and give it to page Johnson.

#### DOCUMENTS GOUVERNEMENTAUX

**M<sup>me</sup> France Gélinas:** I'd like to thank Denis Donald, Roxanne Blais and Monique Bélanger Blais.

« Pétition—Accents en français sur les cartes de santé » et les permis de conduire de l'Ontario.

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

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

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

« Nous, soussignées, pétitionnons l'Assemblée législative de l'Ontario pour qu'elle s'assure que les accents de la langue française », ainsi que les trémas et la cédille, « soient inclus sur tous les documents et cartes émis par le gouvernement de l'Ontario », et ce, « avant le 31 décembre 2020. »

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

#### GOVERNMENT'S AGENDA

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

“Whereas the previous government left the province not only with the largest subnational debt in the world, but also significant, daunting challenges, including hallway health care, transit and roads that are heavily congested, and government services” that are “inefficient and outdated;

“Whereas progress should be made to reduce the deficit while maintaining critical services like small and medium-sized hospitals, public health units, child care and programs to help our most vulnerable;

“Whereas life in Ontario should be more affordable for families and individuals in every corner of the province, by putting more money in people's pockets;

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

“Proceed as effectively as possible to balance the budget by 2023-24 through prudent fiscal management by immediately passing Bill 138, An Act to implement Budget measures and to enact, amend and repeal various statutes, so that:

“(1) Amendments are made to the Co-operative Corporations Act to remove some restrictions;

“(2) Subsection 329(2) of the Municipal Act, 2001, which sets out how certain property taxes are to be determined, is amended to include rules about recalculating property taxes when there is a change to the permitted uses of land....”

I support this petition, Speaker, and I will add my signature to it as well.

#### INTERNATIONAL BACCALAUREATE PROGRAM

**Ms. Bhutla Karpoche:** On behalf of the students in my riding and their families, I'm proud to table this petition titled “Say No to Fees on IB.

“To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“Whereas” the Ontario “government's education funding cuts have resulted in the implementation of fees at Parkdale Collegiate Institute for the grade 11 and 12 international baccalaureate program;

“Whereas the \$3,000 program fee that families and students will now be required to pay puts up barriers to access the program, creates a two-tiered system and erodes Ontario's robust public education system;

“Whereas Parkdale Collegiate Institute is a community hub and programs like IB keep up the school enrolment and the viability of the school;

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

“... reverse the cuts to education so that students can enrol in the international baccalaureate program at Parkdale Collegiate Institute without fees.”

I fully support this petition, and I'm happy to table it.

## GOVERNMENT'S AGENDA

**Mr. Will Bouma:** This petition says:

“To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“Whereas the previous government left the province not only with the largest subnational debt in the world, but also significant, daunting challenges, including hallway health care, transit and roads that are heavily congested, and government services inefficient and outdated;

“Whereas progress should be made to reduce the deficit while maintaining critical services like small and medium-sized hospitals, public health units, child care and programs to help our most vulnerable;

“Whereas life in Ontario should be more affordable for families and individuals in every corner of the province, by putting more money in people’s pockets;

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

**1550**

“Proceed as effectively as possible to balance the budget by 2023-24 through prudent fiscal management by immediately passing Bill 138, An Act to implement Budget measures and to enact, amend and repeal various statutes, so that:

“(1) Amendments are made to the Co-operative Corporations Act to remove some restrictions;

“(2) Subsection 329(2) of the Municipal Act, 2001, which sets out how certain property taxes are to be determined, is amended to include rules about recalculating property taxes when there is a change to the permitted uses of land;

“(3) Subsection 2(2) of the Gasoline Tax Act is re-enacted to set out the current tax rate, which is 6.7 cents per litre.”

I completely endorse this petition, will affix my name to it and pass it to page Suhani.

## LONG-TERM CARE

**Mr. Michael Mantha:** I want to thank Joseph and Rhonda DeGraw from Blind River, who provided me with this petition.

“Time to Care....

“To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“Whereas quality of 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 acuity 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 recommend 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 ... of four hours per resident per day, adjusted for acuity level and case mix.”

I completely and wholeheartedly agree with this petition and present it to page Emily.

## REAL ESTATE INDUSTRY

**Mrs. Gila Martow:** “To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“Whereas given the changes to the real estate industry, technology and regulatory practices over the last two decades, it is essential that the rules for real estate brokerages and professionals reflect contemporary business practices;

“Whereas consumer protection, increased professionalism, efficient and effective regulation, strong business environment and reducing red tape and regulatory burden on businesses are key to the well-being of the province of Ontario;

“Whereas for years Ontario realtors have advocated for higher professional standards, stronger consumer protections and better enforcement of the rules governing real estate practices;

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

“Proceed as effectively as possible to increase consumer confidence, enhance standards for real estate professionals and brokerages and provide additional flexibility to keep pace with a modern marketplace by immediately passing Bill 145, An Act to amend the Real Estate and Business Brokers Act, 2002, so that:

“(1) The act is renamed the Trust in Real Estate Services Act, 2002;

“(2) Abolishes the appeals committee and provides for appeals from decisions of the discipline committee to instead be handled by the Licence Appeal Tribunal;

“(3) Create a new exemption in respect of personal real estate corporations and prescribed members of such corporations, however this exemption be subject to prescribed conditions....”

Of course, we all support this very important piece of legislation. I give it to page Clara.

## ORDERS OF THE DAY

FOUNDATIONS FOR PROMOTING  
AND PROTECTING MENTAL HEALTH  
AND ADDICTIONS SERVICES ACT, 2019LOI DE 2019 SUR LES BASES  
NÉCESSAIRES À LA PROMOTION  
ET À LA PROTECTION DES SERVICES  
DE SANTÉ MENTALE ET DE LUTTE  
CONTRE LES DÉPENDANCES

Ms. Elliott moved third reading of the following bill:

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 / Projet de loi 116, Loi édictant la Loi de 2019 sur le Centre d'excellence pour la santé mentale et la lutte contre les dépendances et la Loi de 2019 sur le recouvrement des dommages-intérêts et du coût des soins de santé imputables aux opioïdes.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls):** Therefore, I turn it now back to you, Minister, for further debate.

**Hon. Christine Elliott:** I am honoured to rise today to begin debate for third reading of Bill 116, the Foundations for Promoting and Protecting Mental Health and Addictions Services Act, 2019.

Before I start, Speaker, I would like to take a moment to acknowledge that I will be sharing my time with the Associate Minister of Mental Health and Addictions, as well as with the Attorney General.

It takes a team, Speaker, to properly address the mental health and addictions concerns that many Ontarians face, and the people who work tirelessly to deliver mental health and addictions services in our province know this all too well. Across the province, teams of compassionate, dedicated mental health and addictions workers strive to provide the best possible care for Ontarians, often with little recognition or reward. They do it because they care. They want the best for all Ontarians. But the reality is, despite all their hard work, all too frequently people cannot get the care they need when they need it, or the care they do get is disconnected from the rest of our health care system.

We know we can build a system that ensures that people can get the help they need when and where they need it, but achieving that worthy goal is going to require all of us working together toward a common cause. We want to bring our partners in the health care sector together and work with everyone to find the right solutions for the significant challenges many people in Ontario are facing.

Our government made a commitment to make mental health and addictions services a priority. We also promised to put an end to hallway health care. But we cannot begin to solve the hallway health care issue without building capacity in community-based care across Ontario, including and especially, I would say, for mental health and addictions supports.

Ontario has been challenged for too long by extensive wait times, barriers to access, inconsistent quality, a lack of standardized data, and widespread fragmentation within the mental health and addictions system. We heard this over and over during our province-wide consultations, when we heard from experts, providers and, of course, people with lived experience, people who shared their powerful stories with us about their struggles and their frustrations.

But this wasn't the first time that I've heard stories like this. I have spoken many times about my time with the Select Committee on Mental Health and Addictions, an all-party committee that was created in 2009 to take a hard look at the mental health and addictions needs of people across the province. Each of the three political parties represented at that time in the House was represented, and

each member volunteered to serve because we shared a personal commitment to helping people with mental health and addictions needs. I want to acknowledge my colleagues the Solicitor General and, of course, the member from Nickel Belt, who are the only other remaining members of that committee who are still speaking and sitting in this Legislature today. The select committee heard hearings on 30 dates, heard testimony from over 230 presenters and reviewed more than 300 submissions. Our efforts went beyond just hearings, as we visited mental health and addictions facilities as well as many Indigenous communities. It was an honour to serve in this capacity.

But it was telling that when our government began our consultations nearly a full decade after the select committee completed its work, we were hearing the same kinds of stories. It was like we were experiencing déjà vu. In a decade, how have we not made any progress on fixing the well-known challenges of the mental health and addictions system?

Speaker, I am going to quote a line from the select committee's letter, found in the report, that stands out to me right now: "We worked co-operatively throughout our entire mandate, and we hope that this spirit of collegiality will influence those who must now implement our recommendations." That last part is really telling, because a decade later, the first recommendation made by the select committee—to create a single body that would be responsible for designing, managing and coordinating our mental health and addictions system—has never been implemented. What is even more concerning is that most of the other 22 recommendations found in the report put together by the select committee have also not been implemented.

But now our government wants to finally fulfill the most important recommendation of the select committee's report. The proposed Foundations for Promoting and Protecting Mental and Addictions Services Act is our way of fulfilling the most important recommendation of the select committee and of living up to the promise of action from all the consultations that have taken place, both then and now. If we are going to make any meaningful change, then we need a Mental Health and Addictions Centre of Excellence within Ontario Health to play an active role. We need this centre to implement our provincial strategy and to keep a close eye on the system to ensure that it is delivering the highest quality care.

**1600**

Our government made a commitment to invest \$3.8 billion over 10 years to develop and implement a comprehensive and connected mental health and addictions strategy. Within that strategy, we will build capacity in the community mental health and addictions sector so people can receive help earlier and so they have clear alternatives to emergency departments, where many are forced to go when they are in crisis.

If passed, this legislation would enable Ontario Health, through the centre of excellence, to begin implementing the strategy. The centre would develop clinical, quality and service standards for mental health and addictions

services. Right now, Ontarians are receiving inconsistent care in many areas. What this diverse sector needs are evidence-based service standards that set clear expectations for providers in delivering care. The centre would also monitor the performance of the mental health and addictions sector. By developing evidence-based policies supported by data and measurement, the proposed centre of excellence would also ensure that Ontarians receive high-quality and consistent mental health and addictions services, when and where they need them throughout the province.

Our government has been listening, and we will continue to listen as we take action to transform our mental health and addictions system. We are going to continue to work toward creating an Ontario where everyone is fully supported in their journey toward mental well-being. That includes those living with an opioid addiction. Right now, our province is in the grips of an opioid crisis, and we are taking our responsibility to address this crisis very seriously. We are working hard to ensure that supports are in place for people struggling from an opioid addiction, but with this proposed legislation, we are proposing to take additional measures to address the opioids crisis and its cost for government and for Ontario taxpayers.

But this proposed legislation is about more than just the financial cost. Since 2007, approximately 9,000 lives have been lost to opioid overdoses in Ontario. Many more people have visited the emergency department or been hospitalized as a result of an opioid overdose. Sadly, there are many more people who are currently at risk of harm from an overdose. The cost has been too high, and my colleague the Attorney General will be addressing this issue very shortly as well.

Before I conclude, I want to urge all members of the Legislature to support Bill 116. People in this province have waited for too long to have their mental health and addiction needs addressed. We have an opportunity to send a strong message, in the spirit of collegiality of the Select Committee on Mental Health and Addictions, to make a real difference for those who are in need of mental health and addictions services—a message that our mental well-being is just as important as our physical well-being.

With that, I would like to call upon the Associate Minister of Mental Health and Addictions to continue this important discussion.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls):** Excuse me. Before we continue, I realize that you were going in rotation, I believe. So I will have to go over to the opposition—

**Mr. Gilles Bisson:** It's good.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls):** You're good? All right.

Further debate? I recognize the Associate Minister of Mental Health and Addictions.

**Hon. Michael A. Tibollo:** It gives me great pleasure today to rise in the House in support of the third reading of Bill 116, the Foundations for Promoting and Protecting Mental Health and Addictions Services Act, 2019. I'd like

to thank the Deputy Premier and Minister of Health for sharing her time with me today.

I want to start by saying that it's an honour to work on this file with the Deputy Premier and Minister of Health. As I have stated many times in the Legislature, too many people and too many families continue to be affected by mental illness and addictions, and we're doing something about that.

I know that both the Deputy Premier and myself share a deep commitment to helping those with mental health and addictions challenges, and I'm proud to have been asked by the Premier to work with her to find solutions, because the reality is that our mental health and addictions system has been faced with numerous problems for far too long: whether it's the long wait times that people and families are faced with to get the care they need or the widespread fragmentation of the system, where service providers are essentially working alone on an island because the system lacks connectivity.

The system is also plagued by inconsistent quality. The services offered in one community may not be quite as good as those offered in another community, and in many cases there are simply no services available at all.

Some people are faced with barriers that prevent them from accessing the services they need, and across the board, there is a lack of standardized data. That lack of information is problematic. It means we can't accurately compare or measure the quality of the care being delivered, making it difficult to develop the right policies to address problem areas within the system.

We need to do better. Ontarians are counting on us to do better, because the reality is that an estimated 30% of Ontarians will experience a mental health and addictions issue at some point in their lives. In fact, two million people in Ontario go to their family doctor for mental health- or addictions-related reasons each year, and the number of people who visited an emergency department within a given year has been steadily on the rise since 2008.

Just as alarming is the rise in mental health and addiction challenges among our children and youth. Between 2006 and 2015, children and youth going to emergency departments for mental health and addictions issues increased by 30%, and we know that suicide is the second leading cause of death among 15-to-24-year-olds.

Mr. Speaker, I could stand here all day and recite statistics that demonstrate the growing need for mental health and addictions services and the struggles that Ontarians face accessing these services. But Ontarians have been hearing their politicians acknowledge the issues for far too long; they want to see action, as the Deputy Premier promised. They've been expecting action since the day the Select Committee on Mental Health and Addictions turned in their report. The time for talking has passed. Now we need to set our sights on achieving the goal of building a better, stronger mental health and addictions system for all Ontarians.

I'm reminded of a quote by Pablo Picasso: "Our goals can only be reached through the vehicle of a plan, in which

we must fervently believe and upon which we must vigorously act. There is no other route to success.”

Our government committed to promoting positive mental health and well-being by building a comprehensive and connected mental health and addictions system. We’re focused on building a system that ensures that children, youth and adults in Ontario receive appropriate services and supports where and when they need them. Our government made a commitment to the people of Ontario during the last provincial election that we were going to make these much-needed investments in mental health and addictions, and we’re committed to investing \$3.8 billion over the next 10 years for mental health, addictions and supportive housing to address those issues.

Through these investments, we will improve access to front-line services and build a modern system focused on core services embedded in a stepped care model, as well as a robust data and measurement framework. We have already made \$174 million in investments for the current fiscal year that will support community mental health and addictions services, mental health and justice services, supportive housing, acute mental health in-patient beds, and child and youth mental health services. This funding will also increase early supports and stabilize services provided in schools, community organizations, health centres and hospitals across the province.

We have also targeted funding for Indigenous and priority populations, such as our province’s many francophone Ontarians and our many dedicated first responders.

**1610**

We’re hard at work, developing a comprehensive strategy that is going to guide the important work we’re doing.

That’s why Bill 116 is so important. This bill will support the introduction and implementation of a mental health and addictions strategy. We believe that the introduction, implementation and success of a mental health and addictions strategy depends on the sustained commitment of all sectors and levels of government. And we want to maximize the value of our investments through a coordinated approach, one that would be made possible through the creation of a Mental Health and Addictions Centre of Excellence within Ontario Health. This is why the first stated goal of the centre, which would be enshrined through this legislation, is to put into operation the mental health and addictions strategy.

It will also ensure accountability. Ontario Health will be required to report back through its annual reports on the actions it is taking through the centre of excellence to strengthen our mental health and addictions system.

Mr. Speaker, we are already hard at work on finalizing our mental health and addictions strategy, and I’m looking forward to sharing that plan with Ontarians in the coming months.

So we have a plan, one that, as Picasso said, we must vigorously act on.

It is also a plan I fervently believe in. For too long, I’ve watched previous governments fail to take real action to

improve Ontario’s mental health and addictions sector. In fact, I would not be in politics today if it weren’t for the lack of action by previous governments to improve the system. After seeing previous governments fail to take meaningful and real action to address several major concerns that I had raised with them, and after seeing Premier Ford’s commitment to invest \$3.8 billion over 10 years, I made a commitment of my own to enter politics to help those living with mental health and addictions challenges. After working for nearly a decade as a certified addictions counsellor, I knew that I could do my part to help Ontarians struggling with mental health and addictions challenges, and assist them in living more fulfilled and enriched lives.

As I always say, I have the heart and drive of an advocate, but I now also have the privilege of holding the office of an elected official. As the province’s first Associate Minister of Mental Health and Addictions, I have the unique opportunity to be a champion for mental health and addictions in the province of Ontario. This is a position I am honoured and privileged to hold.

Throughout my career, I have observed the harms related to drugs and their control over people I’ve met and known throughout my working life.

I’ve corresponded with individuals convicted and imprisoned as drug smugglers, dealers and users, and I’ve spent countless hours speaking to the broken, exhausted families they left behind, wondering where they went wrong.

I’ve visited corrections facilities around the province, all of them struggling to deal with influxes of drug users and of the drugs that they want to use.

I’ve been in emergency departments where many overdosed, and where members of our community struggling with suicidal thoughts end up desperately crying out for help, only to be turned away to fend for themselves.

I’ve helped develop strategies to find a way out of dependence and into useful employment through education.

I’ve interviewed, assessed and worked with many men who have been damaged by their use of heroin, crack cocaine and, for the fortunate few, survived overdose. Several of these men have since passed away—some as young as 16; some as old as 70. Some have continued a life of petty persistent offending, struggling to stay alive, often with a concurrent disorder that goes undiagnosed or self-medicated.

I’ve attended visitations of first responders who gave up and took their own lives because there were no supports available to them.

I’ve visited remote communities where suicide is not an exception but a way of bringing about a profound, tragic end to suffering and the possibility that perhaps the next world will bring something better.

Others have turned their lives around with the help of drug treatment centres, the love of their families, the support of their peers, through sheer determination or a combination of all of the above.

I’ve discussed the issues of addiction and mental health in empty streets, waiting rooms, bleak cells, noisy classrooms, windowless lecture halls, hotel conference rooms,

and inside the boardrooms of past provincial governments right here at Queen's Park.

I've seen abuses of alcohol, tobacco, caffeine and illicit substances of many kinds that are used regularly to numb the pains of life or to cope with adversity even for just a little while. In all cases, Mr. Speaker, I believe it's our duty, our responsibility, to bring back hope because every life has value and every life deserves the opportunity to live to the fullest, substance-free. Everyone deserves help where and when they need it.

I'm reminded of why I do the work I do and why I believe the many people who work in addictions and mental health do their jobs so diligently, often with little or no pay. It's for the love of humanity, the desire to be of service to others, the belief that hope can once again resurrect the spirit of every human being, no matter how downtrodden. That's why I'm here today. That's why I'm here to speak on this bill today.

Our government is proud to continue fulfilling our promise of making mental health and addictions a priority. We're delivering real change to our mental health and addictions sector. I'm honoured to have been tasked by Premier Ford to work alongside the Deputy Premier and Minister of Health to develop our provincial strategy. She gets it; I get it; our government gets it.

It's a plan built from the ground up with advice and input from grassroots organizations, health care providers, health system leaders, experts and advocates, as well as people with lived experience of mental health and addictions, their families and caregivers. It involves work across government, involving multiple programs in multiple ministries to help priority groups such as children, youth, people in the justice system, seniors, Franco-Ontarians, Indigenous communities, first responders, those living with developmental challenges, and the LGBTQ2+ communities.

But, Speaker, all of the good intentions in the world won't make a difference if we can't implement our plan. That's why having a Mental Health and Addictions Centre of Excellence within Ontario is so important. The passage of this proposed legislation would send a strong message to the people who rely on our mental health and addictions sector that their government is finally taking the necessary steps to standardize the quality and delivery of mental health and addictions in this province. That means a better and more consistent health care experience in Ontario for all Ontarians.

The proposed Mental Health and Addictions Centre of Excellence within Ontario Health would enable Ontario Health to carry out its mandate related to mental health and addictions.

Ontario Health was created to bring the best expertise across our health care system together to work and to form deep roots that would put health care in our province on a solid foundation for the future.

The centre would put into operation the mental health and addictions strategy. It would develop clinical, quality and service standards for mental health and addictions and monitor performance-related metrics of the mental health

and addictions system. And the work of the centre would be instrumental in developing resources and support to health service providers, integrated care delivery systems, and others related to mental health and addictions.

Mr. Speaker, I'd also note that when our government introduced the Ontario health team model, we envisaged a new way of organizing and delivering service: Care that is more connected to people in their local communities.

As part of our government's larger plan to modernize the health care system, our government has created Ontario health teams. In fact, many of the first cohort of the Ontario health teams have been announced across the province over the last few weeks. What this means for Ontarians is that, under Ontario health teams, health care providers will work as one coordinated team, no matter where they are, which will be a way to look after primary care, acute care or community-based care.

Mental health and addictions system modernization supports this broader health system agenda by preparing mental health and addictions service providers to be a part of the integrated health care system. The proposed Mental Health and Addictions Centre of Excellence would provide support and resources to these teams to better enable them to connect clients to the different types of care they need and help them navigate the system.

Our government is committed to the creation of a fully integrated health care system in which mental health and addictions care is a core component.

Everyone understand that the stakes are high. Ontarians need a health care system they can rely on. They need a fully integrated health care system that includes mental health and addictions strategies, and as Ontario's government for the people, we have an obligation to improve and protect the system for all Ontarians.

**1620**

We acknowledge that issues with mental health and addictions can't be resolved overnight, but the status quo simply isn't an option. People suffering from mental illness, people struggling with addictions, the experiences of their families and caregivers—all of these things affect our entire health care system. This proposed legislation moves us in the right direction toward fulfilling our commitment to building a comprehensive and connected mental health and addictions system—a system that ensures that children, youth and adults in Ontario receive appropriate services and supports where and when they need them. I am confident that we have the plan and the team to get this done.

Mr. Speaker, I want to leave one last thought with you and with all those listening today: Who are we to give up on anyone who cries out for help? Every life that cries out for help deserves help. As the rabbinical teachings in the Talmud state, "Whoever saves a single life is considered by scripture to have saved the whole world." Imagine: He who saves the life of one human being saves the life of a nation. What a wonderful thought.

I want to thank the members of this Legislature for their time. I'd urge all members to support this proposed legislation so that we can finally address the needs of our mental health and addictions system in a meaningful way.

With that, I would like to call on the Attorney General to continue.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls):** We are going to go in rotation. Thank you for that. I will get to the Attorney General at the appropriate time. But right now, further debate?

**Ms. Bhutla Karpoche:** I'm proud to rise on behalf of the Ontario NDP as the critic for addictions and mental health to speak to third reading of Bill 116.

The title of Bill 116 is the Foundations for Promoting and Protecting Mental Health and Addictions Services Act, 2019. The title sounds great, right? The Ford government and the ministers come up with great titles for their bills; I'll give them that. Unfortunately, great titles don't necessarily translate into great legislation. Don't get me wrong; I do support the creation of a new Mental Health and Addictions Centre of Excellence. As was mentioned by the minister, it was a key recommendation in the 2010 report by the Select Committee on Mental Health and Addictions, and from what I've heard from those in the field in the mental health and addictions sector, they support this.

For too long, mental health and addictions has been treated, as Dr. Steve Lurie from the Canadian Mental Health Association put it, as "the health care system's orphaned child." A centre for excellence is definitely a first step towards rectifying that; I would add, a baby step.

We say mental health is health, but we certainly don't treat mental health the same as physical health. There is a stigma associated with mental health, and for those who do have the courage to step forward and seek help, there is a complete lack of services. We simply let them languish on wait-lists until they reach a crisis point. Does this legislation fix that? No.

The foundations for promoting mental health are things like affordable and accessible housing, fair wages and worker protections, strong social service programs and access to justice. But what has the government done on this so far?

On housing, the government has made it easier to evict tenants, eliminated rent control in new units, has done nothing to address the affordable housing crisis and nothing to close the loopholes that benefit corporate landlords, and made illegal evictions completely normal. It happens every day.

On fair wages and protections, the government cancelled an already-legislated minimum wage increase and then froze the minimum wage. They cut the two paid sick days that workers had and removed equal pay for equal work.

Looking specifically at workplace health and safety, this government gutted regulations that protect the most precarious workers—temp agency workers—and refused to enforce workplace inspections, despite two workers being killed at the same workplace under this government's watch.

On access to justice, the government made massive cuts to legal aid funding and attacked community legal clinics by cutting their funding by 30%. In my riding of Parkdale—

High Park, Parkdale Community Legal Services was specifically targeted and their budget was cut by 50%. Who does this cut hurt? Legal aid workers help injured workers on the job, help single parents get the child support they deserve, help tenants fight illegal evictions, help victims of domestic violence pursue justice, help workers get the wages that they are owed, and help migrants fight deportations. Basically, they help people who are already under tremendous mental health stresses.

So on one hand, the government is talking about creating a centre of excellence for mental health and addictions, but on the other hand, it's doing everything possible to add to the mental health stresses of Ontarians. We know that these factors, the social determinants of health, influence people's mental health immensely. But this government is attacking all of the social factors that influence mental health. Creating a centre of excellence is not enough. Our social policies must promote the mental well-being of Ontarians.

Last week, we had the committee hearings on this bill. I'm going to focus quite a bit of my comments on what we heard during the hearings.

Kate Mulligan, representing Alliance for Healthier Communities, urged the government to keep the vital work of mental health equity at the forefront of the centre. Why? Because key populations—Indigenous peoples, franco-phone populations, Black people, LGBTQ2S+ communities—don't have the same opportunities for good mental health.

Anti-Black racism and structural and systemic discrimination have a profound impact on the mental health of Black populations.

The Mental Health and Addictions Centre of Excellence must prioritize health equity and reduce health disparities for these key populations. This must be prioritized through legislation. We need to have a legislated commitment to the collection and use of socio-demographic and race-based data.

Indigenous populations have significantly higher rates of mental illness and require culturally safe approaches to care. First Nations peoples are twice as likely to die by suicide. This disparity is particularly evident for young people on reserves.

The NDP put forward an amendment to the bill which included clauses that require the centre to collect socio-demographic and race-based data. The Conservatives voted against it. Without the data, there is no accountability for the centre to prioritize mental health equity for populations that face these structural barriers.

We also put forward an amendment to require that the province's mental health and addictions strategy have a specific component for Indigenous peoples—again, voted down by Conservatives. My colleague from Kiiwetinoong has been raising the alarm on the crisis of youth suicides on the reserves and among Indigenous youth, and all this government can do is hold a moment of silence. Where is the action on addressing the crisis?

The second part of the title talks about protecting mental health and addictions services. I think the first

thing that mental health and addictions services need protecting from is this government's cuts. One of the first acts that the government did was to cut \$330 million in funding from mental health and addictions. Later, it was also revealed by the Financial Accountability Office that \$69 million was cut from mental health programs from the Ministry of Children and Youth Services.

We're hearing again and again from this government that they're spending \$174 million on mental health and addictions this year, but what they're silent about is that the \$174 million is actually funding flowing from the federal government—and in the agreement with the federal government, the province is required to match it. So where is the \$174 million from the province? I even asked the minister and ministry staff about this at estimates committee. No surprise: I didn't get a straight answer. From what I can tell, the province itself has put in zero dollars so far.

Meanwhile, as we heard from Kim Moran, CEO of Children's Mental Health Ontario, kids are waiting 40 months for mental health treatment—40 months. She also shared the story of a young boy named Matthew who has been to the hospital over 50 times in the last year. Can you imagine? He goes to the hospital so often simply because he cannot get the intensive treatment he needs. His care in the hospital costs hundreds of thousands of dollars.

Kim noted, and I fully agree, that the Mental Health and Addictions Centre of Excellence is not going to provide the help people like Matthew need. It's not going to solve the problem of severe underfunding and under-availability of child and youth mental health care, which is why I tabled a bill in this House titled Right to Timely Mental Health and Addiction Care, so that children and youth can get the care that they need within 30 days. The government actually voted in favour of it, but it has been stalled for almost a year. The government is just not bringing this bill forward for committee hearings. They're letting it languish in committee.

**1630**

Martha McGroarty, who has been an incredible champion of children and youth mental health care and of my bill, was here at Queen's Park and shared her family's experience of losing their daughter because she did not get timely access to mental health care. It's a heartbreaking story that no family should ever have to go through. We can prevent it from happening again, but the government is not doing anything about it.

Speaker, early intervention is not only critical; it's life-saving. The earlier people receive proper treatment, the more we can set them up for lifelong success and prevent mental health and addiction issues over their lifespan. A good way to protect mental health and addictions, as the title suggested, really is to stop the cuts and invest the money to ensure that mental health care and addictions services are available for those who need it in a timely manner.

This was echoed by Adrienne Spafford, CEO of Addictions and Mental Health Ontario, who at the hearings for this bill had a message of urgent need for funding.

Yes, we do need to ensure that there are good foundations for a much-needed transformation of mental health and addictions care in the province, but we desperately need to provide the investments in the services we know will have an impact now. As Adrienne put it, we can work on building the systems we need, but we must invest immediately in services. The government must not delay in ensuring the funding is there for services today and tomorrow. So no more excuses of "we're working on it," because people are dying because there is a lack of services.

Speaker, I want to spend the remainder of my time focusing on the overdose crisis. Every day, people are dying from a toxic drug supply. Public Health Ontario data already shows a steady increase in opioid-related deaths. Almost 1,500 Ontarians died from an opioid-related cause last year alone. This year, 2019, the mortality numbers are on track to surpass 2018. We need action now to prevent these deaths.

I've been calling for the government to declare a public health emergency. Harm-reduction workers, doctors, public health professionals and people who use drugs have been calling for government action. Instead, everything that this government has done, they've done wrong on this issue. They failed to convene the Opioid Emergency Task Force and listen to experts. They closed overdose prevention sites and delayed action by conducting unnecessary reviews when the evidence was already very clear, defunded overdose prevention sites and set an arbitrary 21-site cap for the entire province.

Right now, Ontario has just 16 consumption and treatment sites when so many more are needed. Street Health and St. Stephen's in Toronto need a site. They are at the epicentre of this crisis and they don't have a site. They're not allowed to have one. The member from Sudbury tabled a motion calling for overdose services in his riding. The member from Peterborough, a member from the government, tabled a petition in support of a site in his riding. The Gilbert Centre in Barrie has also asked for a site. And we have not even touched on the First Nations that have declared a state of emergency over this crisis. So many communities across Ontario are in desperate need of these sites, because it is killing our friends, our family members, our loved ones.

The sites that were approved experienced funding delays that were preventing them from hiring staff and providing these life-saving services. People who use drugs have had to fight this government, and the Liberal government before them, just to be able to live. Instead of putting up more barriers, this government needs to value the lives of people who use drugs, and listen to them, listen to their lived experiences, listen to the experts—like the 410 care providers and researchers who signed an open letter to the Minister of Health and Long-Term Care and to Premier Ford, asking the Ontario government to ensure that Ontarians have access to high-dose injectable hydromorphone.

As Dr. Ahmed Bayoumi, on behalf of the Providers for Public Listing of High-dose Injectable Hydromorphone, who also presented before the committee, said, "The

opioid crisis has been called the defining health crisis of our time.... There is a strong consensus among care providers, public health officials and researchers that ensuring access to high-dose injectable hydromorphone is the most important next step in addressing opioid overdose-related deaths.” He goes on to say that “this bill, which focuses only on suing opioid manufacturers,” while it’s a “positive step ... these processes will take time,” time that we don’t have. “Suing manufacturers will not address the toxic supply of drugs. More immediate action is needed....”

In fact, I think what we need, really, is an entire overhaul of how the Ontario government addresses drugs and drug use. We need a new way to do drug policy.

Recently I met a physician, Dr. Mehta, who works on addiction medicine at Women’s College Hospital. He’s a constituent of mine. He stopped me on the street, actually, to talk to me about it. He reminded me that SARS almost shut down Toronto, and the health care system was on full-throttle precautions. In Canada, three people died. For comparison, in the overdose crisis, three people are dying every day.

Again, for perspective: We are, in this House, 124 members. We’ve been sitting for six weeks. Imagine if, during the six-week period, three members died every day. The entire House would be empty. That’s the scale of the crisis, and we’re not doing anything about it. If it was any other illness that was killing people at this rate, there would be an immediate task force set up. It would be deemed a public health emergency and funding would be flowing, no questions asked. Why are we treating drug users and addictions differently? It is a health issue.

Finally, I want to close today with the presentation from Zoë Dodd from the Toronto Overdose Prevention Society. Here is part of what she said before the committee. For the last number of years, she has been heavily involved in addressing the overdose crisis, working front-line in harm reduction supporting people in Toronto. This is what she said:

Toronto OPS “formed in 2017 as a response to the lack of government action on the overdose crisis and were responsible for the opening and operating of two un-sanctioned overdose prevention sites that ran illegally in Moss Park and Parkdale.” They were part of the overdose task force, which has not met since 2018, despite the overdose crisis raging on unabated, taking the lives of thousands of Ontarians.

Zoë goes on to say, “I have witnessed first-hand the devastating impact of state neglect regarding this crisis, feeling it both professionally and personally. I cannot tell you how many people I have known and who I have supported in my work who have died. I have lost count. I attend more funerals than celebrations, and I say, ‘I’m sorry for your loss’ almost every day. This last week alone, I have been to two memorials for friends and colleagues who have died. In just over two years in this province we have gone from two people dying a day to four. Majority of these ... overdose deaths [are] related to illicit fentanyl.

“Seeking support for substance use within the current treatment system can be a challenging experience. Long

wait times, lack of diversity in programming and models, lack of evidence-based programs, limited access in rural and remote communities, limited access in high-density urban areas, and cost, are many of the barriers. The drug treatment system should have regulations, standards and oversight. It does not. There should be options that are non-abstinence-based, culturally safe, and cultural programs, LGBTQ2S, gender-specific, and government needs to support this system in transformation with resources, funding, and bring it into the publicly funded and administered system.

“The newly proposed centre of excellence does not, by all accounts, have funding or resources attached to it....”

She goes on to say, “We are living in unprecedented times. The urgency has long since passed. We are now years into this crisis that went from 867 deaths in 2016 to 1,473 in 2018—a 70% increase. This crisis is one fuelled by a tainted drug supply of illicit fentanyl and carfentanil, and without the harm reduction measures that we currently have in place—supervised consumption services, overdose prevention sites, naloxone distribution—double the amount of people would be dead. Communities are desperate to implement these measures with urgency. We need an emergency response that helps to expand these services. Drug-related emergency room visits are continuing to climb, and our overdose death rate is going to surpass British Columbia’s by the end of this year.

“People on the ground are sick of begging for a proper response. We are demanding one....”

“We are in an emergency, and this bill does nothing to help us get out of it. This is a distraction and not a concrete solution. Trying to recover money from pharma takes years and there is no guarantee” in this legislation “that those funds would be used adequately” and would be funnelled into addictions care.

**1640**

Speaker, we are in an emergency. It’s time that the government actually acted like it. I couldn’t agree more with Zoë. It’s beyond time that the government acts like we’re in a crisis.

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

**Mr. Mike Schreiner:** I rise for third reading of Bill 116, the Foundations for Promoting and Protecting Mental Health and Addictions Services Act, 2019.

Speaker, I want to make the case that mental health is health and it should be treated as such. That’s why I will support the establishment of a Mental Health and Addictions Centre of Excellence, because we must integrate mental health with our broader health care system.

Right now, thousands of Ontarians are caught between long wait times for publicly funded therapists and the high cost to access private therapists. Children, especially, face long wait times—18 months or longer—to access mental health services.

I hope this centre can break down some of the silos that people are experiencing in the mental health services sector. But to do this, we must make sure that this centre is not just symbolic; for real action to happen, this centre

needs to be backed with proper funding for mental health and addictions. Lack of funding for mental health services puts pressure on and increases costs for our justice system, social services and health care.

I will repeat my concern that funding for mental health was actually reduced this year compared to the 2018 budget by \$335 million. If we want to tackle the mental health crisis, we must properly fund mental health services now, not stretch it over the next 10 years. That's why, although I'll be voting for Bill 116, I continue to call on the government to increase investments in mental health and addictions services.

I also support pursuing strong action, and legal action in particular, against opioid manufacturers. But let's not forget that right now there are caps on supervised consumption sites in Ontario. I'm thankful that in my community in Guelph the community health centre is operating a consumption and treatment services site that saves lives.

I ask the government to not only take legal action against opioid manufacturers but also lift the caps on harm reduction sites so that people's lives in communities across Ontario can be saved. We saw a 70% increase in opioid-related deaths between 2016 and 2018. We have a public health emergency, and the government needs to declare it and act accordingly.

Speaker, I want to mention that I was inspired by a young constituent in my riding by the name of Noah Irvine, who lost both of his parents to the mental health crisis. He has been advocating for a ministry of mental health and addictions. As a matter of fact, I want to thank the member from Nickel Belt, who hosted him at a news conference right here at Queen's Park to share his story.

I do want to acknowledge that the government has put forward an associate minister. These steps are important because there is broad recognition that the current mental health system is fragmented and difficult to navigate. It leaves people in emergency rooms and on waiting lists rather than getting the timely access to care that they need.

There are solutions available to us. In 2010, the Select Committee on Mental Health and Addictions released their final report, with 23 recommendations. In fact, the province has conducted at least 16 reports on reforming mental health care since 1983. It's my hope that we can begin moving forward on these recommendations, because for far too long they've been collecting dust somewhere on a shelf. There are recommendations in the report that don't even cost that much money, such as reforming privacy laws and improving the legislation on involuntary treatment.

Other recommendations from the select committee include better supports that will help our judicial system. For example, the government could be creating more 24/7 mobile crisis intervention teams, increasing the availability of court mental health workers, providing core services to the incarcerated population and better supports for people being discharged.

As the former police chief in Guelph Jeff DeRuyter said, we cannot arrest our way out of the mental health and

addictions crisis. In fact, I would like to see the government develop a complete, comprehensive and well-funded strategy for mental health and addictions, one that includes:

- sufficient and sustainable funding for mental health and addictions services;

- changes to the system to better protect the most vulnerable;

- a real effort to confront the opioid crisis;

- improvements to access to culturally appropriate services and removing systemic barriers to services;

- investments in supportive, social and affordable housing;

- investments in combatting poverty and not changing the definition to access ODSP moving forward; and

- a focus on care and supports for Indigenous nations.

In closing, I hope all members of this House can work together to ensure that we have a proper system that is well funded to provide people with access to the treatment and support they need, because mental health is health.

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

**Hon. Doug Downey:** This legislation enables the government to get some justice for the damage caused to our fellow Ontarians who became addicted to opioids. Bill 116 will support our efforts to hold opioid manufacturers and wholesalers a little bit accountable for some of the harm they caused our communities. That's why this bill includes the Opioid Damages and Health Care Costs Recovery Act.

As recent court rulings in the United States have found, the opioid epidemic is in part rooted in the over-prescription of pharmaceutical drugs. Just this past August, a judge in Oklahoma ruled that Johnson and Johnson had engaged in false and misleading marketing regarding the safety and efficacy of opioids. The judge ordered Johnson and Johnson to pay the state of Oklahoma US\$572 million for damages caused by the company.

Too many communities, big and small, across Ontario are facing tragic losses, injuries, addictions and illnesses perpetuated by opioid manufacturers and wholesalers. This epidemic is taking lives and livelihoods. It's robbing families of their loved ones. It's costing our economy in terms of lost productivity, long- and short-term disability and value of work due to people dying too soon. It's stealing money from our health care system for in-patient hospitalizations, emergency department visits, specialist treatment for opioid use disorder, physician time and drug costs. It's costing our criminal justice system in police work, courtrooms and corrections and expenses for crimes, partially or wholly because of substance abuse.

The Opioid Damages and Health Care Costs Recovery Act would help us recoup past, present and future health care costs due to opioid-related disease, injury or illness. This legislation would also help our government sue opioid manufacturers and wholesalers for their alleged wrongdoing.

The act would also create a series of special rules to assist the litigation process and support Ontario's

participation in a national class action lawsuit launched by British Columbia in 2018 against more than 40 opioid manufacturers and wholesalers. BC launched this lawsuit on behalf of provincial, territorial and federal governments. The lawsuit alleges that companies marketed opioids as safer and less addictive than other medications when they were not. The BC-based national class action advances the issues on behalf of all provinces, territories and the federal government.

I want to be clear that this government would invest any award from this litigation directly into front-line mental health and addictions services. We are standing up for individuals, families and communities that have been affected by this terrible opioid crisis across our province.

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

**M<sup>me</sup> France Gélinas:** I'm happy to be able to put a few minutes on the record on the third reading of Bill 116. Basically, Bill 116 has two sections. The first one is to create the Mental Health and Addictions Centre of Excellence, and the second part is, like the Attorney General was talking about, cost recovery for the opioid crisis.

As the Minister of Health mentioned, herself, myself and many other MPPs worked on the Select Committee on Mental Health and Addictions. The Select Committee on Mental Health and Addictions was actually a recommendation that had been made by the now Minister of Health, who was in opposition at the time. It was accepted. We worked on this report for over a year and a half, and it was tabled in this Legislature in 2010. The number one recommendation from the Select Committee on Mental Health and Addictions was the creation of Mental Health and Addictions Ontario.

1650

Basically, what Mental Health and Addictions Ontario was all about was to give mental health and addictions a home. We still have over 10 different ministries who offer mental health and addictions services or programs. Right now, we have 440 children's mental health agencies. We have 330 for community mental health, we have 150 for substance abuse treatment and we have 50 problem gambling centres.

Yet no matter where you are in Ontario, people are falling through the cracks. Young children needing mental health services are put on 18-month-long wait-lists before they will ever get any sort of help. During that 18-month period, not only will the child get discouraged, lose hope, get bullied in school, but the family has a good chance of falling apart. When you see your child in need, you try your best to help him or her, but we are not mental health experts. Then conflicts arise within the couple, and chances are that by the time the first appointment with the children's mental health service is finally there, Mom and Dad won't be together anymore.

We have to do better. I could go on and on and on as to the failings of our mental health and addictions system, and the catastrophic outcome it has for the people who need that care.

When I saw the bill, it was a step in the right direction. We are giving mental health and addictions a home. We are making an agency responsible for making sure that the best practice that exists—because we are good at providing for mental health and addictions. It's just the system that is not good.

You have centres of excellence in community mental health in Ottawa, you have centres of excellence for children in Thunder Bay, and you have a little jewel of excellence in the southwest. But none of these best practices are identified, are rolled out province-wide, are available to all of us. You take your chances. You don't know, when you get sick, that the system is not there to help you, and it's not when you are sick and in need that it's a really good time to try to figure it out: "Oh, yes, there is a very good addictions program in Kap, but I happen to live in Windsor." Nobody would know that. This is what I hope the new centre of excellence in mental health and addictions will do.

But you see, Speaker, the demand is so huge. We have agencies that have been flat-funded for so many years. We've had workers within the mental health and addictions system who haven't seen an increase in pay in over a decade, and when they did see an increase in pay, it was 1%. The system has a hard time to recruit and retain a stable workforce, because there hasn't been investment in our mental health and addictions centre, although we need to do so much more.

This bill will bring us under Ontario Health. Right now, we have the Ministry of Health. Under the Ministry of Health is Ontario Health. Ontario Health is responsible for six areas of our health care system. They are responsible for hospitals, long-term care, home and community care, mental health and addictions, and primary care, as well as palliative care. Those six areas of our health care system are under Ontario Health.

The centre for excellence in mental health and addictions will be under—Ministry of Health, then Ontario Health, and then we will have the centre for excellence.

I go through all of this formatting so that everybody understands that the centre will be placed under an agency that has a limited mandate under the Ministry of Health.

Like my colleagues have said, as well as people outside of the House, the best practices in mental health are often based on the social determinants of health. Think a little bit about Maslow's hierarchy of needs. Maslow's hierarchy of needs tells you that food and shelter are at the top. Unfortunately for many people who live with addiction, they don't have a home; they are food-insecure. If you don't have a home, if you are food-insecure, it is almost impossible for you to get better from your addiction, for your mental health, because we're all human beings, and for human beings to be healthy, we need to have security of food and shelter. In order for any strategies to be effective, to bring out the end result that we want, where people will have healthy mental health and will have help with their addictions, you need to put in a social-determinants-of-health lens, but none of that is in the bill. And the agency is housed—it's underneath an

agency that doesn't even cover the entire Ministry of Health. When we were in committee, I tried to put amendments in there that would say, "Let's make sure we give them the mandate to work within the lens of the social determinants of health," but that was voted down.

We know that the burden of mental illness and addiction is not equal throughout. If you look at our First Nations community, the Indigenous community, they often face double the rate of suicide than others, which is a very sad outcome of untreated mental illness—often; there are other reasons, of course. It's the same thing with addiction. When I asked that the Mental Health and Addictions Centre of Excellence have a focus on Indigenous people, it was voted down; same thing when we asked to make sure that children's mental health was going to be covered.

Did you know, Speaker, that for decades and decades, children's mental health was never considered part of health; it was considered kids that had behaviour problems. They were bad kids. They were not kids who were sick; they were kids who were bad, so they were under the Ministry of Community and Social Services. Those kids were sick, like anybody else who has a mental illness is sick and needs our health care system. Finally, we brought that in. But you have to realize that we're dealing with 440 children's mental health agencies. All of those have always been under the ministries of children and social services and children and youth, but never under the Ministry of Health. They asked for a specific strategy for children, but that was also voted down.

And then, when we talked about equity—today we asked questions about discrimination against people of colour and racialized people, who often have more barriers facing their access to mental health and addictions. That was also voted down. I know that the Solicitor General said in the House that they intend to take any money that they get from participating in a class action lawsuit against the opioid manufacturers and reinvest that money in care and support in the strategy for mental health and addictions. But Speaker, I have been here long enough to know that it doesn't matter what a government says; it is what's in the bill that counts. Those have to be put in the bill so that if this government is not there when those lawsuits are finally settled, the resources, the money we get out of the class action settlement, will actually be used for mental health and addictions. The NDP put that forward as an amendment. All of those were voted down.

We are in support of this bill. We will support it. We will vote in favour of this bill. We want the Mental Health and Addictions Centre of Excellence to be there. We had the opportunity to do so much better. Even in the select committee report, we have gone through and given examples of what the strategic goals had to be, what the guiding principles should be, and all of this was voted

down. We will vote in favour of the bill, but there are opportunities lost that I'm sure we will all regret.

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

**Mr. John Fraser:** Mr. Speaker, I'm cognizant of the time, and I'll be brief.

I will be supporting the bill, as my colleagues will. We definitely need a centre of excellence in mental health. That will be something that will be helpful. It's not the whole solution. With regard to joining the opioid suits, it's a good idea. It's important that we do it.

There are two points that I want to make in this debate:

(1) With regard to addictions and mental health, the concept of harm reduction is a central part of saving people's lives and getting them healthy and unaddicted, and if it's not in balance in this government's proposals going forward, people will unnecessarily lose their lives. You have to save them before you can help them sometimes.

(2) Just like with smoking cessation, the proceeds of any suit, whether it's smoking cessation or whether it's against companies with regard to the opioid crisis—the monies that come from that, a good portion of that has to be dedicated for those services people need—has to be.

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

Pursuant to the order of the House dated November 28, 2019, I'm now required to put the question.

Ms. Elliott has moved third reading of 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? Carried.

Be it resolved that the bill do now pass and be entitled as in the motion.

*Third reading agreed to.*

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

**Hon. Paul Calandra:** No further business.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls):** Government House leader.

**Hon. Paul Calandra:** Sorry, sorry. I move adjournment.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls):** The government House leader moves adjournment of the House. Is it the pleasure of the House that his motion carry? Carried.

**M<sup>me</sup> France Gélinas:** On division.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls):** Carried, on division. All right.

Therefore, this House now stands adjourned until tomorrow morning at 9 o'clock.

*The House adjourned at 1703.*

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<b>Elliott, Hon. / L'hon. Christine (PC)</b>	Newmarket—Aurora	Deputy Premier / Vice-première ministre Minister of Health / Ministre de la Santé
<b>Fedeli, Hon. / L'hon. Victor (PC)</b>	Nipissing	Chair of Cabinet / Président du Conseil des ministres Minister of Economic Development, Job Creation and Trade / Ministre du Développement économique, de la Création d'emplois et du Commerce
Fee, Amy (PC)	Kitchener South—Hespeler / Kitchener-Sud—Hespeler	Deputy Government House Leader / Leader parlementaire adjointe du gouvernement
Fife, Catherine (NDP)	Waterloo	
<b>Ford, Hon. / L'hon. Doug (PC)</b>	Etobicoke North / Etobicoke-Nord	Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs / Ministre des Affaires intergouvernementales Premier / Premier ministre
Fraser, John (LIB)	Ottawa South / Ottawa-Sud	

<b>Member and Party / Député(e) et parti</b>	<b>Constituency / Circonscription</b>	<b>Other responsibilities / Autres responsabilités</b>
<b>French, Jennifer K. (NDP)</b>	Oshawa	Third Deputy Chair of the Committee of the Whole House / Troisième vice-présidente du comité plénier de l'Assemblée législative
<b>Fullerton, Hon. / L'hon. Merrilee (PC)</b>	Kanata—Carleton	Minister of Long-Term Care / Ministre des Soins de longue durée
Gates, Wayne (NDP)	Niagara Falls	
Gélinas, France (NDP)	Nickel Belt	
Ghamari, Goldie (PC)	Carleton	
Gill, Parm (PC)	Milton	
Glover, Chris (NDP)	Spadina—Fort York	
Gravelle, Michael (LIB)	Thunder Bay—Superior North / Thunder Bay—Supérieur-Nord	
<b>Gretzky, Lisa (NDP)</b>	Windsor West / Windsor-Ouest	First Deputy Chair of the Committee of the Whole House / Première vice-présidente du comité plénier de l'Assemblée
<b>Hardeman, Hon. / L'hon. Ernie (PC)</b>	Oxford	Minister of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs / Ministre de l'Agriculture, de l'Alimentation et des Affaires rurales
Harden, Joel (NDP)	Ottawa Centre / Ottawa-Centre	
Harris, Mike (PC)	Kitchener—Conestoga	
Hassan, Faisal (NDP)	York South—Weston / York-Sud- Weston	
<b>Hatfield, Percy (NDP)</b>	Windsor—Tecumseh	Second Deputy Chair of the Committee of the Whole House / Deuxième vice-président du comité plénier de l'Assemblée législative
Hillier, Randy (IND)	Lanark—Frontenac—Kingston	
Hogarth, Christine (PC)	Etobicoke—Lakeshore	
Horwath, Andrea (NDP)	Hamilton Centre / Hamilton-Centre	Leader, Official Opposition / Chef de l'opposition officielle
Hunter, Mitzie (LIB)	Scarborough—Guildwood	
<b>Jones, Hon. / L'hon. Sylvia (PC)</b>	Dufferin—Caledon	Solicitor General / Solliciteure générale
Kanapathi, Logan (PC)	Markham—Thornhill	
Karahalios, Belinda C. (PC)	Cambridge	
Karpoche, Bhutla (NDP)	Parkdale—High Park	
Ke, Vincent (PC)	Don Valley North / Don Valley-Nord	
Kernaghan, Terence (NDP)	London North Centre / London- Centre-Nord	
Khanjin, Andrea (PC)	Barrie—Innisfil	
Kramp, Daryl (PC)	Hastings—Lennox and Addington	
Kusendova, Natalia (PC)	Mississauga Centre / Mississauga- Centre	
<b>Lecce, Hon. / L'hon. Stephen (PC)</b>	King—Vaughan	Minister of Education / Ministre de l'Éducation
Lindo, Laura Mae (NDP)	Kitchener Centre / Kitchener-Centre	
<b>MacLeod, Hon. / L'hon. Lisa (PC)</b>	Nepean	Minister of Heritage, Sport, Tourism and Culture Industries / ministre des Industries du patrimoine, du sport, du tourisme et de la culture
Mamakwa, Sol (NDP)	Kiiwetinoong	
Mantha, Michael (NDP)	Algoma—Manitoulin	
Martin, Robin (PC)	Eglinton—Lawrence	
Martow, Gila (PC)	Thornhill	
McDonell, Jim (PC)	Stormont—Dundas—South Glengarry	
McKenna, Jane (PC)	Burlington	
<b>McNaughton, Hon. / L'hon. Monte (PC)</b>	Lambton—Kent—Middlesex	Minister of Labour, Training and Skills Development / Ministre du Travail, de la Formation et du Développement des compétences
Miller, Norman (PC)	Parry Sound—Muskoka	
Miller, Paul (NDP)	Hamilton East—Stoney Creek / Hamilton-Est—Stoney Creek	
Mitas, Christina Maria (PC)	Scarborough Centre / Scarborough- Centre	
Monteith-Farrell, Judith (NDP)	Thunder Bay—Atikokan	
Morrison, Suze (NDP)	Toronto Centre / Toronto-Centre	
<b>Mulroney, Hon. / L'hon. Caroline (PC)</b>	York—Simcoe	Minister of Francophone Affairs / Ministre des Affaires francophones Minister of Transportation / Ministre des Transports
Natyshak, Taras (NDP)	Essex	
<b>Nicholls, Rick (PC)</b>	Chatham-Kent—Leamington	Chair of the Committee of the Whole House / Président du comité plénier de l'Assemblée
Oosterhoff, Sam (PC)	Niagara West / Niagara-Ouest	Deputy Speaker / Vice-président

Member and Party / Député(e) et parti	Constituency / Circonscription	Other responsibilities / Autres responsabilités
Pang, Billy (PC)	Markham—Unionville	
Park, Lindsey (PC)	Durham	
Parsa, Michael (PC)	Aurora—Oak Ridges—Richmond Hill	
Pettapiece, Randy (PC)	Perth—Wellington	
<b>Phillips, Hon. / L'hon. Rod (PC)</b>	Ajax	Minister of Finance / Ministre des Finances
Piccini, David (PC)	Northumberland—Peterborough South / Northumberland—Peterborough-Sud	
Rakocevic, Tom (NDP)	Humber River—Black Creek	
Rasheed, Kaleed (PC)	Mississauga East—Cooksville / Mississauga-Est—Cooksville	
<b>Rickford, Hon. / L'hon. Greg (PC)</b>	Kenora—Rainy River	Minister of Energy, Northern Development and Mines / Ministre de l'Énergie, du Développement du Nord et des Mines Minister of Indigenous Affairs / Ministre des Affaires autochtones
Roberts, Jeremy (PC)	Ottawa West—Nepean / Ottawa- Ouest—Nepean	
<b>Romano, Hon. / L'hon. Ross (PC)</b>	Sault Ste. Marie	Minister of Colleges and Universities / Ministre des Collèges et Universités
Sabawy, Sheref (PC)	Mississauga—Erin Mills	
Sandhu, Amarjot (PC)	Brampton West / Brampton-Ouest	
<b>Sarkaria, Hon. / L'hon. Prabmeet Singh (PC)</b>	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	
<b>Scott, Hon. / L'hon. Laurie (PC)</b>	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	
<b>Smith, Hon. / L'hon. Todd (PC)</b>	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	
<b>Surma, Hon. / L'hon. Kinga (PC)</b>	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	
<b>Thompson, Hon. / L'hon. Lisa M. (PC)</b>	Huron—Bruce	Minister of Government and Consumer Services / Ministre des Services gouvernementaux et des Services aux consommateurs
<b>Tibollo, Hon. / L'hon. Michael A. (PC)</b>	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	
<b>Walker, Hon. / L'hon. Bill (PC)</b>	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	

<b>Member and Party / Député(e) et parti</b>	<b>Constituency / Circonscription</b>	<b>Other responsibilities / Autres responsabilités</b>
<b>Yakabuski, Hon. / L'hon. John (PC)</b>	Renfrew—Nipissing—Pembroke	Minister of Natural Resources and Forestry / Ministre des Richesses naturelles et des Forêts
Yarde, Kevin (NDP)	Brampton North / Brampton-Nord	
<b>Yurek, Hon. / L'hon. Jeff (PC)</b>	Elgin—Middlesex—London	Minister of the Environment, Conservation and Parks / Ministre de l'Environnement, de la Protection de la nature et des Parcs
Vacant	Orléans	
Vacant	Ottawa—Vanier	

**STANDING COMMITTEES OF THE LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY  
COMITÉS PERMANENTS DE L'ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE**

**Standing Committee on Estimates / Comité permanent des budgets des dépenses**

Chair / Président: Peter Tabuns  
Vice-Chair / Vice-président: Wayne Gates  
Stan Cho, Wayne Gates  
Randy Hillier, Andrea Khanjin  
Jane McKenna, Judith Monteith-Farrell  
Lindsey Park, Michael Parsa  
Randy Pettapiece, Peter Tabuns  
Effie J. Triantafilopoulos  
Committee Clerk / Greffier: Julia Douglas

**Standing Committee on Finance and Economic Affairs /  
Comité permanent des finances et des affaires économiques**

Chair / Président: Amarjot Sandhu  
Vice-Chair / Vice-président: Jeremy Roberts  
Ian Arthur, Sol Mamakwa  
David Piccini, Kaleed Rasheed  
Jeremy Roberts, Amarjot Sandhu  
Sandy Shaw, Donna Skelly  
Dave Smith  
Committee Clerk / Greffière: Julia Douglas

**Standing Committee on General Government / Comité  
permanent des affaires gouvernementales**

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Vice-Chair / Vice-président: Daryl Kramp  
Robert Bailey, Jessica Bell  
Goldie Ghamari, Chris Glover  
Mike Harris, Daryl Kramp  
Sheref Sabawy, Amarjot Sandhu  
Mike Schreiner, Jennifer (Jennie) Stevens  
Daisy Wai  
Committee Clerk / Greffière: Jocelyn McCauley

**Standing Committee on Government Agencies / Comité  
permanent des organismes gouvernementaux**

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Vice-Chair / Vice-président: Taras Natyshak  
Will Bouma, Lorne Coe  
Rudy Cuzzetto, Parm Gill  
Taras Natyshak, Rick Nicholls  
Marit Stiles, Vijay Thanigasalam  
John Vanthof  
Committee Clerk / Greffière: Jocelyn McCauley

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Vice-Chair / Vice-présidente: Effie J. Triantafilopoulos  
Roman Baber, Will Bouma  
Lorne Coe, Parm Gill  
Natalia Kusendova, Suze Morrison  
Gurratan Singh, Effie J. Triantafilopoulos  
Kevin Yarde  
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permanent de l'Assemblée législative**

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Vice-Chair / Vice-président: Vijay Thanigasalam  
Rima Berns-McGown, Michael Coteau  
Faisal Hassan, Logan Kanapathi  
Jim McDonell, Christina Maria Mitas  
Sam Oosterhoff, Kaleed Rasheed  
Sara Singh, Donna Skelly  
Vijay Thanigasalam  
Committee Clerk / Greffière: Valerie Quioc Lim

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Norman Miller, Michael Parsa  
Nina Tangri  
Committee Clerk / Greffier: Christopher Tyrell

**Standing Committee on Regulations and Private Bills / Comité  
permanent des règlements et des projets de loi d'intérêt privé**

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Vice-Chair / Vice-président: Will Bouma  
Deepak Anand, Toby Barrett  
Will Bouma, Stephen Crawford  
Mitzie Hunter, Laura Mae Lindo  
Gila Martow, Paul Miller  
Billy Pang, Dave Smith  
Jamie West  
Committee Clerk / Greffier: Eric Rennie

**Standing Committee on Social Policy / Comité permanent de  
la politique sociale**

Chair / Présidente: Natalia Kusendova  
Vice-Chair / Vice-président: Aris Babikian  
Aris Babikian, Jeff Burch  
Amy Fee, Michael Gravelle  
Joel Harden, Mike Harris  
Christine Hogarth, Belinda C. Karahalios  
Terence Kernaghan, Natalia Kusendova  
Robin Martin  
Committee Clerk / Greffier: Eric Rennie