

Legislative
Assembly
of Ontario



Assemblée
législative
de l'Ontario

**Official Report
of Debates
(Hansard)**

No. 156

**Journal
des débats
(Hansard)**

N^o 156

1st Session
42nd Parliament
Thursday
12 March 2020

1^{re} session
42^e législature
Jeudi
12 mars 2020

Speaker: Honourable Ted Arnott
Clerk: Todd Decker

Président : L'honorable Ted Arnott
Greffier : Todd Decker

Hansard on the Internet

Hansard and other documents of the Legislative Assembly can be on your personal computer within hours after each sitting. The address is:

Le Journal des débats sur Internet

L'adresse pour faire paraître sur votre ordinateur personnel le Journal et d'autres documents de l'Assemblée législative en quelques heures seulement après la séance est :

<https://www.ola.org/>

Index inquiries

Reference to a cumulative index of previous issues may be obtained by calling the Hansard Reporting Service indexing staff at 416-325-7400.

Renseignements sur l'index

Adressez vos questions portant sur des numéros précédents du Journal des débats au personnel de l'index, qui vous fourniront des références aux pages dans l'index cumulatif, en composant le 416-325-7400.

Hansard Reporting and Interpretation Services
Room 500, West Wing, Legislative Building
111 Wellesley Street West, Queen's Park
Toronto ON M7A 1A2
Telephone 416-325-7400; fax 416-325-7430
Published by the Legislative Assembly of Ontario



Service du Journal des débats et de l'interprétation
Salle 500, aile ouest, Édifice du Parlement
111, rue Wellesley ouest, Queen's Park
Toronto ON M7A 1A2
Téléphone, 416-325-7400; télécopieur, 416-325-7430
Publié par l'Assemblée législative de l'Ontario

ISSN 1180-2987

CONTENTS / TABLE DES MATIÈRES

Thursday 12 March 2020 / Jeudi 12 mars 2020

ORDERS OF THE DAY / ORDRE DU JOUR

Rebuilding Consumer Confidence Act, 2020, Bill 159, Ms. Thompson / Loi de 2020 visant à rétablir la confiance chez les consommateurs, projet de loi 159, Mme Thompson

Mr. Wayne Gates	7697
Mr. Terence Kernaghan	7700
Mr. Logan Kanapathi	7700
Mr. Terence Kernaghan	7700
Mrs. Belinda C. Karahalios	7701
Mr. Paul Miller	7701
Mrs. Nina Tangri	7701
Mr. Terence Kernaghan	7704
Mr. Amarjot Sandhu	7704
Mr. Terence Kernaghan	7705
Mr. Sheref Sabawy	7705
Mr. Jeff Burch	7705
Ms. Christine Hogarth	7705
Miss Monique Taylor	7706
Second reading debate deemed adjourned	7707

MEMBERS' STATEMENTS / DÉCLARATIONS DES DÉPUTÉES ET DÉPUTÉS

COVID-19

Ms. Rima Berns-McGown	7707
-----------------------------	------

Baku massacre

Mr. Aris Babikian	7708
-------------------------	------

Indigenous public health

Mr. Guy Bourgouin	7708
-------------------------	------

Seniors

Mr. Mike Harris	7708
-----------------------	------

COVID-19

Mr. Jeff Burch	7708
----------------------	------

Debate tournament

Mr. Vincent Ke	7709
----------------------	------

Employment standards

Ms. Catherine Fife	7709
--------------------------	------

Hospital funding

Ms. Lindsey Park	7709
------------------------	------

Flooding

Mr. Rick Nicholls	7710
-------------------------	------

INTRODUCTION OF VISITORS / PRÉSENTATION DES VISITEUSES ET VISITEURS

Ms. Marit Stiles	7710
------------------------	------

Mr. Vincent Ke	7710
Ms. Jessica Bell	7710
Hon. Bill Walker	7710
Miss Monique Taylor	7710
Ms. Natalia Kusendova	7710
Mr. Stan Cho	7710

QUESTION PERIOD / PÉRIODE DE QUESTIONS

COVID-19

Ms. Andrea Horwath	7710
Hon. Merrilee Fullerton	7710

Employment standards

Ms. Andrea Horwath	7711
Hon. Merrilee Fullerton	7711
Hon. Monte McNaughton	7712

Health care

Mr. Gurratan Singh	7712
Hon. Merrilee Fullerton	7712

Ontario Provincial Police

Ms. Jane McKenna	7713
Hon. Sylvia Jones	7713

COVID-19

Ms. Marit Stiles	7713
Hon. Merrilee Fullerton	7713
Hon. Stephen Lecce	7714

COVID-19

Mr. John Fraser	7714
Hon. Paul Calandra	7714
Hon. Stephen Lecce	7714

Skills training

Mr. Parm Gill	7714
Hon. Monte McNaughton	7715

Licence plates

Ms. Jennifer K. French	7715
Hon. Paul Calandra	7715
Hon. Lisa M. Thompson	7715

Employment standards

Mr. Mike Schreiner	7715
Hon. Paul Calandra	7716

Anti-bullying initiatives

Mr. Stan Cho	7716
Hon. Paul Calandra	7716

Winter highway maintenance

Mr. Guy Bourgouin	7717
Hon. Kinga Surma	7717

Natural gas	
Mr. Randy Pettapiece	7717
Hon. Bill Walker	7717
Flooding	
Mr. Percy Hatfield.....	7718
Hon. Paul Calandra	7718
Accessibility for persons with disabilities	
Mr. Logan Kanapathi	7719
Hon. Raymond Sung Joon Cho.....	7719
Northern highway improvement	
Mr. Jamie West	7719
Hon. Kinga Surma.....	7719
Human trafficking	
Mr. Amarjot Sandhu	7720
Hon. Sylvia Jones.....	7720
Legislative pages	
The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott)	7720
Private members' public business	
The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott)	7720
Notice of dissatisfaction	
The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott)	7721

DEFERRED VOTES / VOTES DIFFÉRÉS

Supply Act, 2020, Bill 181, Mr. Bethlenfalvy / Loi de crédits de 2020, projet de loi 181, M. Bethlenfalvy	
Second reading agreed to	7721
Supply Act, 2020, Bill 181, Mr. Bethlenfalvy / Loi de crédits de 2020, projet de loi 181, M. Bethlenfalvy	
Third reading agreed to	7721

INTRODUCTION OF VISITORS / PRÉSENTATION DES VISITEUSES ET VISITEURS

Hon. Steve Clark	7721
------------------------	------

INTRODUCTION OF BILLS / DÉPÔT DES PROJETS DE LOI

Protecting Tenants and Strengthening Community Housing Act, 2020, Bill 184, Mr. Clark / Loi de 2020 visant la protection des locataires et le renforcement du logement communautaire, projet de loi 184, M. Clark	
First reading agreed to.....	7722
Hon. Steve Clark	7722
Vision Zero Strategy Act, 2020, Bill 185, Ms. Bell / Loi de 2020 sur la Stratégie Vision Zéro, projet de loi 185, Mme Bell	
First reading agreed to.....	7722
Ms. Jessica Bell.....	7722

STATEMENTS BY THE MINISTRY AND RESPONSES / DÉCLARATIONS MINISTÉRIELLES ET RÉPONSES

Affordable housing / Logements abordables

Hon. Steve Clark	7722
Ms. Suze Morrison	7723

PETITIONS / PÉTITIONS

Public transit

Mr. Peter Tabuns	7724
------------------------	------

Agri-food industry

Mr. Vincent Ke.....	7724
---------------------	------

Veterans memorial

Mr. Percy Hatfield.....	7725
-------------------------	------

Veterans memorial

Mrs. Nina Tangri.....	7725
-----------------------	------

Education funding

Ms. Jessica Bell.....	7725
-----------------------	------

Ontario economy

Mr. Aris Babikian.....	7725
------------------------	------

Long-term care

Mr. Kevin Yarde	7726
-----------------------	------

Services for persons with disabilities

Ms. Natalia Kusendova	7726
-----------------------------	------

Education funding

Ms. Sara Singh	7726
----------------------	------

Home care

Ms. Goldie Ghamari.....	7727
-------------------------	------

PRIVATE MEMBERS' PUBLIC BUSINESS / AFFAIRES D'INTÉRÊT PUBLIC ÉMANANT DES DÉPUTÉES ET DÉPUTÉS

Sikh Genocide Awareness Week Act, 2020, Bill 177, Mr. Singh / Loi de 2020 sur la Semaine de la sensibilisation au génocide des sikhs, projet de loi 177, M. Singh

Mr. Gurratan Singh	7727
Hon. Prabmeet Singh Sarkaria	7729
Ms. Rima Berns-McGown	7729
Mr. Amarjot Sandhu.....	7729
Ms. Andrea Horwath.....	7730
Mrs. Nina Tangri.....	7730
Mr. Kevin Yarde	7731
Mr. Parm Gill	7731
Ms. Sara Singh	7732
Mr. Gurratan Singh	7732

**Franco-Ontarian Emblem Amendment Act, 2020,
Bill 182, Ms. Kusendova / Loi de 2020 modifiant la
Loi sur l’emblème franco-ontarien, projet de loi
182, Mme Kusendova**

Mme Natalia Kusendova.....	7732
M. Guy Bourgouin.....	7734
Mme Goldie Ghamari.....	7734
M. Michael Mantha.....	7735
M. Sam Oosterhoff.....	7736
M. Joel Harden.....	7736
Mme Gila Martow.....	7737
M. Jamie West.....	7737
Mme Natalia Kusendova.....	7737

**Ditch the Switch Act, 2020, Bill 174, Mr. Paul Miller
/ Loi de 2020 pour remettre les pendules à l’heure,
projet de loi 174, M. Paul Miller**

Mr. Paul Miller.....	7738
Mr. Roman Baber.....	7739
Ms. Teresa J. Armstrong.....	7740
Mr. Joel Harden.....	7741
Ms. Suze Morrison.....	7741

Ms. Peggy Sattler.....	7742
Mr. Paul Miller.....	7742

**Sikh Genocide Awareness Week Act, 2020, Bill 177,
Mr. Singh / Loi de 2020 sur la Semaine de la
sensibilisation au génocide des sikhs, projet de loi
177, M. Singh**

Second reading agreed to.....	7742
-------------------------------	------

**Franco-Ontarian Emblem Amendment Act, 2020,
Bill 182, Ms. Kusendova / Loi de 2020 modifiant la
Loi sur l’emblème franco-ontarien, projet de loi
182, Mme Kusendova**

Second reading agreed to.....	7743
-------------------------------	------

**Ditch the Switch Act, 2020, Bill 174, Mr. Paul Miller
/ Loi de 2020 pour remettre les pendules à l’heure,
projet de loi 174, M. Paul Miller**

Second reading agreed to.....	7743
-------------------------------	------

House sittings

Hon. Paul Calandra.....	7743
Mr. Gilles Bisson.....	7744
Hon. Paul Calandra.....	7746
Motion agreed to.....	7747

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY
OF ONTARIO

Thursday 12 March 2020

ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE
DE L'ONTARIO

Jeudi 12 mars 2020

The House met at 0900.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Good morning. Let us pray.

Prayers/Prières.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

REBUILDING CONSUMER
CONFIDENCE ACT, 2020
LOI DE 2020 VISANT À RÉTABLIR
LA CONFIANCE CHEZ
LES CONSOMMATEURS

Resuming the debate adjourned on March 11, 2020, on the motion for second reading of the following bill:

Bill 159, An Act to amend various statutes in respect of consumer protection / Projet de loi 159, Loi modifiant diverses lois en ce qui concerne la protection du consommateur.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Further debate? The member for Niagara Falls.

Mr. Wayne Gates: Thank you very much. It's an interesting start to the morning, Mr. Speaker. I'm talking on Bill 159, and I'm going to be talking for about 20 minutes. For those who don't know, I was the critic that actually took on Tarion, going back a few years ago. But we want to start by saying, and we can all agree to this—we don't agree to a lot of things on both sides of the House, but I think we can agree to this—that buying a home is our biggest investment, and when you save to buy your home, you expect the home builder to make sure that it's built correctly.

I want, off the hop, to say there are a lot of great home builders in the province of Ontario. Unfortunately, in the province of Ontario, there are some that aren't so great, and they're the ones that we're talking about in this bill. When you buy your home, and you end up with mould, you end up with rats in your home, you end up with all kinds of issues around that particular home, what you shouldn't have to do is fight Tarion to protect you, because that's what they're there for. And they haven't done that for years, and we know that. This is strictly about protecting home builders.

Think about this, Mr. Speaker—because I know you're not here that long; you have somebody replace you in the mornings for a while. The developer who built the home is regulating himself, and what Tarion is doing is supporting the builder instead of what they're supposed to be mandated to do, and that is support the homeowner.

I can tell you, Mr. Speaker, and to my colleagues, those who are listening, that I'm from Niagara Falls; my riding is in Niagara Falls. But I also have Fort Erie—I have to say them all and I apologize for that, because if I don't, they'll say, "Well, he forgot about me." I represent Crystal Beach, which a lot of people are familiar with; Ridgeway; Niagara-on-the-Lake; Niagara Falls; Queenston; Virgil; Old Town. We have problems with our builders in my own riding. How do I know that? Because the homeowners come to me and say, "Gatesy, I got a problem. This is what's going on: leaky roofs."

Like I said, there's a section in one of my communities that is rat-infested because there was no insulation put into the homes. They were able to get into the homes or in through the attics. Think about that—after you've saved your entire life to buy a home. And now they can't get it fixed because they're arguing about it. It's absolutely wrong what's going on. The NDP asked the Auditor General for an independent investigation of Tarion, and the AG investigation confirmed what the NDP's suspicions were for a long time.

Think about this: We've been arguing in this House—I wouldn't say arguing; I guess that's not the right word; debating, I guess, is the right word, sometimes loudly—over a 1% increase to teachers, education workers, health care workers. Listen to this: Tarion executives took 30% to 60% bonuses for making the agency more lucrative—lucrative; it's an interesting word—meaning management benefited personally from turning down claims. Does that make sense to you?

I was trying to figure out what would be similar to that. It's really similar to WSIB, where they deem that you have a job that isn't there but then they cut your benefits. And we know what goes on with WSIB.

This is the one that really bothers me: Tarion re-licensed shady builders—that's in the report; that's what they call them—who were demonstrating problematic behaviour. Builders are getting away with not paying for costs incurred to resolve defects and Tarion is still re-licensing them.

So they get a number of complaints about a builder. That would tell me that there's a problem with that particular builder. I want to say that there's a lot of good builders in the province of Ontario, and there's a lot in Niagara that are good. But there are some that might not be as good, and they're re-licensing them even though they're causing problems. There are people buying their homes.

You cannot go on a website or anything and say, "Gatesy's Builders"—let's just use my name because it's

easier—“Gatesy’s Builders is not doing their job. They’re not building quality homes.” Yet if I go purchase a Gatesy home, there’s no way for me to know that he’s shady.

Mr. Terence Kernaghan: Gatesy’s not shady.

Mr. Wayne Gates: No, I know, but I’m just using my name. It’s easier. I don’t want to use a builder’s name. That wouldn’t be fair to them either.

Then the other one is: They have a board, which is fair. They’re a private organization; they have a board. But do you know what? It’s heavy with home builders, which means they regulate themselves. Would it not make sense—I’m asking the Speaker, as he’s nodding his head to me; I think he’s actually agreeing with me this morning, so it’s good. What I’m trying to say here is that you have a board that’s got mostly home builders on it and one homeowner. Would it not make sense to have a board that’s equal so that you can at least have that discussion? That would make sense to me. But, no, that doesn’t happen here.

I’m going to get into my formal part of my speech, because I saw this as I was going through all of the notes, and there are lots of notes here on this. I want to say to my colleagues—and, please, I know you guys are busy and you’ve got lots to do over there and we’re allowed to play on our phones now, but I want you to listen to this, because this is important. It’s important to all of us.

0910

Something happens—I haven’t been on that side yet, but I know it’s true, because I’ve seen the examples. We’re heading that way in a couple of years, by the way. I’m just letting you guys know. I’m giving you advice right now. This is why I’m concerned about this.

I’m to going read something that was said by a PC member on December 6, 2017. I’m going read it out for you so you can all hear it.

I’m trying to figure out what happens when you say something on this side and then you get elected to go to that side—I’m talking to the maintenance people here: Is there something different in the water on this side than in the water on that side?

Interjection.

Mr. Wayne Gates: There isn’t.

I can’t figure out why you say something over here, and then when you go over there it’s completely different.

I think it’s fair and I think it’s reasonable to quote somebody who said something here. It’s in Hansard. Everybody can take a look at it. I’d like to start by quoting something from December 6, 2017. This is coming from the PC caucus:

“The concerns of the PC caucus and many stakeholders who warned of the failure of this bill to address key issues in the industry it affects have gone unaddressed by the government”—meaning the Liberals. We all know how bad the Liberals were. We’ve got to give them credit. They were terrible. I’m going to say that right off the top. “It is only right for us at this point in time to point out some of these issues before the government proclaims this bill into legislation.”

That’s being said by the PCs. I want it to be clear who’s saying it.

“First and foremost, the portions of Bill 166”—that was a bill at the time—“that reform new home warranties in Ontario only reflect some of the outcomes of the Cunningham report. Justice Cunningham was commissioned by this government to look into Tarion and the administration of new home warranties. The minister at the time seemed to want to predetermine the review’s outcome when he said they expected the review to find Tarion doing a good job and meeting expectations of protecting consumers.” If I were allowed to say anything in this House, I would use some adjectives for that. “To say he missed the mark would have been an understatement.” Again, this is what the PCs are saying. “Justice Cunningham built an unassailable argument that Tarion was not doing its job and was beset by a persuasive conflict of loyalties arising from its structure.

“It was the only avenue for new home builders to be licensed and for consumers to receive compensation for shoddy building work”—shoddy building work. “As the administrative authority, Tarion had the majority of its board of directors composed of the same people it regulated, licensed and from whose common warranty fund it paid consumers who complained about the builders’ work.”

Again, I’m reading this from Hansard, said by a Conservative, and I just wish you’d listen, because it’s one of your colleagues. Maybe you can ask him after I’ve finished my presentation why he said this.

“Tarion wore too many hats, out of sight of the government”—think about that—“that for over a decade allowed Tarion to drift apart from government leadership and oversight. It was shielded from key accountability legislation, including such measures as the Auditor General’s oversight, which the government rejected again when they had the opportunity to insert it into Tarion’s governing legislation during the clause-by-clause.”

Again, this is being said by the Conservatives; not by me, not by the NDP.

“Tarion, like any other administrative authority within this ministry, mandates that businesses practising in the field it regulates become members and pay substantial fees to the regulator. Membership of Tarion is not by choice”—and for the new members of the PCs, I’m going to read that for you in case you guys don’t know that. “Membership of Tarion is not by choice and any agency with such a captive constituency should be made transparent and accountable.”

Madam Speaker, welcome.

As you will likely have come to the conclusion—and I kind of helped you along the way—that was from one of my friends who is currently a member of the PC caucus. It was from the member for Stormont–Dundas–South Glengarry, who is currently a sitting member of your government. That’s who said that.

So they’re on this side and they’re agreeing with the NDP, they’re agreeing with the AG on all the problems that we’ve got with Tarion, and we’re not protecting the home builders. Yet then they go on that side and all of a sudden the water is different. I don’t understand it.

This was a speech he gave when the previous Liberal government—and I've already said that the Liberals didn't do a very good job for 15 years. So it's clear that the PCs knew—I'm including all of the members who are here today—what was wrong and what needed to be fixed. They absolutely knew that. Like us, you have caucus meetings. I'm sure you talked about the bill with your caucus.

So let's see how this action matches up with their own words. The member says, and I quote—how many minutes have I got?

Mrs. Jennifer (Jennie) Stevens: Eight minutes.

Mr. Wayne Gates: Lots. I'm quoting what you guys have said, so you guys know there's a problem with Tarion. The problem is, quite frankly, that when I buy my home, I want it to be built right the first time. Yes, there may be some defects in it, but I shouldn't have to fight to get that compensation when I'm told I've got to pay into it to go.

This is a quote, by the way, Madam Speaker. It's not coming from me; it's a quote right out of Hansard: "First and foremost, the portions of Bill 166 that reform new home warranties in Ontario only reflect some of the outcomes of the Cunningham report." To date, the PCs have publicly said they will implement only 29 of Justice Cunningham's suggestions, yet they won't tell us—and think about this. My colleagues, listen to this, because you'll tell me after I do my 20 minutes. Madam Speaker, think about this: To date, the PCs have publicly said they will implement 29 of Justice Cunningham's suggestions. But listen to this part: Yet they won't tell us or the media—because you don't let media in a lot of times, particularly at your conventions—or homeowners which of the actual recommendations they're going to implement. They're saying they're going to do 29, but it's a secret. Nobody is going to know. They're not telling us. They're not telling the media. They're not telling the homebuyer.

He went on to say, "Tarion had the majority of its board of directors composed of the same people it regulated, licensed and from whose common warranty fund it paid consumers who complained about the builders' work."

This bill will see some enabling legislation that may—and that's the key word when you're bargaining anything. It doesn't say "will." "Will" is a stronger word. "Shall" is a stronger word—"may." They may; they may not. It's just a weasel word. That's kind of what it is. It's just what it is. It may one day allow the government to address this issue, depending on who is in power. Given their concerns in 2017, why was this not more forcefully dealt with in this bill? And I don't just mean by the board; I mean the whole process. Legislate a fair board. Get rid of this enabling legislation.

Frankly, anyone looking at Tarion today can see that the home builders have had free rein over an organization for most of its lifetime. They have controlled the board, they have controlled the proceedings and they have controlled its direction. And that's wrong. It's wrong in the province of Ontario. It's certainly wrong for people who buy homes.

All the while, residents across Ontario have been denied the right to get insurance for their massive defects.

Madam Speaker, do you think that's right? I'm pretty sure you don't.

It's insurance, by the way, that is supposed to be offered by the builder first, and Tarion is the last resort. What's supposed to happen: I build the house for you, I find some defects and the builder is supposed to fix them. But when they refuse, Tarion is supposed to be there, as the insurance company, to help us. Instead—listen to this—Tarion has just become an arm of denial. It's very similar to what I've said about WSIB and the deeming bill. It's the same type of thing. Just say no. Just get rid of them.

Nowhere is it more evident than Tarion's home builder registry, where any person in Ontario should be able to pull up a name of that builder and see the faulty homes they have built in the past and see where they've cut corners. That is so important. If you've got a terrible builder that has a reputation of building terrible homes, you can't even pull up the name to say, "Don't buy a home from this guy," because it's hidden. You're not told when you buy that home. Tarion allows that to go on. That's wrong.

Madam Speaker, I know when it comes to designing licence plates, this government has a hard time. But how does it take over a decade to design a website that properly tracks these things? Over a decade.

0920

Madam Speaker, I want to be clear. This is not an issue with all home builders, or even most home builders. I have a lot of friends who are home builders in Niagara. Most are decent, honest people who are glad to do their work and make a living. When I talk to those home builders, do you know what they tell me? They don't want to protect somebody who is not building those homes correctly, because it reflects on the entire industry; and they're right.

The home builders are saying to me, "Fix it. We don't want shoddy home builders in Niagara. We don't want it in Ontario. Fix it, because I take pride in the work I do." I agree with that. Not only do the home builders take pride, the workers take pride too. But there are massive holes for the bad ones, the bad ones who go on to be defended by the same shoddy spokespersons for these groups. Enough is enough, Madam Speaker. This system will work fine if we tighten the belt on these guys for the simple fact that most home builders don't want to rip off people. We get that. They don't want to rip off people.

If you look at home defects, you can see that these builders are cutting corners to try and make a buck. We hear stories of companies refusing to pay overtime or mileage, so they ship in guys from Toronto who have to drive to Niagara and do all their work without charging miles. So what happens? Instead of putting in eight hours, they put in three. It's a recipe for disaster. Sometimes these disasters are small. Sometimes it's poorly placed floorboards or cheap materials, but sometimes—I want my colleagues to hear this—it's deadly.

Sometimes it takes people—what it did to Daniel Browne-Emery. I know my colleague raised Daniel Browne-Emery's story in his hour lead. We're talking about people suffering from health issues because of

mould, mould that is there because of poor workmanship. What happens with mould? People lose their insurance. When they lose their insurance, they lose their mortgage. When they lose their mortgage, they lose their homes. This is almost criminal, and it shouldn't happen in Ontario.

Madam Speaker, I'd like to go back to my colleague's speech. I'm going to quote this from him: "Membership of Tarion is not by choice and any agency with such a captive constituency should be made transparent and accountable." On that point, he's right. People are forced to pay into Tarion, but it's even worse: They're forced to pay out of their pocket when they need to take on Tarion. If you've got a problem and you've got to take on Tarion and they won't fix it, if you're rich you can probably fight with Tarion. But if you just scraped up enough money to buy that home, you can't do it. Maybe if you're well-off you can afford to do this, but many can't. Many sink their savings into their house and that's all there is, so when they need to go down the costly process of fighting Tarion, they simply can't do it.

Madam Speaker, towards the end of my friend's speech, he had this to say: "The government's proposals on Tarion reform fall" drastically "short of the reforms contemplated by Justice Cunningham and of consumers' expectations." I can think of no better way to sum up this government's bill than his statement.

This government has been in committee and they've been in this chamber. For years, people just like Tracy Wheeler, just like Daniel—they have to put their lives on hold to try and fight for justice, justice they're entitled to and, most insultingly, justice they were forced to pay into.

This government has a real chance to reform Tarion, to tear down this failed system and rebuild it into a system that respects consumers and is not beholden to big interests, that focuses less on buying tables at home builders' dinners and more on fixing kitchens in homeowners' houses.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Jennifer K. French): Questions and responses?

Mr. Terence Kernaghan: I'd like to thank the member from Niagara Falls for his excellent comments. I really appreciated the fact that he pointed out the correlation between Tarion and the system in WSIB. It makes a great deal of sense. We see systems that need a complete overhaul.

The Auditor General, as the member has pointed out, indicated that Tarion's executives were enriching themselves at consumers' expense, and yet the Conservative government is doing nothing. My question: Why are the Conservatives continuing the Liberals' scheme of allowing Tarion to continue to enrich themselves at every homeowner's expense?

Mr. Wayne Gates: What I want to say to you is that—I only got through half my presentation, because I didn't touch on the issue around CEO compensation. Do you know that the head of Tarion is making close to \$800,000, and they've given themselves a 30% to 60% bonus, and the bonus is that they deny people to get their homes fixed? They are there for the homeowner, and that's the problem

with this entire bill. It's a problem with what's going on in Ontario.

We've had stories of people who have not only lost their home, they've ended up homeless. They've suffered mental stress. That's an issue for me.

I appreciate the question.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Jennifer K. French): Questions and responses?

Mr. Logan Kanapathi: Thank you, member from Niagara Falls. Thank you for his passion and thank you for his eloquent speech.

Madam Speaker, this bill, the Consumer Protection Act, is been outdated. It's outdated for a long time. That's why our government is wanting to make reasonable change. We want to bring confidence to the consumers. That's why we call it rebuilding consumer confidence, through this act. And that's why our government and our minister is committed to do some changes. That's why they've been trying to do some changes.

Madam Speaker, my question, through you to the member opposite: The Consumer Protection Act is outdated and doesn't address the needs of consumers in the present climate. Does the member opposite understand how important the proposed legislation is in order to protect our consumers?

Mr. Wayne Gates: I'll tell you what's outdated, sir: that you did not take in every recommendation by Justice Cunningham in his report. That's what's outdated. What you should be doing is protecting homeowners.

I'm going to look at you while I say this: Protect the homeowners because, you know what, it could be your son or it could be your daughter buying their first home, and they buy their first home and what happens is, it falls apart. There's mould in the basement. The attic has rats in it. There's no insulation put in between the walls. That's what's wrong.

The reason why I read what the PCs said, going back to 2017, is that you know it. This isn't a secret to any of us. This isn't the first time we've debated this issue; we debated this issue a few years ago. I know you weren't here, but you are now. Talk to your colleagues who stood up and said how bad Tarion is, how bad the industry is. That's what's wrong.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Jennifer K. French): A reminder to all members to please direct their remarks to and through the chair.

Further questions.

Mr. Terence Kernaghan: The member from Niagara Falls, through you, Speaker, has called Tarion the arm of denial, a lot like the WSIB. Yesterday in the media, we heard the Premier saying, as it relates to the COVID-19 outbreak, that he stands on the side of businesses. He doesn't say that he stands on the side of people, which is in direct contrast to many of the bumper sticker slogans that we see from this government.

My question for the member from Niagara Falls is: We saw that the member from Humber River–Black Creek tabled legislation that was going to implement all of the recommendations from Justice Cunningham's 2017

report. Why is this Conservative government continuing Liberal plans of not implementing these recommendations?

Mr. Wayne Gates: I did it right. I got it. The labour minister is smiling at me.

What I'm trying to get out this morning is that the NDP knows how to fix this problem. But I'm going to say that the PCs know too, and that's why I don't understand why you didn't fix it in the bill. My colleagues have to tell me why. I can tell you that on this side of the House, I'm always going to stand up for the person that's buying his home, because, at the end of the day, when we spend 40, 50, 60 or 70 years here while we're alive, the one thing that we own is our home. The one thing we can pass on to our kids and our grandkids is our home.

We have our family dinners. I'm married to an Italian. We used to have our lunches every Sunday, our pasta lunches—

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

Mr. Wayne Gates: That was my response. I'm sorry, go ahead. Thank you.

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

Mrs. Belinda C. Karahalios: Good morning to the member from Niagara Falls. Thank you for that. I always enjoy listening to you get up and debate. You have a lot of passion with everything, so thank you for that.

0930

To the member opposite: If the government were to choose a multi-provider insurance model, as you're advocating for, how can you guarantee that insurance companies will be transparent and act in the best interests of the consumers?

Mr. Wayne Gates: That's a good—

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Jennifer K. French): Answer? The member from Niagara Falls.

Mr. Wayne Gates: I'm working hard on this, Madam Speaker.

I'm going to tell you—I'm going to read this out, because I think it's fair—two of my colleagues, Rosario and Jagmeet Singh, tabled bills to fix this. They tabled bills. But nothing really changed until 2017, when an NDP MPP—his name was Wayne Gates; you might have heard of him—successfully tabled an amendment to Bill 166 that, for the first time, gave the AG the authority to investigate Tarion.

Shortly after that, the NDP successfully tabled a motion before the public accounts committee in January 2018 requesting that the AG conduct such an investigation. Her October 30, 2019 report is the response to that request.

That's how you get it fixed. That's how you make sure they're held accountable for what they're doing and all their denials. So if they're going to deny it—okay, I'm done. Thank you.

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

Mr. Paul Miller: A very good speech today, Wayne, on this situation.

I want to know why Tarion doesn't notify people that their appeal period is expired—they never do—and how they are going to enforce their own rules, which they don't do now.

I've had hundreds of complaints about expirations and a lack of following through. They don't have inspectors; they just give you a nice little booklet when you start with your home ownership, and they don't even follow their own rules in the booklet. What would you say to that?

Mr. Wayne Gates: It's always nice to hear compliments coming from my colleague from Stoney Creek.

I want to say that they haven't followed them because the board is controlled by the builders. That's what people have to understand. I'm not sure if we've all been on boards, but I've been on the United Way board. We've had community people on the board, so they had a say in it. But when it's 11 builders and one homeowner, what message are you going to get? The message is that the home builders are driving that message. That's the problem. It's the problem with this whole system.

I don't know for the love of me—I can't figure this out—why would you not stick up for homeowners in your ridings?

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

Mr. Wayne Gates: Okay, I've got a couple of seconds left. Why would you not stick up for—

Interruption.

Mr. Wayne Gates: I thought it was somebody calling me. Okay, thank you.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Jennifer K. French): There's not enough time for another round of questions and responses.

Interjections.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Jennifer K. French): Order, please.

Further debate?

Mrs. Nina Tangri: Good morning, Speaker and everyone in the House. I'm pleased that our government is taking consumer protection so seriously, and I thank the minister for bringing this bill forward.

As the minister alluded to last week, while every ministry, agency, board and commission is vital to the operations of provincial government, the public institutions that serve Ontarians under the Ministry of Government and Consumer Services are especially important whether it's:

—ServiceOntario, issuing birth and death certificates, photo ID cards or driver's licences; the provincial archives, filing and protecting documents and records to protect Ontario's wonderful history for future generations;

—the Technical Standards and Safety Authority, providing public safety services and ensuring technical compliance on behalf of the government for elevators, escalators, funnels, amusement park rides, ski lifts and much more;

—the direct administration of one of over 55 acts the ministry is responsible for, covering everything from condominiums to motor vehicle dealers, business names to

horse-riding safety, the travel industry to film classification, retail holidays to new home warranties; or

—the support services and programs provided by the ministry to support other areas of government and over 60,000 members of the Ontario public service, such as administration, procurement, pay and benefits.

The ministry touches every single Ontarian at multiple points throughout their lives. This is why it's so important to make sure that the programs, services, legislation and regulations under this ministry are up to date and doing their jobs, supporting the people of Ontario, the businesses of Ontario and the government of Ontario, all while maintaining the highest standards of safety, compliance and consumer protection.

This bill is an important one, and it's also unique with respect to its journey through this chamber, in that we moved right into public consultations before second reading of this bill. What this did was it allowed us to make full use of the winter adjournment to travel this bill around the province and hear from various stakeholders and individuals on how we can make it better.

The Standing Committee on Justice Policy, which I had the pleasure of joining briefly on its first day of consultations, met over four days in Brampton, Windsor, Ottawa and Toronto, spanning across the province to gather feedback and bring us a stronger, amended bill which greater achieves its purpose.

As we can see by looking through all the strikeouts and underlines in the reprinted bill, there are many changes made through these amendments that were guided by the feedback we received on the bill—and great feedback, by the way. The reason we received so much feedback is because stakeholders and individuals recognize that things are no longer working as intended.

I'll start with the Tarion Warranty Corp. and the government's proposed changes to the Ontario New Home Warranties Plan Act and the New Home Construction Licensing Act. Buying a home, for most of the population, is the biggest investment in their lives. For the biggest investment of one's life, people require the strongest protections to have confidence in the purchase and life-changing decisions.

People are often frustrated with the quality of construction of new homes and subsequently must deal with a warranties and protection system that is complex, lengthy and confusing. They want to be confident they are hiring a reputable builder to build their home and expect strong warranties and protections that they can depend on, with strong oversight and enforcement of clear rules for builders. But that currently isn't the case, Speaker.

The proposed changes to the acts would, if passed, respond to the special report on Tarion released by the Auditor General last year and further achieve three main goals. They would:

(1) overhaul the current warranty and protection program by requiring Tarion to enter into a binding agreement with the Minister of Government and Consumer Services to strengthen oversight and Tarion's accountability and providing them with a stronger mandate in consumer protection;

(2) enhance the dispute resolution and claims process by providing Tarion with the ability to use a range of processes to resolve disputes between homeowners and builders for vendors; restoring balance for consumers by removing builders and vendors as parties at the Licence Appeal Tribunal in disputes between homeowners and Tarion over warranties and protections claims, absent competing regulations; and enabling the government to prescribe adjudicative bodies other than the Licence Appeal Tribunal to resolve disputes between homeowners and Tarion over warranties and protections claims; and

(3) also promote the construction of better-built homes by requiring Tarion to increase the scrutiny of applications to build or sell a new home to better prevent bad actors from operating, and establishing a mandate for Tarion to promote the construction of properly built homes.

In November, the minister took steps to tip the Tarion scales back in favour of consumers who thought that for too long, the corporation inherently favoured builders and developers. By the time this House returns, the Tarion board of directors will be decreased to better align the board's size with other boards and authorities, from 16 members to 12. No more than 34% or, realistically, one third of this board can be builders, vendors or industry associations or their agents.

0940

As I said last week and maintain still, the previous makeup of the board most definitely leaned towards developers and didn't really help consumers at all. These people do need to be represented on the board, to be held accountable, but should not hold the majority and never should have.

We are also proposing legislative and regulatory changes to condominium living. We've heard loud and clear from stakeholders that people lack clear processes to navigate condo living, because it is different from other types of housing. People also expect better, faster and cheaper digital services. As well, they need more transparency and accountability when buying and living in a condo.

Recent regulatory changes have been made to provide condo owners, corporations, purchasers and mortgagees with improved access to 17 forms made under the condo act. They are now available through the Condominium Authority of Ontario's website, where other information is available. Owners and prospective owners now have a one-stop shop for all the information they require, rather than having to visit the ministry's website separately. Of course, the minister retains the responsibility for the forms and their content, but we will collaborate with condo authorities to make improvements.

The government is currently consulting on changes to develop a variety of proposed regulatory changes to:

—provide condo corporations with clear processes and rules for the procurement of services and goods, and financial management of condo reserve funds;

—increase the amount of interest that would be owed to a buyer by a developer on their deposits if their pre-construction condo project is cancelled and in other circumstances;

—provide clearer processes for occupancy fees and chargebacks;

—develop a condo guide for buyers, and require developers to provide it at the point of purchase. This will better equip condo purchasers with information in an easy-to-understand format; and

—clarify the processes for mediation or arbitration between condo corporations and owners.

Another issue we have been hearing about across Ontario is the Condominium Authority Tribunal system, and how long and extensive it can be for cases brought before the tribunal to be resolved. That is why we are expanding the scope of topics that the tribunal can mediate, such as nuisances and smells. This will not only expedite the process by which condo owners can reach a resolution to a dispute that they have with their neighbours, but it also provides an alternative level of dispute resolution instead of using limited resources in the legal system.

This is an example of the government's cross-ministry, holistic approach to addressing the issues and concerns that affect Ontarians. We are hitting two birds with one stone here, so to speak.

I've been talking a lot about protections for housing. While these changes are important and underlined by the investment required in these transactions, they are far from the only changes being proposed in this bill.

We're also looking at amending the Consumer Protection Act itself. Legislative amendments introduced through this bill would enable the provincial government to issue administrative monetary penalties, or AMPs, against businesses that do not comply with the Consumer Protection Act. If this bill is passed, the government will consult with industry early this year on regulations that would be required in order to implement the administrative monetary penalties scheme in an orderly and effective manner.

We have seen in other areas, both municipally and provincially, that administrative monetary penalties are an effective tool to encourage compliance with the law and discourage deceptive and predatory practices. Adding AMPs to the ministry's enforcement toolbox would bring our Consumer Protection Act in line with other provinces and be an additional way to enforce the act.

Would it work for everything? No. Part of the ministry's ongoing consultations would include determining which infractions would be subject to AMPs and determining what those penalty amounts would be for these offences.

We will also be conducting an overall review of the Consumer Protection Act. This would be the first comprehensive review of the act in 15 years. Fifteen years is a long time in any context, but this past 15 years are especially significant. Think about it: Fifteen years ago, Amazon was primarily selling books, Netflix was only mailing DVDs, and you actually had to go into a store and walk through an aisle to do most of your shopping.

What I'm getting at is that there has been a massive change in technology and marketplace innovation. To

continue to be effective, the act needs to be updated to strengthen protection for consumers. The review will also streamline and clarify requirements to improve consumer and business understanding and to support compliance and include effective enforcement powers and tools to deter non-compliance.

One of the important changes that this bill makes is in schedule 10, to the Ticket Sales Act. Like many of us here, most Ontarians have likely purchased a ticket to a sporting event, concert or other form of entertainment online. The Internet has provided extra opportunities for consumers to find good deals on these tickets, but also has produced vulnerabilities that can be exploited by retailers, especially resellers.

If something is too good to be true, it probably is. In the rush to get an excellent deal, you may rush through the check-out, only to later realize that you weren't being charged in Canadian dollars. After currency exchange and additional currency conversion fees, once they're processed, this can represent a significant additional cost to a purchaser.

We are proposing updates to the Ticket Sales Act to ensure that all dollar amounts and ticket offers are listed and charged in Canadian currency. Being able to buy concert tickets online and know exactly how much they are costing you would make your experience that much better and encourage more Ontarians to support local events.

We will also further consult on proposed regulations under the Ticket Sales Act to improve protection, transparency and choice for consumers buying tickets to Ontario events. The consultations will include securing feedback on items that promote choice, including ensuring that ticket purchasers can transfer their tickets and that consumers who don't have smart phones or who want paper tickets can get them upon request. Like the proposed changes to the Consumer Protection Act that I mentioned previously, we will consult on new administrative monetary policies under this act to discourage bad behaviour by the industry and promote compliance.

Our proposals under this bill don't stop there, Speaker. The ministry is also proposing changes to strengthen enforcement and transparency measures to improve elevator safety and availability. We are proposing stronger enforcement tools to improve compliance with elevator safety laws, data collection with respect to elevator outages to better inform policy development, and publication of outage data online to educate and inform consumers. We will be consulting on these changes very soon this year.

As we know, the condo industry is booming, especially here in the GTA. More skyscrapers means more elevators. Out-of-service elevators lead to accessibility and quality-of-life issues for vulnerable populations, including seniors and especially those with disabilities. Access to reliability and service data will ensure that Ontarians have the information they need to be informed about their place of residence.

We intend to do everything we can to ensure compliance with all elevator safety laws and adequate elevator

performance. We are working with the Technical Safety and Standards Authority to resolve current safety issues in the sector and to bring the safety compliance rate to an acceptable level. We are also considering changes that would require elevator outage data to be reported to and be posted online by the TSSA as a transparency measure.

0950

These changes are aimed at improving elevator performance in your building by promoting better maintenance. You would also be able to find more information about outages online to make more informed choices, which is important in terms of accessibility.

There are also several other changes we are considering under regulation that the minister announced as part of our plan to rebuild consumer confidence. Some of these changes affect the travel industry. Again, this is an industry that has rapidly changed over time, and it's our responsibility to ensure that the industry is regulated to protect consumers, but not overregulated to put Ontario at a disadvantage against global operators and other competitors.

We intend to address concerns we have heard from Ontarians by updating the disclosure and advertising rules to help improve protections for consumers, introducing new steps to increase employee accountability through a requirement for salespersons to register and meet requirements in continuing education, and providing the regulator with additional compliance tools to better address bad conduct, amongst other things.

Another piece of legislation that we are reviewing and consulting on is the Collection and Debt Settlement Services Act to address concerns that debtors who are struggling to pay their creditors are not being sufficiently protected from harassment by debt collectors. The government will be consulting in 2020 to help identify potential changes to the act to ensure debt settlement service providers abide by the rules.

I have countless constituents come to me with issues regarding collection and debt settlement, and I'm sure many members of the House have experienced the same. Sometimes the constituent actually does owe the debt and is having trouble paying. But there are also instances, far more than there should be, where they have already paid their debts, never owed anything or are the wrong person all together. But the calls don't stop. We will take action to improve protections for consumers in this regard, as well as educate them as to what their rights and responsibilities are.

In conclusion—I'm running out of time, so here I will wrap up—this ministry and the honourable minister have done an excellent job here. These are long-overdue changes that are needed to protect consumers while at the same time keeping our province open for business. They've done due diligence consulting with individuals and stakeholders. We travelled the bill, through committee, across the province and have made amendments to make the bill better.

I was proud to see this House come together and unanimously pass this minister's last piece of legislation, and I really hope, together, we will see that again.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Jennifer K. French): Questions and responses.

Mr. Terence Kernaghan: I would like to thank the member from Mississauga–Streetsville for her comments. I'm a little concerned when I hear the word "consultations" come from this government, because we see expensive things that are sometimes buried and hidden.

But for my question, I would like to turn to recommendation number 6 from the Auditor General's report. We understand that the Globe and Mail uncovered documents from Tarion in 2020, revealing that Tarion is backing away from the arbitrary and unfair 30-day deadline for filing claims. One of the recommendations is to get rid of that. Is this an example of accountability and transparency, allowing this to continue and not following that recommendation?

Mrs. Nina Tangri: I really want to thank the member opposite for the question because it is very, very important. I sat in when we were on public accounts and I listened to members from Tarion speak, and I certainly had a long time listening to the Auditor General and her recommendations.

I was actually quite shocked that Tarion has been operating the way it has been operating all of this time, with no changes put in place. Understanding that there were many, many recommendations when we travelled this bill, and I know when I was joining them in Brampton we heard loud and clear about some of the changes that must come, and will come. But we really are looking at ways on how we can make the Tarion warranty program work for everything. One of the things we really wanted to make sure happened right away was that we were going to change the makeup of the board so that not more than one third of the board can be made up of developers, builders or their agents.

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

Mr. Amarjot Sandhu: Our government is listening to the needs and concerns of the consumers to help better protect them. That's why throughout the last year, 2019, we have been consulting on three main pillars. They are protecting the privacy of Ontarians, enabling the businesses to compete digitally and enabling better, smarter and more efficient government.

My question to the member from Mississauga–Streetsville is, what are the major concerns driving the changes to consumer protection in Ontario?

Mrs. Nina Tangri: I want to thank the member from Brampton West. I know he's spent quite a bit of time working and consulting. I know many of us, on our side of the House—and I have listened intently to members on the other side of the House on what things they want to see us make changes with, whether it be ticket sales—but I think the one big item that we heard a lot about was the Tarion warranty program. It has for so long, unbelievably, been the same way, the same old. The people who were on the board, the way they were compensated—it was appalling. There's nothing short of that.

I know that when we were on committee—and the members opposite were very vocal in how they wanted to

make sure that changes to Tarion were made swiftly, which is why we wanted to make sure we got it into this bill. But we didn't wait. We made sure that we got out and we started consultations immediately. We started criss-crossing the province to make sure that we got input from all stakeholders and from consumers.

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

Mr. Terence Kernaghan: The member from Mississauga—Streetsville, in addition to mentioning the consultations—which is something that frightens me early in the morning—also talked about the composition of boards. Whenever a Conservative or Liberal government talks about how they want to manipulate the composition of boards, it's rather frightening to me.

The NDP has called for the appointment of an administrator to take over Tarion completely, which I think will be a great idea. I'm also thankful that the NDP successfully passed an amendment allowing the Auditor General, or giving the authority, to investigate Tarion; otherwise, we'd see a lot more of the same.

To the member from Mississauga—Streetsville—through you, Speaker—do you think it's fair that everyday Ontarians and consumers have to pay outrageous salaries, such as those to Tarion's CEO, who is paid almost \$800,000 in salary and benefits? Is that fair?

Mrs. Nina Tangri: I'd like thank the member opposite. I do apologize if I frighten you so early in the morning.

I have to admit, when I heard those salaries myself, in committee, I was also blown away. It was really difficult to understand not just their salaries, but the makeup of the board. It was so one-sided.

The Tarion warranty program, the way it was put together, the way that they have the 30-day windows at the beginning and at the end, the fact that they were not providing the consumer with the appropriate documentation at the time of purchase—all of that, in and of itself, showed an organization that was so out of date and very poorly put together.

We took swift action. We heard members from the opposition, who told us what they wanted to see, and we immediately, right away, got rid of the chair and the CEO to make sure that we can now put good people in there to support consumers.

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

Mr. Sheref Sabawy: As we all know, purchasing a new home is one of the most significant investments someone can make in their lifetime. Many Ontarians have been eagerly awaiting improvements to the new home warranty program in this province after years of Liberal lack of action. Could the member please tell us what our government is doing to enhance the home warranty program in Ontario to protect the homeowners?

Mrs. Nina Tangri: Thank you to my neighbouring member from Mississauga—Erin Mills. I'll talk a little bit about some of the enhancements that we are making under the home warranty program.

First, we want to make sure that we overhaul the whole warranty program in a way that protects the interests of

new homebuyers, and we're taking the time to make sure we get it right.

1000

That's why we're establishing a mandate for Tarion to promote the resolution of claims as soon as reasonably possible. We want to make sure that builders, developers, their agents and all of those who participate in a new home being built are held accountable. We want to make sure they understand that there are consequences, so that they will build proper homes in the first place and hopefully Tarion won't even need to exist. We want to make sure that everything is done in compliance.

The Licence Appeal Tribunal will be there to resolve disputes between homeowners and Tarion over warranty and protection claims.

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

Mr. Jeff Burch: I thank the member from Mississauga—Streetsville for her presentation.

My friend from Niagara Falls touched on this: When a new home buyer finds defects in their home and the builder is unwilling or unable to fix the problem, Tarion is supposed to step in. But what they were doing, obviously, was protecting the builder. Tarion's board is controlled by the Ontario Home Builders' Association, which is the lobby group for the development industry that Tarion is supposed to regulate.

Does she realize that her government's bill doesn't actually fix this problem at all?

Mrs. Nina Tangri: I'd like to thank the member opposite for the question because it is very important, which is why we're separating the warranty administration and builder and vendor regulator—we want to separate them altogether.

The government has heard from Justice Cunningham, which is why we wanted to make sure that, under the Ontario New Home Warranties Plan Act, with Tarion—we wanted to address this conflict of interest because it was of serious consumer concern.

At this time, it is expected that the future regulatory authority—we'll hopefully get that up and running by the fall of this year, because we do want to make sure that we have that separation between the builder and the HCRA.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Jennifer K. French): Further questions and answers, quickly.

Ms. Christine Hogarth: Thank you to the member for her comments today.

In my riding of Etobicoke—Lakeshore, the condo market has just exploded. We actually have more condo units now than residential homes. So now, more than ever, consumer confidence is extremely important. It's so important that I just sent out a mailer to my condo owners with a feedback card.

For the member: I just wondered if you could expand on what we're doing to modernize this legislation to reflect the needs of our condominium owners.

Mrs. Nina Tangri: I'd like to thank the member from Etobicoke—Lakeshore for her question.

We want to make sure that we're proposing these regulatory changes to condominium living. We've heard

loud and clear from these stakeholders. They want clear processes. They want to make sure that they have access to cheaper digital services, because that's not acceptable right now. We want to make sure that the prospective owners have a one-stop shop so that they can—

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

Miss Monique Taylor: I am pleased to have an opportunity today to speak to Bill 159, the Rebuilding Consumer Confidence Act. This bill, like many bills that we see before us, is an omnibus bill that touches on a range of issues. But schedule 5, which addresses Tarion, is the part of bill that interests me the most, and so that's where I will be focusing quite a bit of time.

I have to say that there's a real missed opportunity to make some positive changes that could really have helped the lives of homeowners in my riding of Hamilton Mountain and across Ontario. We have known about the challenges and issues relating to Tarion for years. Under the previous Liberal government, nothing was done to address them. Now under this government, we're seeing changes that do not go far enough to reform or replace the troubled organization.

It's important that we take real action on Tarion. The issues with Tarion are about protecting consumers who are making the biggest and most important purchase in their lives.

For too many, the dream of home ownership becomes a nightmare when frustrating or dangerous construction problems happen and Tarion abandons them. We've all heard the horror stories of homebuyers who find out that the company that built their home did shoddy work—maybe it was a broken HVAC system or a water heater that doesn't work, or there's mould or there are cracked foundations. In all of these cases, homebuyers are on the hook for thousands of dollars in repairs. That's why an organization like Tarion, if it worked correctly, is so important.

Tarion is supposed to be the place that homeowners could go to get help and recoup their costs. Instead, for many years, Tarion has been protecting the interests of builders over the consumers.

We've seen the stories; they come up in the media all the time. We hear them in our offices on a regular basis, and members of this Legislature have heard those very difficult stories from homeowners themselves as the committee travelled. We all know that homeowners have complained that Tarion regularly refuses to help them. We also know that consumers have found themselves in court, not only fighting their builder but also Tarion, the organization that was supposed to protect them.

New Democrats have been raising this issue for several years. Thanks to the work of New Democrat MPPs, we were able to amend a Liberal government bill to allow the Auditor General to look into Tarion. I believe I've heard this morning that it was the member from Niagara Falls who made that happen. New Democrats, like the member from Niagara Falls, then requested the AG to conduct an investigation.

The Auditor General found that our suspicions were correct: Tarion has been protecting developers and not the consumers. To quote the Auditor General's report: "We found that the strong presence of home builders on the Tarion board of directors, combined with Tarion's internal requirement that it seek advance consultation with the Ontario Home Builders' Association on any proposed changes to its regulations, created an imbalance at Tarion that favoured the interests of builders over homeowners...." That's the Auditor General stating clearly that Tarion works in favour of the developers and the home builders.

Also, Tarion is supposed to act as a backstop when builders who are actually responsible for the warranty fail to deliver. Unfortunately, the AG determined that Tarion did not collect enough refundable security deposits from builders to cover the cost of homeowners' claims that it might have had to pay out. As a result, of the money Tarion had to pay out because builders refused to honour their warranties, they were only able to recoup 30% of it. That is a huge savings for bad builders.

We also learned that the leadership salaries at Tarion were shockingly high. Tarion's CEO was receiving over \$700,000 in compensation, all for siding with developers over homeowners.

The AG report also found that Tarion's executives were enriching themselves at the expense of consumers due to a compensation framework that rewarded officials who denied consumer claims. So Tarion's senior management were given large bonuses—sometimes up to 60% of their annual salary—for increasing profits and minimizing financial aid paid to homeowners who were seeking their help. That is absolutely shameful.

Further, Tarion has received the AG's report and promised to adopt the recommendations. But the Globe and Mail discovered through obtaining internal documents that Tarion was quietly backing away from many of the consumer protections it had promised to implement. For example, one of Tarion's arbitrary and unfair rules was that the claims had to be filed within a 30-day window. Many homeowners missed this deadline, even by just a few days, and thus lost their warranty protection. The AG asked for this rule to be scrapped; instead, Tarion is keeping it.

We have a situation here in Ontario where our homeowner consumer protection organization is run by the agency that it is supposed to oversee, and they're giving themselves bonuses to congratulate themselves for abandoning consumers. This is clearly so broken, and I cannot believe that it's still in place.

Tarion is so broken that some of the things that the AG reported just seem absolutely absurd. For example, Tarion's call centre was determined to provide inaccurate information in 14% of the calls—all of this from a consumer protection organization. Does that not sound ridiculous? I believe it's ridiculous.

Ontarians deserve to have peace of mind that the home they are buying is safe and in good shape and that they are protected from bad actors.

New Democrats have proposed solutions to Tarion several times over the years. Former MPPs Rosario Marchese and Jagmeet Singh both tabled bills to create more transparency with Tarion and to give the Ombudsman oversight into its operations.

1010

We've been talking about this for so long that I went back and checked and saw that Rosario Marchese's first Tarion reform bill was tabled a decade ago in 2010. He then introduced bills on Tarion reform in 2011 and 2012. We've been trying to push for a solution for many years.

Most recently, our New Democrat member from Humber River–Black Creek introduced Bill 169, Home Warranties to Protect Families Act. That bill would eliminate Tarion and would replace it with a new agency, not another delegated authority over which the government and the people of Ontario have no control. All existing Tarion cases would be immediately moved into this new agency. That bill would also open up the new home warranty system to a multi-provider model, which is a recommendation from Justice Cunningham's 2015 review of Tarion. The multi-provider new home warranty system exists in other jurisdictions in Canada, like BC and Alberta. The builder would be responsible for finding their own warranty provider, and that provider would be in charge of providing the new home warranty. The new government agency that the bill would establish could also provide new home warranties. Either way, there would be no monopoly of the home warranty providers.

The bill tabled by my colleague also directs the new agency to open up past cases that were rejected by Tarion in order to see if those rejections were justified. That bill, Bill 169, offers a real solution to the issues that plague new home ownership. Stakeholders, like Canadians for Properly Built Homes, and others, all overwhelmingly support Bill 169, and they also believe that this government bill that we're debating today does not go far enough. In their view, the bill "does not go nearly far enough to provide adequate consumer protection, and it is taking far too long to address the serious issues with Tarion."

Further, every homeowner who testified at the Standing Committee on Justice Policy travelling sessions in Brampton, Windsor and Ottawa have said that Bill 159 does not go far enough. We need real action on Tarion to protect homebuyers, because ultimately, real people's lives are affected. Here's a quote from the committee, from Krista Shuman, whose husband, Dr. Earl Shuman, took his own life in 2016 after fighting Tarion for 27 years: "The impact of the Ontario government's inaction and its lack of oversight has been devastating for many families. It is extremely disappointing one year after MPP Walker's announcement of their promise to correct Ontario's new home warranty program, and not enough has been done."

"Through Bill 159, the Ontario Conservative government had an opportunity and also a duty to protect Ontario families in the most important purchase that homeowners make. Our government has failed to protect us from building code violations and the impacts on the financial,

physical and mental health of Ontario families, including my own."

That's a big story to come to the committee to share. That says a lot about how many people are at home facing these issues that don't get the space to come to committee. I thank her greatly for putting herself and her family out there for the best interests of the people of Ontario. Tarion's failure to adequately protect families in Ontario has had a real human impact. This bill does not go far enough in ensuring homebuyers in Ontario are safe.

I wanted to talk about a couple of other sections of the bill, but I see that our time is ticking and I may not have the opportunity get there. Some of the major issues that are addressed in this bill, again, that do not go far enough are the 12 delegated administrative authorities and the ticket sales that we have for events. It was something that we thought we were making headway on to try to get fixed, and then when the Conservatives came into power they changed what had been done, and now they're doing very minimal changes to ensure that ticket sales are correct. I know, ordering online, many times you can order—

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): I apologize to the member. I am compelled to interrupt her as per the standing orders, since it is 10:15.

Second reading debate deemed adjourned.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): That means it's now time for members' statements.

MEMBERS' STATEMENTS

COVID-19

Ms. Rima Berns-McGown: COVID-19 is bearing down upon Ontario, and the government has yet to develop a solid plan for the most vulnerable among us: people across the province experiencing homelessness; overcrowded shelters and drop-ins; a community whose health is already compromised; many folks chronically ill and with poor immune systems; a community made up increasingly of seniors and families evicted from rental units they can no longer afford; people forced to migrate through cities and towns during the day, unable to self-isolate or maintain a safe social distance.

These conditions are inhumane and downright cruel for the individuals concerned. They are also a serious public health challenge. Shelters where people are crammed in like sardines could become virus incubators.

The province has an obligation to keep all Ontarians safe. That means listening to advocates like Cathy Crowe, who has decades of experience with homeless health care.

Among other measures, it means extra funding to allow cities to open additional shelters, to relieve congestion and allow for beds that are six feet apart, to lessen the chance of transmission; relaxed rules that allow people to remain in bed during the day; enhanced cleaning protocols; screening on admission; nurses on-site; pocket hand sanitizers; and extra funding for motels or other spaces where people can recover in isolation.

I can't emphasize this enough: The government needs to declare a state of emergency on homelessness in Ontario, and it needs to begin with a serious plan for COVID-19.

BAKU MASSACRE

Mr. Aris Babikian: The 30th anniversary of the Baku massacres was recently commemorated by its survivors and descendants who reside in Ontario.

On January 13, 1990, nationalists in Azerbaijan launched widespread and predetermined massacres against the unarmed Armenian minority in the capital, Baku. Hundreds of Armenians were killed, tortured and forced to leave their homes during these atrocities.

The massacres were preceded by the mass killing of Armenians in the Azerbaijani cities of Sumgait, Kirovabad and Ganja in 1988 and 1989.

These crimes against humanity resulted in the ethnic cleansing of the Armenian population in the former Soviet republic. About half a million Armenians were deported from Azerbaijan and had to seek refuge in different parts of the world, including Canada.

To silence the voice and the will of the people of Artsakh for self-determination, Azerbaijan escalated the crisis into a war. The impunity the criminals enjoyed only served as fertile soil for new, even more horrible crimes.

Sustainable peace and development in the South Caucasus is impossible without facing the past and restoring justice based on the principles of international law.

Finally, the survivors condemn the manifestation of xenophobia, intolerance and extremism—

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

INDIGENOUS PUBLIC HEALTH

Mr. Guy Bourgouin: Just yesterday, the Minister of Health announced new protocols aimed at protecting what she called the "province's most vulnerable people" from the COVID-19 pandemic. Experts continue to indicate that the best preventive method is to wash your hands with water and soap.

But what can we do in dozens of communities under water advisories? And how will the minister contain the pandemic in remote and fly-in communities?

Just this week, Neskantaga and Attawapiskat chiefs shared their concerns about the arrival of COVID-19 in their communities. The Attawapiskat chief said the virus is "going to spread like wildfire." The Neskantaga chief said "it's going to be ... devastating," because people live in dreadful conditions and lack the essentials of a health system worthy of this province.

The Minister of Health needs to work for the well-being and health of all Ontarians. It's about equity, not the distance from Toronto.

I thus demand that the Minister of Health and the Minister of Indigenous Affairs work quickly to provide

proper health services to Indigenous people living in remote areas.

1020

SENIORS

Mr. Mike Harris: Yesterday, I had the honour of hosting the Honourable Raymond Cho, Minister of Seniors and Accessibility, at the Aging Well in Woolwich seniors active living fair in the great riding of Kitchener–Conestoga.

I wish to extend the gratitude of the event organizers and the entire community in Waterloo region for the minister's strong advocacy for active living, and a comprehensive accessibility framework that will make a real impact for Ontario seniors.

This government was elected with a clear mandate to stand behind the men and women who, together, built this province. We have kept our promise to them by introducing free dental care for seniors most in need, providing record spending on health and long-term care and investing over \$14 million in Seniors Active Living Centres across the province.

When I was out door-knocking, many seniors told me that they wanted to live out their years in their homes, close to family and friends. That is why I am proud that this government is also investing an additional \$155 million to expand front-line home and community care services. This includes \$150,000 to Community Care Concepts' take-me-home program, which provides transportation for seniors to and from the hospital.

I am excited that these community organizations will be playing an active role in providing modern, wraparound and continuous care within our new Ontario health teams.

I look forward to again joining the seniors in my riding at next year's fair and bringing more good news about the things our Minister of Seniors and Accessibility is doing for them.

COVID-19

Mr. Jeff Burch: People in my community of Niagara are concerned about COVID-19, and I want to use this opportunity to provide them with an update.

Niagara Region Public Health has been working with the province and the federal government on identifying travellers who might be carrying COVID-19. Locally, they have developed multiple scenarios for what may happen, and plans for those scenarios are continually being revisited as we learn more from other countries.

I would join the Association of Local Public Health Agencies in imploring this government to put their modernization review of public health and emergency health services on the back burner. Health workers are working around the clock to contain COVID-19, and a modernization plan in the midst of a global outbreaks creates unnecessary confusion in trying times. Public health units have been challenged for years due to ministry caps on budget increases.

My office spoke with Dr. Thomas Stewart, CEO of Niagara Health, who informed us that “the key immediate priorities are to get alternative sites up and running. In addition, given that occupancies are so high, we need plans to move patients not needing hospital care out.”

It is vital that the province work with local hospitals, health units and public health to ensure the necessary funding is provided.

I would like to thank the front-line health care workers, public health officials, administrators and everyone working on this file. Those in Niagara and across the province can have confidence that they are working tirelessly behind the scenes to contain and mitigate COVID-19.

DEBATE TOURNAMENT

Mr. Vincent Ke: The art of debate is important, and it is what we do here every day in the House.

Last weekend, a team of young debaters in my riding of Don Valley North, students of the Extraordinary Education Centre—EEC—participated in a debate tournament at Harvard University.

Please join me to welcome our champion, Max Rosen from team Canada, and finalists Randy Chang, Diba Heydary, Stella Zhang and Sarah Zhao from EEC.

Also, congratulations to the three top speakers, Randy Chang, Diba Heydary and Stella Zhang from EEC, and to the principals of EEC as well for their commitment and effort in educating our future leaders.

Max Rosen from team Canada is also the debate coach at EEC, being a two-time champion for both 2019 and 2020, and coach for the finalist team. It is quite an achievement.

I am confident that they will become influential leaders of tomorrow. Some of them may one day be sitting in this Legislature.

I'm honoured and proud to welcome these brilliant young debaters, all dreamers and doers. They are great role models for their peers and—

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Yet again, one more time, I will remind the members that we are in members' statements, and when we're in members' statements, I would ask you to keep your private conversations to a minimum and as quiet as possible, so that I can hear the member who has the floor. I'm reluctant to stand up in the middle of a member's statement and interrupt the clip—and I've heard back from members about that too.

We're trying to adapt to the new rules. It's just common sense and courtesy that we try to be quiet when another member has the floor.

Start the clock. The next statement is the member for Waterloo.

EMPLOYMENT STANDARDS

Ms. Catherine Fife: Karen reached out to my office and told us, “I'm terrified of getting sick, because if I don't

work, I don't get paid and I have a lot of people relying on me.” These are tough choices for workers in Ontario.

As we begin to grapple with the unprecedented effects of COVID-19, we need to get real about paid sick days. Research shows that in jurisdictions where paid sick days are required, there are fewer flu cases, which means there is less stress on the health care system. It's as simple as that.

The Decent Work and Health Network is here today at Queen's Park, and they reported that eight out of 10 workers will go to work sick; over three quarters of emergency room doctors report they have to write sick notes; and a family doctor reported just this week, in a health crisis, that one third of the patients in his office required sick notes in one day. But in PC-run Ontario, employers have no legal obligation to offer any paid sick days to employees. In our current climate, that is just not good enough.

We have called on this government to introduce responsible measures to ensure that employees can stay home when they're sick. That would entail preventing employers from requiring people to get a sick note, and giving employees access to paid sick days.

Public health officials are working desperately to prevent the spread of COVID-19. They need a government that supports the employees and the front-line health workers in this province. Step up today. Put in place paid sick days that protect the people of this province.

HOSPITAL FUNDING

Ms. Lindsey Park: On March 6, I was joined by my fellow Durham region PC colleagues, the member for Whitby and the member for Pickering–Uxbridge, to announce that some very important hospital upgrades at Lakeridge Health's Bowmanville and Ajax-Pickering hospitals are coming.

Speaker, as you know, we're modernizing the way health care services are delivered in the province of Ontario, moving toward a more connected and patient-centred model. But while we work on this bigger-picture transformation, it's still important that we focus on the smaller and more urgent needs of our hospitals that enable continuity and reliable patient care.

Our government has invested a total of \$175 million this year through the Health Infrastructure Renewal Fund to support hospitals across Ontario. As part of that fund, Lakeridge Health Bowmanville received \$1.3 million and Ajax-Pickering received \$215,000 to meet their urgent infrastructure needs. This funding will allow both locations to make needed improvements, so that patients in Durham region can continue to rely on the high-quality health care services they have come to expect.

Speaker, my constituents in Durham rely upon the services provided by the Bowmanville Hospital every day. This infrastructure funding helps support a healthy and safe environment, while our incredible health care professionals can continue to provide reliable patient care to the people of Clarington in their time of need.

FLOODING

Mr. Rick Nicholls: On Thursday, February 27, the municipal council of Chatham-Kent declared a state of emergency regarding the flood dikes on Erie Shore Drive near Erieau. In a bylaw passed, Chatham-Kent council empowered administration to bring a report to council within eight weeks regarding options for either preparing an alternative access via a newly constructed road, considering a buyout of the property owners affected by the road closure and/or introducing a further permanent road closure of Erie Shore Drive.

Thanks to the generosity of Ridge Landfill and its president, Izzie Abrams, 10,000 metric tonnes of clay have been donated for dike stabilization. We look forward to continuing to work together to ensure the safety of our community and fairness for all residents. What a great corporate citizen. But as Izzie says, “It’s the right thing to do!”

The municipality gave residents a short time frame to evacuate, causing frustration and major inconvenience. The time to act, however, is now, because of weather unpredictability.

In the event of a disaster, our government stands ready. I’ve engaged the Ministry of Natural Resources and Forestry, the Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing, the Solicitor General and the Premier’s office. They have all been unequivocal that the safety of residents is first and foremost.

Thank you to everyone for ongoing efforts as we tackle this situation, ranging from the rebuilding of the dike road, to police officers guarding properties, to volunteers bagging sand and helping residents in the danger zone.

1030

INTRODUCTION OF VISITORS

Ms. Marit Stiles: I’d like to introduce a very active volunteer in our community of Davenport, Nahum Mann. Thank you for being here.

Mr. Vincent Ke: I would like to introduce the champion from the Harvard College World Schools Invitational 2020, Max Rosen from team Canada, and finalists Randy Chang, Diba Heydary, Stella Zhang and Sarah Zhao from the Extraordinary Education Centre in my riding of Don Valley North. Welcome to Queen’s Park.

Ms. Jessica Bell: I’d like to welcome the following residents from my riding of University–Rosedale: Karie Hiebert, John Corso and Bryan Beauchamp. Thanks for coming.

Hon. Bill Walker: I’m pleased to welcome three guests from my great riding of Bruce–Grey–Owen Sound to Queen’s Park. John Hammill, Ron Ledingham and Tyler Stone, who I’m told loves politics, are all here today. Welcome to Queen’s Park.

Miss Monique Taylor: From the Ontario Autism Coalition, today we have Amanda Mooyer and her son Finn, Stacy Kennedy, Angela Brandt, and Laura Kirby-McIntosh.

Ms. Natalia Kusendova: I’d like to welcome Shakila and Sami Rafiq, the brother and mom of our page from

Mississauga Centre, Nyle Rafiq. Welcome to Queen’s Park.

Mr. Stan Cho: It’s my privilege to welcome two of my constituents from my riding of Willowdale, Dr. Hamid and his son, Ali Hamid. Welcome to Queen’s Park.

QUESTION PERIOD

COVID-19

Ms. Andrea Horwath: My first question is to the Premier. Yesterday, as the Premier and I were meeting in his office, the World Health Organization declared COVID-19 a pandemic. The federal Minister of Health said it was safe to assume that 30% to 70% of Canada’s population could become infected.

The Premier has stated, “We have a plan for every scenario.” At this point, information about these contingencies is vital for families, so my question is: When will the government start laying out the details of these plans?

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Minister of Long-Term Care.

Hon. Merrilee Fullerton: Thank you to the opposition for the question. I can tell you that our government is absolutely committed to making sure that Ontarians, and our front-line workers, have the information that they need. We are putting together a command table to make sure that everyone is informed.

This situation is evolving. It will change day to day. The most important thing we can do right now is containment, and that’s what our plan is about. We have a command table. We have response teams. We are making sure we’re working with Public Health Ontario and PHAC. Up to \$100 million in a response fund was announced by the Premier just yesterday, to include our readiness and response to COVID-19. Ontario’s command table has been refining and finalizing plans for enhanced measures.

I can tell you, as the Minister of Long-Term Care, that we are on this. We are making sure our active screening is occurring in all our homes—and the enhanced access to screening, the dedicated assessment centres, the physician billing codes, the launching of a self-assessment tool. This situation is evolving. This government has a plan and we’re acting on it.

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

Ms. Andrea Horwath: Health experts have urged the government to share information about planning so people can be prepared, and so that the resources needed to confront this pandemic are being properly allocated.

Speaker, people are hungry; they’re hungry for information. Parents are wondering what will happen at schools, many of which are already in a poor state of repair. Shelters need to know that support will be there to protect especially vulnerable populations. Telehealth Ontario has waits as long as 11 to 15 hours for people seeking information.

Will the Premier commit to laying out the government's contingency plans to address these concerns as soon as possible?

Hon. Merrilee Fullerton: Thank you again for this important question. I can tell you that our government is actively creating screening centres at hospitals across Ontario that will be separate from the hospitals themselves. This will be in special locations across Ontario.

We want to make sure that the Telehealth issue is resolved. Our government is committing additional resources to make sure that Telehealth is responsive and staffed properly, and responsive in a timely way. We're working very closely with Telehealth to ensure that they have the adequate supports.

Containment is of the utmost importance right now, and that will require advanced screening and that people have the proper communication tools at hand. Communication, communication, communication: Our government understands that and is acting on it.

We are committed to allocating additional resources to Telehealth as needed, and we are making sure that we will review virtual care options as well. Virtual care uptake through the command table is being assessed. And our command table, our regional tables, provincial table are working hard as we speak.

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

Ms. Andrea Horwath: Well, Speaker, there's definitely no doubt that families are especially concerned about the ability of Ontario's health system to cope with the dramatic increase in people seeking medical care. We know that hospitals are already routinely stretched well beyond their capacity.

Despite promises of ending hallway medicine, the government has continued to freeze funding, and that leaves hospitals treating patients in hallways and boardrooms to this very day.

So will the government be announcing their plans to support hospitals as COVID-19 spreads? And if so, will that include the announcement of new additional funding resources for hospitals?

Hon. Merrilee Fullerton: Again, thank you for the question. Our government is working closely with our counterparts in collaborating with different levels of government, including our public health agencies and the federal government. The federal government has announced \$1 billion to help provinces to address this issue, so we'll be looking forward to how that will best be used for our hospitals.

Our first wave of assessment centres is established at Brampton Civic, the Ottawa Hospital, North York General, Mackenzie Health, Scarborough Health Network and Trillium Health Partners. These centres will help with the testing that is so badly needed right now.

Our government is doing everything possible to make sure that people are adequately screened and that active screening is taking place. We are making sure that Ontarians have access to credible, up-to-date information, and the public education campaign is up and running. For

resources, you can go to ontario.ca/coronavirus, updated twice daily at 10:30 and 5:30, seven days a week. Our website provides relevant information in 30 different languages.

Communication, communication, communication of our plan is ongoing. Swift action is—

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

EMPLOYMENT STANDARDS

Ms. Andrea Horwath: My next question is also for the Premier. The Ford government's decision to make sick notes mandatory and strip workers of paid sick days was concerning to both health experts and working people when it was passed two years ago. Now, in light of the COVID-19 pandemic, it poses even more serious threats to public health.

This morning, doctors, nurses and other health providers here at Queen's Park spoke out in a press conference, urging the government to reverse their changes to these policies. Will the government do that?

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): The Minister of Long-Term Care.

Hon. Merrilee Fullerton: Thank you for the question. I want to reiterate our government's commitment to the safety and well-being of all Ontarians and our front-line workers. That's why we are looking at asking the federal government to increase the health transfers to 5%. This is really important, that we understand how different levels of government can contribute to this. We're all in this together. This is not a time for vitriol. This is a time for active and responsive caring and compassion for each one of us.

We all have responsibility for our own health and the health of others. And we're recommending that people who feel ill stay at home, and we encourage employers to support that advice. This is a time for unity. This is a time for working together. This is a time for caring and not vitriol.

1040

Employers have the option to require reasonable proof of the circumstances that entitle the employee to leave.

Our government will continue to work with our federal counterparts to coordinate our response to COVID-19, and that includes addressing the needs of our front-line workers.

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

Ms. Andrea Horwath: Speaker, what we're asking this government to do is to roll back their decision on sick notes being required in this province writ large. Every employer should not be asking any worker for a sick note. We should make sure that those workers have paid sick days to rely on, so that their financial ability is maintained.

It's not just us, of course. Doctors, nurses and public health specialists are all speaking out for a simple reason: There is no point whatsoever in telling workers to take time away from work if their work won't allow that to

happen. They're calling for paid sick days, emergency leave and an end to mandatory sick notes.

We have already made it clear that we will work with this government to ensure that legislation rolling back these policies passes quickly in this House.

Why is the government refusing to adopt these common-sense measures that are coming from all kinds of different sources in terms of recommendations?

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): The Minister of Labour, Training and Skills Development.

Hon. Monte McNaughton: Thank you to the Leader of the Opposition for that question. I can assure her that we are monitoring the situation minute by minute here in the province and across the country.

Mr. Speaker, I encourage employers to be reasonable, to be responsible, and the ones I've spoken to have acted that way.

I also want to highlight what the Premier just said this morning. He is in Ottawa, meeting with the Prime Minister, the Deputy Prime Minister, all the Premiers and territorial leaders. First off, he thanked the Prime Minister for the \$1 billion in funding to the provinces and territories. He also asked the Prime Minister and the federal government to increase health transfers to Ontario by just over 5% per year.

I'll have more to say in the next answer.

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

Ms. Andrea Horwath: With all due respect, monitoring and encouragement is not leadership on a file like this. We need leadership, and we need the government to act.

People who can't afford to take a sick day from work are not going to take a sick day. People who could lose their job if they take a sick day will go to work. They will not take a day off.

No one should have to choose between their job and their health—no one. That choice puts all of our health at risk.

The Ford government knows that their current laws put public health at risk. Now is the time to change those laws, in the midst of the situation that we are facing.

Why is this government refusing to make the changes that are being recommended by experts? The changes need to happen. It's not about encouragement. It's not about simply monitoring. Make the changes.

Hon. Monte McNaughton: As the member opposite knows, our government added three new types of leave: sick leave, family responsibility leave and bereavement leave.

Mr. Speaker, we need everyone working together on this issue. This is a global challenge for every single person across the globe.

I want to pay tribute to our front-line health care workers, who are working every single day for the health and well-being of the people of this province.

I also want to commend the Deputy Premier of Ontario, the health minister, Christine Elliott, who is doing an outstanding job communicating this issue with all of the people of the province.

As well, I want to thank the Chief Medical Officer of Health for the province of Ontario, who is working very, very closely right across the government with all ministers.

As I said, we're monitoring this situation minute by minute.

HEALTH CARE

Mr. Gurratan Singh: Like everyone, families in my community of Brampton are worried about the COVID-19 pandemic. But Brampton has been struggling with a health care challenge for years. Before the COVID-19 outbreak, Brampton city council declared a health care emergency because our hospital routinely operates beyond capacity.

Yesterday, the Premier claimed that he had a plan for every scenario regarding the COVID-19 pandemic. Given the chronic underfunding of Brampton Civic, the thousands of people treated in our hospital's hallways and the health care crisis declared by the city of Brampton, what is this government's plan to meet Brampton's health care needs? My question is to the Premier.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): The Minister of Long-Term Care to reply.

Hon. Merrilee Fullerton: Hallway health care is a complex issue, and hospitals across Ontario have been feeling the pressures for many years. Under the previous government, very little was done to address that for 15 long years, so due to the previous government's mismanagement, we are dealing with this reality now.

Our government's campaign promise was to relieve hallway health care and we've been diligently working on that ever since. We know that there are many pieces to this, and our efforts have included investing millions and billions of dollars into our health care system: \$384 million in our hospital sector to maintain critical hospital capacity, increase access to highly specialized and innovative treatments and support the volume. We have an aging population, a growing population, and the neglect of 15 years of the previous government takes time to settle. Our estimates suggest that these investments will help. It will take time. I appreciate your concerns.

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

Mr. Gurratan Singh: Back to the Premier: The people of Brampton see the incredible work our public health teams are doing to protect our community, but they also know that our local health system is facing tremendous strains already. Hallway medicine has been a fact of life in Brampton under Conservative and Liberal governments.

Will the government commit the resources Brampton needs to meet the COVID-19 pandemic and permanently stop the hallway medicine emergency in our city?

Hon. Merrilee Fullerton: Once again, in the case of Brampton, we've announced that the first wave of assessment centres will be established at the Brampton Civic. That is one of the hospitals that will be included. The active screening processes, the treatment centres, the testing capacity are being ramped up. They will be ramped

up across Ontario, and we're working with Public Health Ontario.

We recognize that COVID-19 is novel. We are learning every day about the issues associated with it, and understanding the science and the evidence behind how we respond to it. We have amazing people working non-stop at Public Health Ontario and our federal counterpart as well, making sure that our front-line providers, as well as long-term-care homes, are equipped and ready to deal with it.

We've launched a province-wide public education campaign, and we want to make sure everyone understands we're all in this together. We have to work together to solve this issue. It will take all our resources and all of our compassion.

ONTARIO PROVINCIAL POLICE

Ms. Jane McKenna: My question is for the Solicitor General. The mental health and well-being of police and other first responders in Ontario is incredibly important to all Ontarians. I want to thank all the front-line police officers that keep us safe every day.

I was pleased last year that the Solicitor General commissioned an external, independent review panel to review and report back on the workplace culture of the OPP. And I'm glad that, this week, the Solicitor General shared the report and its recommendations, and an update of our government's progress in implementing those recommendations.

Can the Solicitor General share with this House the circumstances that led to her commissioning this report?

Hon. Sylvia Jones: Thank you to the member from Burlington. I know that there are many colleagues on this side of the House and on the other side that have had a long and focused interest on well-being, particularly related to mental health and, of course now in my current role, as it relates to our front-line officers.

The tragic deaths that have occurred over a number of years in OPP ranks led us, as a government, last April to strike a commission. This independent panel has done some excellent work. This will not be easy work for us to do, but it is critically important to ensure for our front-line officers that when they need help, when they reach out, the assistance is there.

I am so pleased that we are working in cooperation with OPP Commissioner Carrique and his management team. Equally important, Rob Jamieson is the president of the Ontario Provincial Police Association.

1050

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

Ms. Jane McKenna: Thank you to the Solicitor General for that response and for all your hard work. I'm proud that our government, under the leadership of this Solicitor General and Premier Ford, has been taking action on this critically important issue.

Speaker, the review panel's report makes it clear that action is required to improve the workplace culture at the

OPP. Our dedicated and selfless front-line heroes deserve nothing less than our absolute commitment, leadership and support. I'm confident that our Solicitor General, our Premier and our entire government are committed to doing the necessary work to get this right.

Can the Solicitor General share how we are taking action in response to the recommendations of the independent review panel?

Hon. Sylvia Jones: Thank you for raising this. It gives me an opportunity to talk about the very positive things that we have already begun to do.

This report truly is a turning point in the transition to a healthier, more positive and supportive workplace. The reviewers made 66 recommendations, Speaker, and of those, 42 are already complete, in progress or well under way. It speaks to the commitment that Commissioner Carrique, as the head of the OPP, Rob Jamieson as the head of the OPP Association, and our government have, to ensure that people have the supports where and when they need them. And in the coming weeks and months, you will find that there are new and exciting announcements that will be made that add to what the independent review panel has recommended.

COVID-19

Ms. Marit Stiles: This question is for the Premier. As Ontarians are watching the developments around the COVID-19 pandemic unfold, there is, understandably, growing concern among parents and guardians about protections for our kids in our school system.

While so far the virus has had very limited impact on children younger than 10, the nature of children's interactions could increase the risk of transmission in schools.

Can the Premier tell the House what steps the government is taking to support school boards and families as they deal with the threat of COVID-19?

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): The Minister of Long-Term Care.

Hon. Merrilee Fullerton: Thank you for the question. The health and well-being of Ontarians, including students and school staff, is Ontario's top priority. Students, parents and school communities should rest assured that we are working together in close cooperation with partners in both the education and the health care sectors to ensure the continued safety of students and staff.

In the course of case and contact management, public health units can contact employers, schools, restaurants and places of business. This is a completely normal part of Ontario's response to COVID-19, and it means our system is working.

Our government will continue to keep school boards up to date on the current situation and work to contain COVID-19. We all have a role to play in this. We all have respect and responsibility for our own health and the health of others.

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

Ms. Marit Stiles: Thank you to the minister for that response. I have to say, though, that I was hoping we

would get a little bit more detail here in the House about what's happening now. What we're hearing is that there are going to be regular calls starting after March break. That is concerning, I think, for a lot of us. We want to know that this is happening now, that there's a plan in place and that there's complete transparency.

School boards are already taking, as we know, extra precautions to guard against outbreaks. Custodians are logging extra hours. Extra cleaning and sanitizing supplies are being ordered. But at a time when we've seen school boards squeezed and custodial staff laid off, the government needs to be prepared to provide resources as necessary.

During the H1N1 outbreak, the province provided additional funds to offset these extra costs for boards. Is this government prepared to do the same for COVID-19?

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): The Minister of Education to reply.

Hon. Stephen Lecce: Thank you to the member opposite for the question. I think we all have a shared interest in ensuring the safety of our students and our staff in our schools. That's why, on the first presumptive positive case of COVID-19, I asked, with the support of the Minister of Health and Deputy Premier, to get the Chief Medical Officer of Health to speak to every director of education this Sunday, the day after that first case.

Information is flowing in real time. We have constant dialogue with directors and our stakeholders within the system to ensure that staff and students remain safe.

Of course, Speaker, we have increased the heightened vigilance in schools to ensure the safety of our personnel. The federal government, as well, has provided guidelines surrounding best practices to keep safe.

We are obviously going to continue to have those discussions in real time with the directors of education, in consultation with the Chief Medical Officer of Health, to ensure that every student and every staff member in Ontario remains safe.

COVID-19

Mr. John Fraser: My question is for the Acting Premier. Speaker, COVID-19 is a challenge we're all facing together. We do, I think, on all sides appreciate the government's invitation to yesterday's briefing on the government's efforts and some updates.

My question relates to the \$100-million contingency fund that the Premier announced yesterday. Speaker, through you, my questions are, and there are two: Is the \$100-million contingency fund solely for anticipated health care costs? And secondly, is the money allocated in this fiscal year, or is it the anticipated contingency in the upcoming budget?

Hon. Paul Calandra: I appreciate the question from the honourable member. Just let me thank oth himself, the leader of the Green Party and the Leader of the Opposition for making themselves available for a briefing with the Premier, the Minister of Finance and the Minister of Health yesterday.

The initial funding that was announced by the Minister of Finance is directed to preserve and protect health care. It would be made available, obviously, immediately. We are continuing to monitor the situation. It is an initial contribution. We're obviously monitoring the situation very, very closely and if more steps need to be taken, the government stands ready to make those additional resources available.

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

Mr. John Fraser: I thank the House leader for his answer. I appreciate the clarity, and Ontarians will need further clarity as to the government's contingencies going forward for both health care costs and the economic impacts that are going to be felt in this province. I would encourage the government to be open-minded about those potential impacts.

We all know the public health advice that we're getting, which we can all participate in, which is to wash your hands and don't touch your face. If you're sick, stay home. Practise social distancing. Call if you're concerned.

But we know that next week is March break, and millions of kids are going to be off. They're going to be with their families. I know the Premier said this morning that he wants families to have a good time, and we all agree. Many of those students and their families have travel plans, and we all know that travel is going to create some risk. Parents are looking for direction and advice.

Through you, Speaker: Does the government have any advice for parents about this March break and travel?

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

Hon. Stephen Lecce: I thank the member opposite for the question. Indeed, some of these parents and students may be travelling on the eve of March break. As I noted in the prior question, we are encouraging all citizens, including, of course, staff, to strictly adhere to the guidelines set by both the province and the federal government with respect to travel, informed by the Chief Medical Officers of Health of Ontario and Canada with respect to travel and isolation protocols.

To ensure that students and staff returning from March break remain safe is the paramount priority, I think, of all members of this Legislature, united to ensure that the citizens of this province travel safely and adhere to those precautions, as mentioned by the Chief Medical Officer of Health.

Yesterday I convened a meeting of all ministers of education across the country, on my request, to help ensure that there's a national dialogue about how we can ensure that we take action to combat this virus and ensure the safety of all citizens in Canada.

SKILLS TRAINING

Mr. Parm Gill: My question is for the Minister of Labour, Training and Skills Development. Landing a good job is not just about a paycheque; it also gives people purpose and dignity. Everyone is better off when people

are working. For too many people across the province, it is hard to put a roof over their head.

At a time when Ontario has a talented, skilled and dedicated workforce with so much to offer, can the Minister of Labour, Training and Skills Development please tell this House how we're helping laid-off manufacturing workers find work?

1100

Hon. Monte McNaughton: I want to thank the member for Milton for that excellent and important question.

Mr. Speaker, we are helping manufacturing workers retrain and get jobs faster. I firmly believe that with the right kind of training and support, people and businesses can have great opportunities in our ever-changing economy.

On Tuesday, I was pleased to meet Maksud. He was an electrician in India and came to Ontario with \$500 in his pocket. After 16 years, he was laid off from his job at a textile company. Through our Second Career program, he retrained, got a diploma, and now has an excellent job. In his own words, Maksud says that his dream came true right here in Canada. We need more stories like Maksud's.

We're going to continue to work with all of our workers right across the province so they have the best opportunities possible.

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

Mr. Parm Gill: Thank you, Minister, for that answer. I'm pleased to hear that our government is committed to supporting our manufacturing workers and creating opportunities for them.

Mr. Speaker, it's important to remember that jobs are about people. Every time there is a layoff, workers, their families and their communities are impacted.

Can the minister please share with this House how he is making it easier for laid-off workers to get back to work sooner?

Hon. Monte McNaughton: Thank you again for that question.

Mr. Speaker, last year, the Second Career program helped train more than 3,800 people. This program offers assistance not only with training, but also for related costs like books and transportation. But I agree that we need to make it work sooner and better for Ontario's workers. Recently, with the member for Cambridge and the member for Kitchener South–Hespeler, I announced that we have ended the delay for laid-off manufacturing workers to get retrained in Ontario. We are adapting the program to make it work better for the people of this province.

Mr. Speaker, we will always stand with the working men and women of this province, because when everyone can contribute to the economy, our communities and our province can prosper.

LICENCE PLATES

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

Recently, the Premier was heartbroken that there won't be PC-blue plates on every Ontario vehicle. But this issue isn't heartbreaking; it's absurd and mind-boggling.

It's so mind-boggling that even one of this government's former top officials, Jenni Byrne, weighed in publicly and said, "There is no defending it. This issue was managed absolutely terribly. I can't imagine how it could have been managed worse." Ms. Byrne went on to say, "The government seemingly defended this licence plate issue for three days. This was the hill they were going to die on, and then it became evident four days, five days in, that it wasn't going away and there actually was a problem with the licence plates."

Speaker, she's not wrong, and inquiring minds want to know what will be tomorrow's hill to die on for this Premier. Will it be billboards, or could it be something like autism services, clean drinking water, affordable housing or public health?

Hon. Paul Calandra: Obviously, for us, what we're doing right now is, we're focused on the economy, and we're focused on COVID-19. That's the priority of this government.

I can appreciate the role that the opposition has in both supporting the government in times of a health emergency and also extracting accountability. But I'm sure the member opposite can appreciate that we will continue to focus on what matters most to the people of Ontario, and that's the health and safety of all Ontarians in communities across the province.

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

Ms. Jennifer K. French: This strange, winding road we've all been on with the Premier's hand-picked party plates has captivated the attention of folks across the province. It has been a weird circus that never should have happened.

This Premier's heartbreak, however, doesn't seem like a good enough reason to bury the costs and details of these party-blue licence plates. I have asked repeatedly, and the government has dodged repeatedly. But Ontario still deserves the answer. How can this government justify using a non-disclosure agreement to hide their self-serving misuse of public money?

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): The Minister of Government and Consumer Services.

Hon. Lisa M. Thompson: I want to assure everyone in this House and everyone watching today that we are working with our stakeholders and we're working with the vendor in terms of delivering a product that addresses the concerns that we have taken very seriously.

Again, I appreciate that people felt that they could speak to us and share their concerns. Ontarians should feel confident that they have a government that is actually responding and acting on those concerns. I can tell you that our focus is absolutely on delivering an enhanced plate that meets the highest standards.

EMPLOYMENT STANDARDS

Mr. Mike Schreiner: My question is for the Acting Premier.

I want to first thank the Premier for hosting an all-party meeting for a briefing on COVID-19 yesterday, and I want

to thank the Leader of the Opposition for pushing to have the meeting. I think it's really important, at this moment in time, that we work across party lines.

I also think it's important that all Ontarians work together to care for each other. As we all work hard to contain COVID-19, health experts are saying that if you're showing symptoms, self-quarantine. The bottom line is: If you're sick, stay home.

But many Ontarians cannot afford to stay home. We've been seeing articles in the newspapers about people struggling: Are they going to pay the rent or stay home?

I'm going to ask the Acting Premier: Will the government commit to a paid sick and emergency leave program so people can self-quarantine without fear of not being able to pay their rent or mortgage or put food on the table?

Hon. Paul Calandra: I thank the honourable member for attending the briefing yesterday. As the member knows, the initial response was \$100 million, which goes to protecting the health and safety of those who are dealing with it on the front line.

We are working very closely with our federal partners to ensure that Ontarians and Canadians, more broadly, are protected in this. I know that the federal government has announced a number of measures through employment insurance to make it easier and quicker for Ontarians who are impacted by COVID-19 to access support.

As the Minister of Finance said yesterday, we are monitoring the economic situation very, very closely, not only across Ontario but with our partners across the country, to ensure that we can respond to that, once we have the health care situation under control across Ontario. But obviously, we are going to continue to work with the federal government and with all members to ensure that Ontarians are safe and secure in this time.

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

Mr. Mike Schreiner: I appreciate the House leader's response, but self-quarantining, staying home from work when you're sick, is directly related to public health. Public health officials are saying, "If you're sick, stay home," but not all workers can afford to stay home. As a matter of fact, EI supports don't always benefit people who are in the hospitality industry, the service industry and the gig economy. I was just reading an article in the National Post this morning about workers saying that they are going to go to work even if they're sick, because they can't afford not to.

While I would like to see a permanent reversal of the government's move to cancel paid sick days and sick notes, I'm wondering if the minister would at least agree to a temporary program to support workers to stay home while we're trying to contain COVID-19.

Hon. Paul Calandra: As I said in my initial response, the Premier, the Minister of Finance and Minister of Health are in Ottawa today meeting with the Prime Minister, the Deputy Prime Minister and Premiers across Canada. Many of the Premiers, the member will know, share some of the same concerns. We understand that across the economy, there are impacts which will be felt,

and that different areas of the economy are impacted in a different way.

As we said, the initial investment of \$100 million is, first and foremost, to ensure the safety and security of those people who are dealing with this on the front line. The federal government has made some initial moves to assist through employment insurance, and we will continue to monitor the situation so that Ontarians can be assured that not only will we get through this, but we'll get through this together.

I think it also highlights the need to ensure that the province is always on sound fiscal footing. I appreciate the fact that we've been able to do that in 18 short months.

ANTI-BULLYING INITIATIVES

Mr. Stan Cho: I know how devastating bullying can be on a child. Today in the Legislature, I have a very special visitor who has been dealing with some bullies at his school. He's a young, bright, wonderful person. He and all other victims of bullying do not deserve such treatment.

1110

We know that the longer a child is bullied, the more likely they are to develop physical, emotional and psychological scars that can last a lifetime. That should never happen. We need to learn from these incidents and take action to protect our children.

Can the Minister of Education please tell us how the government is combatting the bullying issues that we have in Ontario schools, and what we can do to stop this problem in the province of Ontario?

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Government House leader to reply.

Hon. Paul Calandra: I appreciate the question from the member for Willowdale. Let me just reach out to the guest he has brought with him today, to tell him that not only this side but all members of this House stand with him constantly.

This is something that we all agree should not be taking place in the province of Ontario. I know that the Minister of Education has been working very closely across party lines to address this very real problem in schools across the province.

I have two young daughters. Often I hear some of the stories that they bring back and they recount, and I wish I could say that they weren't, on occasion, themselves the victims of bullying. As a parent, it breaks your heart, but as a parliamentarian, it makes me want to redouble my efforts to work across the floor with my colleagues to make sure that we educate our students and work with our school partners to make sure that we can put an end to this.

Again, to the honourable young man who joins us in the galleries, thank you so much for being here and having the courage to share your story with us.

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

Mr. Stan Cho: I'm glad to hear that the government House leader and this government do indeed take the issue of bullying very, very seriously.

Through you, Mr. Speaker: I'd like to thank the government House leader for recognizing that the topic of bullying is a non-partisan issue. I encourage all members of this House to work together to provide constructive ideas on how we can eradicate this problem for good in our schools here in the province. No kid should ever have to go through bullying. This government is committed to making sure that we get rid of it in our schools and we get rid of it in our societies. I look forward to those constructive discussions.

I was wondering if the government House leader could provide some other examples of what we're working on in government to prevent bullying, and how we can help each other get rid of this problem once and for all.

Hon. Paul Calandra: Again, let me just thank the member for Willowdale for the question. Our government is taking action to combat bullying, but the member is correct: We need to learn more about the systemic challenges surrounding bullying so we can drill down and focus our attention accordingly to combat it.

In November, the minister announced the assignment of the member for Scarborough Centre, who is a former teacher, to advise on education matters, with a focus on bullying prevention. I know that we all value that advice.

The government will also conduct a province-wide online survey to better understand students' experiences with bullying. We will conduct a review of school reporting practices on bullying, and a review of the definition of bullying in ministry policies, to ensure it reflects the realities of today. We are working to change the culture to one where everyone sees inherent dignity in the value of a person, irrespective of their faith, heritage, orientation, race or income.

Finally, on a day when we're all thinking of a lot of different things, we again congratulate and thank the young man who joins us today for his courage in bringing this forward.

WINTER HIGHWAY MAINTENANCE

Mr. Guy Bourgoin: My question is for the Acting Premier. Two months ago, almost to the day, three people died in a winter road collision on Highway 11/17 near the junction with Highway 102 in Thunder Bay. Every single time there is a fatal accident like this one, there is a family that is torn apart. There are people and an entire region that come to a halt.

When questioned about the state of northern Ontario road maintenance, the minister indicated that Highway 11/17 is cleared of snow in an average of seven hours. Well, that came as a shock to someone who routinely drives those highways. That is less time than it takes to clear the 401, Speaker.

Can the Acting Premier explain the seven hours, when northern Ontarians see roads packed with snow and ice every single day?

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): The Associate Minister of Transportation (GTA).

Hon. Kinga Surma: I want to thank the member for the question. Certainly, safety is the number one priority

for the Ministry of Transportation as well as for all the members in the House.

The Ministry of Transportation has been working very diligently over a number of years to improve winter maintenance and snow removal across our northern communities—such as greater oversight with contractors—as well as working with contractors so that they have the equipment necessary so that they can remove snow as quickly as possible.

I will continue to work with the members opposite to ensure that all drivers on our highways are safe, and that our roads continue to be rated amongst the safest in North America.

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

Mr. Guy Bourgoin: Thank you for explaining the seven hours.

Speaker, people may say that our highways have always been treacherous and risky. But since the Liberal government privatized the winter maintenance system and enforced performance-based area maintenance contracts in 2009, things have gone from risky to deadly.

To be fair, the member from Nipissing made himself a name by telling the then Minister of Transportation, now the leader of the Ontario Liberals, that driving conditions in the north are disgraceful. Yet neither the member from Nipissing nor any of his fellow northern ministers want to pull back from the Liberals' area maintenance contracts mess.

Acting Premier, can you tell northern Ontarians if your government is satisfied with the Liberals' infamous area maintenance contracts, yes or no?

Hon. Kinga Surma: Again, I thank the member for the question. Again, I want to reiterate that safety is the number one priority for the Ministry of Transportation. It certainly is the number one priority for our cabinet members, and our members of caucus who represent northern communities.

I want to remind the member opposite that his very own party voted, in estimates, against an additional \$40 million to keep our northern roads safe. Maybe you should explain that to your constituents.

NATURAL GAS

Mr. Randy Pettapiece: My question is for the Associate Minister of Energy. As the parliamentary assistant to the Minister of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs, I've had the privilege to meet with farmers across the province. They tell me that energy is one of the largest inputs on farms. They tell me that access to natural gas will help boost the competitiveness of rural Ontario communities, businesses and farms—and they're right.

Could the associate minister please explain how the Natural Gas Expansion Support Program is supporting farmers in rural communities across Ontario?

Hon. Bill Walker: I thank the parliamentary assistant to the Minister of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs for a great question, and for his work on behalf of our province's agricultural community.

Alongside our great Minister of Government and Consumer Services, I had the pleasure of launching phase 2 of the Natural Gas Expansion Support Program at Snobelen Farms, near Lucknow, which was connected to natural gas through phase 1 of the program. Sam Snobelen, president of Snobelen Farms, said, “We have competitors that are serviced with natural gas. It put us at a real disadvantage during the rail strike when there was no propane available. They could keep their elevators and facilities running because they had natural gas and we didn’t. So, we’re going to be right back up on a level playing field.” That’s huge news for people like the Snobelens.

Our government knows that access to natural gas drives down costs, increases competitiveness, provides certainty for farmers and creates jobs across the province. We’re excited about phase 2.

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

Mr. Randy Pettapiece: Thank you to the associate minister for his response.

Rural Ontario could simply not win under the Del Duca Liberals. About four years ago, they tried to effectively ban natural gas. No, we haven’t forgotten.

I’ve long spoken up for better access to natural gas in Perth–Wellington, in places like Perth East and the township of Mapleton, to name just a few, and I’ll continue speaking up for those without access to natural gas.

It’s refreshing that our government has a plan to support rural, remote and Indigenous communities through the Natural Gas Expansion Support Program.

Could the associate minister please tell us what communities are saying about this government’s program?

1120

Hon. Bill Walker: Again, a great question from the honourable member from Perth–Wellington.

After years of neglect from the Del Duca Liberals, municipalities across rural Ontario are excited about our government’s plan to build Ontario together. Communities connected through phase 1 of the program are incredibly excited about the potential that these projects have for residents and businesses.

Chief Kelly LaRocca of the Mississaugas of Scugog Island said the project in her community will provide the “community with a more affordable and environmentally way to heat homes and businesses.”

Darrin Canniff, mayor of Chatham-Kent, said that the project in his community “is vital because it allows for the immediate development and expansion of businesses in our community.”

We continue to hear from numerous municipalities that are keen to submit new projects through phase 2. We are encouraging those communities to partner with a natural gas utility to do so before June 4 of this year. We look forward to continuing the program.

FLOODING

Mr. Percy Hatfield: My question is to the Acting Premier, the government House leader. Good morning, sir.

Flooding on our lakes and rivers has turned many dreams into nightmares in southwestern Ontario. A state of emergency has been declared along Erie Shore Drive in Chatham-Kent. Homeowners there have had to evacuate. They don’t know if they’ll ever be able to return to their homes. The banks and cliffs are eroding and falling into Lake Erie at Wheatley Provincial Park, a dike has been breached in the Hillman Marsh in Leamington. For safety reasons, the OPP have closed a street to traffic in Belle River. Windsor has had to spend \$5 million at our municipal marina to build floating docks because of the high water levels.

This government slashed funding for flood response in their previous budget. Will they reverse those cuts in the new budget expected later this month?

Hon. Paul Calandra: I appreciate the question from the honourable gentleman. As the member will know, the Minister of Natural Resources convened a panel to investigate and to provide advice to the government with respect to a new flood strategy for the province of Ontario.

The member is quite correct: For a number of years—for 15 long years—this was something that was virtually ignored by the previous government. We’re trying to catch up in many instances.

The panel, which was convened by Mr. Doug McNeil, has come back with a number of recommendations for the government. Look, we know that we can’t prevent flooding, but we can certainly put in place policies that help to reduce it in many instances. That means working with our federal and municipal partners. It means working on ensuring that developments don’t occur near flood zones. We’re going to continue to work on that. We’re going to continue to work through the recommendations of the panel and ensure that all communities are safe and secure and that we catch up to the work that hadn’t been done for 15 years.

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

Mr. Percy Hatfield: The government House leader is correct: The government recently released their flood strategy. But their strategy seems to be, “Well, we’ve studied it, we know flooding is a problem, but we’re not going to do anything about it.” In fact, their flood strategy doesn’t come with one single nickel of funding—not a nickel—despite being told by their expert adviser that more funding is badly needed.

The climate crisis in Ontario is in full swing. This government seems to be content pretending the problem will fix itself. Well, it won’t, and our constituents deserve better.

Speaker, will the government agree to reverse course and restore the funding they cut from flood mitigation programs in southwestern Ontario?

Hon. Paul Calandra: Mr. Speaker, we just heard that for 15 long years, not much was done on this file. So, certainly, we’re not going to reverse course and go back to a time when the Del Duca Liberals failed the province of Ontario, often with the support of the NDP. We’re going to move forward.

We are working very closely with our municipal friends. The minister has brought forward a strategy through the work of Mr. McNeil. We've made significant investments across the province already. We're going to continue to make more investments by working with our municipal and federal partners to get the job done. I know the Minister of Infrastructure has a number of projects that we are awaiting approval from the federal government on.

Obviously, we are going to focus on working with our partners to ensure that all communities are safe and that individuals can have the confidence that the government of the Ontario is moving forward with a strategy that will work after 15 years of neglect.

ACCESSIBILITY FOR PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES

Mr. Logan Kanapathi: My question is for the Minister for Seniors and Accessibility. Last year, the Honourable David Onley completed his review of the AODA. That means the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disability Act. Mr. Onley's report not only cited the "soul-crushing barriers" faced every day by Ontarians with disabilities, but he also noted that the previous government fell short in taking action.

Can the minister tell us what he's doing to get accessibility back on track after 15 years of the Del Duca Liberals allowing us to fall behind?

Hon. Raymond Sung Joon Cho: Thank you to the member for this excellent question. Our government is taking action now. In January, I announced Advancing Accessibility in Ontario, our government's plan to get accessibility back on track. This plan includes breaking down barriers in the built environment; the government leading by example in its role as a policy maker, service provider and employer; increasing participation in the economy for people with disabilities; and improving understanding and awareness about accessibility.

Unlike the Del Duca Liberals, we will waste no time.

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

Mr. Logan Kanapathi: Thank you, Minister, for that answer, and thank you for all your great work, because accessibility is a very important piece of our Legislature. Also retrofitting the current building—you and I talk about those issues.

It's great to see that our government is taking action to advance accessibility in Ontario. Can the minister give us some more specific examples of how this plan will help to remove barriers for Ontarians with a disability?

Hon. Raymond Sung Joon Cho: Our government is taking quick action with practical measures to break down barriers. One step we have taken, which I'm very proud of, is our new partnership with the Ontario Building Officials Association, or OBOA. With our support, the OBOA is developing a new training course in accessibility and universal design so that municipal building officials across Ontario can all become accessibility champions.

I will have more to announce soon because, unlike the Del Duca Liberals, we are taking action now.

NORTHERN HIGHWAY IMPROVEMENT

Mr. Jamie West: My question is to the Acting Premier. People in the ridings of Sudbury and Nickel Belt and across northern Ontario have waited over 14 years for the completion of the four-laning of Highway 69, and they're frustrated. Expanding this highway is vital for safe and reliable access to Ontario's north. There are only 68 kilometres left, but we still don't know when the project will be completed.

The Greater Sudbury Chamber of Commerce's budget recommendation continues to urge the government to expedite the completion of the four-laning of Highway 69. The economic prosperity of our region depends on there being no further delays.

Why does the government continue to leave northerners in the dark on when the four-laning of Highway 69 will finally be completed?

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): The Associate Minister of Transportation (GTA).

Hon. Kinga Surma: Thank you very much to the member for the question.

In this House, I just want to again thank our very strong advocates, our cabinet members and our caucus members who advocate for northern Ontarians every single day in this House.

We've already invested \$850 million to complete 70 kilometres of this project. We've also committed an additional \$200 million in terms of initiating the construction.

Our government has been very clear that we believe in investing money in critical infrastructure, whether it's highway infrastructure or public transit. We are making those key investments. We're spending \$2.3 billion alone this year to invest in our highway network across the province of Ontario.

1130

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

Mr. Jamie West: Back to the Acting Premier: The concern here is the cost of demobilizing and remobilizing if we don't complete it now.

Last year, I asked a similar question to the Minister of Transportation, about when people in my riding could expect to see the four-laning of Highway 69 completed. The minister told me to look forward to the upcoming 2019 budget. But last year's budget had no new funding and no timeline for completion.

Will the Premier continue to string people along in northern Ontario, like the Liberals did for more than a decade, or will he listen to the people of Sudbury, to the people of Nickel Belt, and to the Sudbury Chamber of Commerce, and commit to making Highway 69 a priority in the 2020 budget? Will he release the funding needed to start the work on the last 68 kilometres of Highway 69 as soon as possible?

Hon. Kinga Surma: We've already announced that Highway 69 is a priority for this government, and we've backed that commitment with \$850 million and another \$200 million. That is a significant amount of financial investment.

Again, we are investing \$2.3 billion across the province of Ontario in terms of highway infrastructure, to improve our highway network so that we can get Ontarians moving again.

HUMAN TRAFFICKING

Mr. Amarjot Sandhu: My question is for the Solicitor General.

Last week, the Solicitor General and the Associate Minister of Children and Women's Issues launched our new, comprehensive, cross-government strategy to tackle the crime of human trafficking in Ontario.

Mr. Speaker, through my experience while meeting with constituents and community leaders in Brampton, I have come to understand the scale of human trafficking. This is not only a dominant issue; it is an epidemic issue.

We all have a role to play in the fight against human trafficking, which is why my question focuses on the cross-government part of this strategy.

Can the Solicitor General share how our strategy allows for broad participation across many ministries and sectors?

Hon. Sylvia Jones: Thank you to the member from Brampton West. He's absolutely right. The initiative that Premier Ford has tasked us with is actually something that hits many ministries, and we are working collaboratively on it.

While we ensure that individuals who are being sex-trafficked and labour-trafficked are removed from those terrible situations, we also need to have the supports in place to support, treat and ultimately pass them through the court system for the individuals who are recruiting individuals. It's an important piece of what we have to do.

Interjection.

Hon. Sylvia Jones: It's really unfortunate that the member from Hamilton doesn't understand that the average age of human trafficking is the same age as these pages—so if you would actually listen for a minute and start to understand what kind of commitment we are making.

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Order.

I'll remind members to make their comments through the Chair.

Supplementary question.

Mr. Amarjot Sandhu: Thank you to the Solicitor General for the response. This is a critically important issue, and it's clear that our government is stepping up to the plate.

Of course, tackling human trafficking requires supporting our law enforcement partners to ensure that offenders can be held accountable and brought to justice. This is not always easy, given that human trafficking is a complex,

province-wide crime that often includes ties to other forms of organized crime.

Speaker, can the Solicitor General explain how our government's new anti-human trafficking strategy supports the theme of holding offenders accountable, and builds on our government's work to support police services?

Hon. Sylvia Jones: Thank you for the member's interest in this issue. I know that there are many, many colleagues who understand the importance of why we are taking a government-wide approach. It really speaks to the commitment that we've made, the investments that we are making in Solicitor General, in Attorney General, and of course in children and youth—which has been the largest investment that we have announced.

It strikes me as strange that the members opposite would choose to try to politicize this issue when historically we have worked very, very co-operatively as members, as parents, as parliamentarians.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): That concludes our question period for this morning, and for this week as well.

LEGISLATIVE PAGES

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): I'm going to ask our pages to now assemble.

It's now time to say a word of thanks to our legislative pages for the outstanding work that they have done over the last almost four weeks. Our pages are smart, trustworthy and hard-working. They are indispensable to the effective functioning of the chamber. They cheerfully and efficiently deliver notes, run errands, transport important documents throughout the precinct, and make sure that our water glasses are always full. We are indeed fortunate to have them here.

Our pages depart having made many new friends, with a greater understanding of parliamentary democracy, and memories that will last them a lifetime. Each of them will go home and carry on and continue their studies, and will no doubt contribute to their communities, their province and their country in important ways.

We expect great things from all of you. Maybe some of you will someday take your seats in this House as members, or work here as staff. We wish all of you well.

Please join me in showing our appreciation to this group of legislative pages.

Applause.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Now, back to work.

Laughter.

PRIVATE MEMBERS' PUBLIC BUSINESS

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): I beg to inform the House that pursuant to standing order 101(c), a change has been made to the order of precedence on the ballot list for private members' public business such that Mr. Yarde assumes ballot item number 8 and Ms. Singh, Brampton Centre, assumes ballot item number 85.

NOTICE OF DISSATISFACTION

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Pursuant to standing order 36(a), the member for Oshawa has given notice of her dissatisfaction with the answer to her question given by the government House leader concerning the use of a non-disclosure agreement. This matter will be debated Tuesday, March 24, 2020.

Begum, Doly	Hassan, Faisal	Singh, Sara
Bell, Jessica	Hatfield, Percy	Stevens, Jennifer (Jennie)
Berns-McGown, Rima	Horwath, Andrea	Stiles, Marit
Bisson, Gilles	Kernaghan, Terence	Taylor, Monique
Bourgouin, Guy	Mantha, Michael	Vanthof, John
Burch, Jeff	Miller, Paul	West, Jamie
Fife, Catherine	Monteith-Farrell, Judith	Yarde, Kevin
French, Jennifer K.	Morrison, Suze	
Gates, Wayne	Rakocevic, Tom	

DEFERRED VOTES

SUPPLY ACT, 2020

LOI DE CRÉDITS DE 2020

Deferred vote on the motion for second reading of the following bill:

Bill 181, An Act to authorize the expenditure of certain amounts for the fiscal year ending March 31, 2020 / Projet de loi 181, Loi autorisant l'utilisation de certaines sommes pour l'exercice se terminant le 31 mars 2020.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Call in the members. This is a five-minute bell.

The division bells rang from 1137 to 1142.

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

On March 11, 2020, Mr. Bethlenfalvy moved second reading of Bill 181, An Act to authorize the expenditure of certain amounts for the fiscal year ending March 31, 2020.

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

Ayes

Baber, Roman	Kanapathi, Logan	Rasheed, Kaleed
Babikian, Aris	Karahalios, Belinda C.	Roberts, Jeremy
Bailey, Robert	Ke, Vincent	Romano, Ross
Barrett, Toby	Kramp, Daryl	Sabawy, Sheref
Bouma, Will	Kusendova, Natalia	Sandhu, Amarjot
Calandra, Paul	Lecce, Stephen	Sarkaria, Prabmeet Singh
Cho, Raymond Sung Joon	MacLeod, Lisa	Scott, Laurie
Cho, Stan	Martin, Robin	Skelly, Donna
Clark, Steve	Martow, Gila	Smith, Dave
Coe, Lorne	McDonell, Jim	Smith, Todd
Crawford, Stephen	McKenna, Jane	Surma, Kinga
Cuzzetto, Rudy	McNaughton, Monte	Tangri, Nina
Downey, Doug	Miller, Norman	Thanigasalam, Vijay
Fullerton, Merrilee	Nicholls, Rick	Thompson, Lisa M.
Ghamari, Goldie	Oosterhoff, Sam	Tibollo, Michael A.
Gill, Parm	Pang, Billy	Triantafilopoulos, Effie J.
Hardeman, Ernie	Park, Lindsey	Wai, Daisy
Harris, Mike	Parsa, Michael	Walker, Bill
Hogarth, Christine	Pettapiece, Randy	
Jones, Sylvia	Piccini, David	

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

Nays

Andrew, Jill	Gélinas, France	Sattler, Peggy
Armstrong, Teresa J.	Gretzky, Lisa	Shaw, Sandy
Arthur, Ian	Harden, Joel	Singh, Gurratan

The Clerk of the Assembly (Mr. Todd Decker): The ayes are 58; the nays are 34.

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

Second reading agreed to.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Pursuant to standing order 67, this bill is ordered for third reading.

SUPPLY ACT, 2020

LOI DE CRÉDITS DE 2020

Mr. Calandra, on behalf of Mr. Bethlenfalvy, moved third reading of the following bill:

Bill 181, An Act to authorize the expenditure of certain amounts for the fiscal year ending March 31, 2020 / Projet de loi 181, Loi autorisant l'utilisation de certaines sommes pour l'exercice se terminant le 31 mars 2020.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Pursuant to standing order 67, I am required to put the question. Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? I heard some noes.

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

All those opposed will please say "nay."

In my opinion, the ayes have it.

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

Interjection: Same vote.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Same vote? Same vote.

The Clerk of the Assembly (Mr. Todd Decker): The ayes are 58; the nays are 34.

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

Be it resolved that the bill do now pass and be entitled as in the motion.

Third reading agreed to.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): There being no further business in the House this morning, this House stands in recess until 1 p.m.

The House recessed from 1147 to 1300.

INTRODUCTION OF VISITORS

Hon. Steve Clark: I'd like to introduce to the House Tony Irwin from the Federation of Rental-housing Providers, who is here for the introduction of my bill. Welcome to Queen's Park.

INTRODUCTION OF BILLS

PROTECTING TENANTS AND STRENGTHENING COMMUNITY HOUSING ACT, 2020

LOI DE 2020 VISANT LA PROTECTION DES LOCATAIRES ET LE RENFORCEMENT DU LOGEMENT COMMUNAUTAIRE

Mr. Clark moved first reading of the following bill:

Bill 184, An Act to amend the Building Code Act, 1992, the Housing Services Act, 2011 and the Residential Tenancies Act, 2006 and to enact the Ontario Mortgage and Housing Corporation Repeal Act, 2020 / Projet de loi 184, Loi modifiant la Loi de 1992 sur le code du bâtiment, la Loi de 2011 sur les services de logement et la Loi de 2006 sur la location à usage d'habitation et édictant la Loi de 2020 abrogeant la Loi sur la Société ontarienne d'hypothèques et de logement.

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 will invite the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing to give a brief explanation of his bill.

Hon. Steve Clark: Speaker, the Protecting Tenants and Strengthening Community Housing Act, 2020, will include a number of legislative changes. I'll speak more to those proposed changes and how they will make life more affordable for Ontarians under statements by the ministry.

VISION ZERO STRATEGY ACT, 2020 LOI DE 2020 SUR LA STRATÉGIE VISION ZÉRO

Ms. Bell moved first reading of the following bill:

Bill 185, An Act to require the establishment of a strategy to reduce the number of road deaths and serious injuries on Ontario roadways to zero / Projet de loi 185, Loi exigeant l'établissement d'une stratégie visant à ramener à zéro le nombre de décès et de blessures graves qui surviennent sur les routes de l'Ontario.

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

First reading agreed to.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Would the member for University–Rosedale like to explain her bill?

Ms. Jessica Bell: The bill enacts the Vision Zero Strategy Act, 2020. It requires the Lieutenant Governor in Council to establish the Ontario Vision Zero Strategy. The goal of the strategy shall be to reduce the number of road deaths and serious injuries on Ontario roadways to zero. The bill establishes requirements for the strategy's contents and publication, as well as for consultation during the development of the strategy. The bill also requires the Minister of Transportation to prepare annual reports setting out Ontario's progress towards meeting the goal of the strategy.

STATEMENTS BY THE MINISTRY AND RESPONSES

AFFORDABLE HOUSING LOGEMENTS ABORDABLES

Hon. Steve Clark: I rise in the House today to talk about one of the ways that our government is working to make life more affordable for the people of Ontario. And, of course, housing is a big part of that.

During the tenure of the last government, home ownership and affordable housing became out of reach for too many Ontarians. Our government knows that must change. Every town, city, and community in our province is unique, but no matter where you go, one thing is the same: People are looking for housing that meets their needs and their budget. The current supply of housing is not meeting people's needs. More than three quarters of Ontario households can't afford the average price of a resale home, and more than half of renters find that the average rent for a two-bedroom apartment is out of their reach.

Last May, I rose in this House and introduced the More Homes, More Choice Act, our government's Housing Supply Action Plan to tackle Ontario's housing crisis. It cut unnecessary red tape that has been slowing down development approvals and adding years to construction projects. Our government did this while maintaining the same high standards for public health and safety, and protecting the environment. More Homes, More Choice is helping to build more homes quickly and making it easier to build a variety of housing, from single detached homes and townhomes, to mid-rise apartments and family-sized condos. Our plan also calls for more secondary suites, basement apartments and laneway homes, as well as large apartment buildings.

Now we've taken the next step to build on More Homes, More Choice through this new proposed legislation. The Protecting Tenants and Strengthening Community Housing Act would, if passed, strengthen protection for tenants, while making it easier to be a landlord.

Si elle est adoptée, la Loi de 2020 visant la protection des locataires et le renforcement du logement communautaire renforcera les mesures de protection des locataires, tout en facilitant la tâche des propriétaires.

Speaker, we've heard loud and clear the concerns that tenants have about being renovicted from their homes—forced to leave their homes due to renovations. That's why we're proposing to double the maximum fine amounts, to \$50,000 for an individual or \$250,000 for a corporation. And we're proposing to increase compensation for tenants who have been evicted in bad faith. We're also proposing to tighten the rules to identify landlords who are bad actors, and enhance our enforcement activities to be more proactive when we suspect someone isn't following the law.

Of course, part of the reason rents are rising is because there's not enough rental housing. More Homes, More Choice is already helping to build new apartments. Last

year, in August, new rental construction outpaced condominiums for the first time in 15 years.

Now, with the Protecting Tenants and Strengthening Community Housing Act, we're proposing to make it easier to be a landlord. Our changes would, if passed, streamline processes at the Landlord and Tenant Board and make it easier to resolve certain disputes. It would shift many disputes from the courts to the board, making it simpler to recover costs like unpaid utility bills, and it would allow landlords to recover costs caused by tenant behaviour.

This legislation would achieve a balance for all parties in the rental market, while ensuring that everyone's rights are protected.

Mr. Speaker, this legislation would also allow us to move forward on our plan to improve community housing. Last spring, we released our Community Housing Renewal Strategy. It focuses on sustaining, repairing, and growing our community housing sector, which, quite frankly, was neglected for 15 years under the previous government.

We've already taken steps to make life easier for community housing tenants and providers. We've removed rules that punish tenants for working more hours or going back to college or university. We're protecting tenants who receive child support payments. We're giving housing providers tools to help keep their buildings safe. We're also—and this is very important—replacing a complicated rent-gear-to-income formula with a simple calculation based on income tax information.

Our Community Housing Renewal Strategy also provides a number of opportunities to help sustain, repair and renew critical community housing supply. It encourages Ontario's community housing providers to continue working in the system and dedicates funding under the Canada-Ontario Community Housing Initiative specifically to these providers. It also gives non-profits and municipalities first access to the Ontario Priorities Housing Initiative to fund new, affordable housing stock. But there is much, much more work to do.

1310

The Protecting Tenants and Strengthening Community Housing Act, if passed, would allow us to create a better environment for community housing providers so they will stay in the system when their original obligations end and so new providers will join and grow Ontario's community housing system.

Si elle est adoptée, la Loi de 2020 visant la protection des locataires et le renforcement du logement communautaire nous permettra d'améliorer l'environnement d'affaires des fournisseurs de logements communautaires afin qu'ils ne quittent pas le système quand prendra fin leur obligation originale et que de nouveaux fournisseurs se joignent à eux et fassent croître le système de logement communautaire de l'Ontario.

Speaker, we're also proposing to give service managers and housing providers much more flexibility to meet local needs and operate more effectively. Our approach is based on four core principles:

- matching people with the right housing based on their needs;

- ensuring supports and services are flexible and that rules reflect local realities;

- building effective relationships between all levels of government, housing providers, tenants and Indigenous and community partners; and finally

- promoting innovation and long-term sustainability.

I'd like to point out that the bill before our House is simply enabling legislation. If this bill passes, we are committed to continuing to work closely with municipalities, housing providers and stakeholders on developing the regulations.

The bill also proposes amendments to the Building Code Act that would enable the creation of an administrative authority that would help deliver faster, better and smarter services.

A more responsive way to deliver building code services would be to make sure that practitioners get the support they need and deliver on the recommendations of the Elliot Lake Commission of Inquiry to strengthen public safety.

It also proposes to dissolve the Ontario Mortgage and Housing Corp. and shift the financial responsibilities for various legacy housing programs from that agency to the ministry. The agency's work is already performed by ministry staff, so the proposed change would have no impact on programs or the public.

Mr. Speaker, I know we can improve the lives of the people of Ontario. We will do that by making it easier for them to find homes that meet their needs and also their budget. We want to make it easier to be a landlord, and we also want to strengthen protections for tenants.

We have to protect our most vulnerable households with a community housing system that is both innovative and efficient but also sustainable.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Responses?

Ms. Suze Morrison: I rise today in alarm and, frankly, with significant concern over this Conservative government's absolute mismanagement of the housing file. Our province is in the midst of a housing crisis the likes of which we have never seen before. Two decades of neglect and inaction by Liberal and Conservative governments have allowed the housing crisis in Ontario to reach a boiling point. And I want to be perfectly clear: We did not get here overnight. The former Liberal government should be ashamed of the state of housing in this province, a situation that is only getting worse.

We are seeing record low-vacancy rates, sky-high rental prices, decades-long wait-lists for subsidized housing and more and more people being pushed out of their homes and into homelessness than before.

We also have an aging stock of rental housing that landlords have not been keeping in a good state of repair. In my riding, 1,500 residents from 650 Parliament Street were evacuated for 18 months after an electrical fire because their building had not been properly maintained. When those tenants were displaced, there was nowhere for them to go.

When we look at social housing, again we see this government taking things from bad to worse. Wait-lists for social housing are more than 10 years' long, and our social housing infrastructure is crumbling. The capital repair backlog for Toronto Community Housing alone is more than \$2 billion, and every year it grows.

The shameful state of community housing is the inevitable result of decades of Liberal and Conservative governments who have buried their heads in the sand and failed to provide the necessary investments our communities need. Every day when I talk to my constituents there's a real sense of uncertainty and fear, particularly about the availability of affordable housing that's in a decent state of repair. People just want a place to call home that they can afford, and a place that they can feel safe in. That's the foundation of building a good life.

Yet one of the first things that this government did when they came into office was to gut protections for tenants by creating a rent control loophole for new buildings and units. All new units and buildings occupied after November 15, 2018, are now completely exempt from rent control, a move that flies in the face of all logic and evidence.

Last fall I shared the stories of the tenants from 22 John Street, a new rental building in York South–Weston. They were facing rent hikes as high as 25%.

Just this week I asked the minister about a constituent of mine, Kaleigh, who is facing a 10% increase in her rent—an increase that, as a young worker, she simply cannot afford. When I asked the minister to back down from his devastating rent control loophole, the minister told me that the short answer was no.

I want to share a note now that I received from one of my constituents as well. It reads, "My partner and I have lived in Toronto's Church/Wellesley area for about nine years. We are both bilingual and educated. My partner holds a master's degree in computer engineering and I have a bachelor's degree in interior design.

"Since we moved to Toronto there has been an immense increase in the cost of housing. Our first rented apartment was 465 square feet and \$1,300 a month in 2011. We moved due to outrageous rent increases that were earned under the guise of building renovations. Now that same apartment is listed for \$1,900 a month, and to be frank, it was a cockroach-infested dump. If a unit is in disrepair, the cost of the renovations should not be coming out of the renter's pocket.

"We are lucky to have rent control in our current building; however, my partner and I would like to start a family. We can't afford the current prices for one bedrooms in the city, much less anything larger. Condos are also out of our price range, with the average price for a two-bedroom condo being \$700,000+, even outside of the downtown core. I have friends who pay 50% or more of their salary on rent, and they all have roommates.

"Something needs to be done about housing affordability, and it needs to be done now. I cannot stress enough how much this issue is affecting people my age (late 20s). It's affecting our ability to save for the future, our ability to have families and it causes an extreme amount of

anxiety and pressure. Landlords, developers and investors are taking advantage of the loose regulations to earn a maximum profit. Even with established careers in lucrative fields, our take-home pay is not nearly enough to afford basic housing in this city."

I implore this government to take this file seriously, but I would be speaking dishonestly if I said for one second that I trusted this government to open up the Residential Tenancies Act, among the other acts that they propose to amend, as they have with this bill, without making a situation that is by all accounts a crisis even worse.

PETITIONS

PUBLIC TRANSIT

Mr. Peter Tabuns: I have a petition: "Petition to Keep the Ontario Line Underground.

"To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas the decision of the government to abandon the relief line will delay subway construction in Toronto;

"Whereas the decision to route this subway line, called the Ontario Line, above ground south of Gerrard Street will damage parks and residential streets;

"Whereas routing of the Ontario Line above ground will require the rebuilding of six railway bridges from Gerrard Street to Eastern Avenue;

"Whereas the bridge reconstruction will cause extended traffic jams for many months, if not years;

"Whereas continuing the Ontario Line underground from Gerrard Street to south of Eastern Avenue would address all these" concerns;

"Therefore we, the undersigned, petition the Legislature Assembly of Ontario to call on the government to keep the Ontario Line underground from Pape and Danforth to south of Eastern Avenue and to carry out a thorough and inclusive environmental assessment and consultation with the affected community."

I agree with this petition, I affix my signature and I give it to page Hamza to submit to the table officers.

1320

AGRI-FOOD INDUSTRY

Mr. Vincent Ke: My petition is, "Food Day Ontario Act.

"To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas the agri-food industry employs over 2.3 million Canadians and one in eight jobs in the Canadian economy; and

"Whereas the agri-food industry contributes over \$47.7 billion in GDP annually to Ontario's economy; and

"Whereas Canada's rich culinary culture is worthy of celebration; and

"Whereas fresh, nutritious, locally grown food is necessary for daily life and for proper health and wellness; and

"Whereas locally grown food is an essential component of Ontario's agriculture sector; and

“Whereas the Food Day Ontario Act would encourage restaurants and consumers to purchase locally produced ingredients and to support our local suppliers; and

“Whereas Food Day Ontario will unite our communities, create jobs, and boost our economy; and

“Whereas the day will promote culinary sovereignty by emphasizing local food, local producers and local businesses; and

“Whereas an annual Food Day Ontario will recognize the hard work and dedication Ontario’s agriculture sector workers put into providing nutritious and healthy food for so many communities;

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

“That the Legislative Assembly of Ontario pass Bill 163, Food Day Ontario (Food Day Canada in Ontario) Act, 2019.”

I support this petition. I will sign this and give it to page Daniel.

VETERANS MEMORIAL

Mr. Percy Hatfield: I have a petition called, “Support the Highway of Heroes Tree Campaign,” signed by people from Windsor–Tecumseh, including my good friend Andrew Dowie.

“To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

I fully agree with this. I’m going to sign my name to it and give it to Jessica to bring down to the table officers.

VETERANS MEMORIAL

Mrs. Nina Tangri: “Petition in Support of Constructing a Memorial to Honour Our Heroes.

“To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

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

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

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

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

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

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

I support this petition. I’ll sign it and give it to page Hannah.

EDUCATION FUNDING

Ms. Jessica Bell: “Increase Grants Not Loans....

“To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

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

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

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

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

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

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

“—provide more grants, not loans;

“—eliminate tuition fees for ... students;

“—increase public funding for public education;

“—protect students’ independent voices; and

“—defend the right to organize.”

I support this petition, I’ll be affixing my signature to it and giving it to page Michael.

ONTARIO ECONOMY

Mr. Aris Babikian: “To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“Whereas over the last 15 long years under the previous Liberal government costs for businesses skyrocketed; and

“Whereas the Ford government has been eliminating thousands of regulations and ensuring regulation to the point of integrity by introducing the Making Ontario Open For Business Act, Restoring Ontario’s Competitiveness Act and the Better for People, Smarter for Business Act; and

“Whereas the government has reduced business premiums for the Workplace Safety and Insurance Board; and

“Whereas the Minister of Economic Development, Job Creation and Trade has been travelling to Asia and the United States on trade missions with business and political leaders; and

“Whereas our government has scrapped the job-killing carbon tax; and

“Whereas our government has reduced the costs of energy by passing the Access to Natural Gas Act and the Fixing the Hydro Mess Act; and

“Whereas since June of 2018 Ontario has added 307,800 new jobs; and

“Whereas the province of Ontario has added more jobs than in any 12-month period since statistics on job numbers have been recorded;

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

“That the government continue its efforts to reduce the cost of doing business in Ontario with the goal of building on the record-breaking job number of the past 18 months.”

I support this petition. I will affix my signature to it and I will give it to page Connie.

LONG-TERM CARE

Mr. Kevin Yarde: This petition is entitled “Time to Care Act—Bill 13.

“To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

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

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

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

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

I completely agree with this petition. I’ll affix my name to it and give it to page Nathan.

SERVICES FOR PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES

Ms. Natalia Kusendova: “To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“Whereas in the province of Ontario specialized transportation services provide persons with disabilities who experience barriers to using conventional transportation with a valuable service that allows them to travel with dignity; and

“Whereas the current framework for eligibility appeals for specialized transportation services, subsection 64(5) of Ontario regulation 191/11 leaves the process open for the providers to manipulate such appeals as they see fit. This interference from these companies has the potential to leave some individuals who genuinely need such services without them;

1330

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

We ask “that the jurisdiction for eligibility appeals for specialized transportation services in the province be removed from the providers themselves and be placed by a truly neutral body, namely the Social Benefits Tribunal. We also” ask “that this proposed new process include rules that would allow appellants to make a request for temporary service prior to their appeal being heard. The process should also include an early resolution process to narrow down issues and potentially resolve issues at an early stage. Finally, all decisions on appeals must be in accordance with the relevant legislation so individuals who need service can access it.”

I support this petition, affix my signature to it and pass it to page Rudra.

EDUCATION FUNDING

Ms. Sara Singh: I’m proud to present this petition entitled “Stop Ford’s Education Cuts.

“To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“Whereas” the Premier’s “new education scheme seeks to dramatically increase class sizes starting in grade 4;

“Whereas the changes will mean thousands fewer teachers and education workers and less help for every student;

“Whereas secondary students will now be forced to take at least four of their classes online, with as many as 35 students in each course;

“Whereas” the Premier’s “changes will rip over \$1 billion out of Ontario’s education system by the end of the government’s term; and

“Whereas kids in Ontario deserve more opportunities, not fewer;

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

“Demand that the government halt the cuts to classrooms and invest to strengthen public education in Ontario.”

I wholeheartedly support this petition. I will be signing my name to it and sending it off with page Hamza.

HOME CARE

Ms. Goldie Ghamari: This petition is for home care services.

“To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“Whereas after 15 years of neglect under successive Liberal governments, the demand for home care services has far outstripped the ability of care providers to coordinate these services;

“Whereas decisions about home care are currently often made in bureaucratic settings using a siloed approach that does not allow for individual patient circumstances to be taken into account;

“Whereas care plans can currently have service maximums for set hours that result in patients receiving insufficient care, care scheduled in ways that are sub-optimal for patients and providers;

“Whereas Ontario health teams are set to transform health care in Ontario with a greater focus on the patient and on easing transitions between different kinds of care;

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

“Proceed as effectively as possible to support the improvement of home care services and the coordination of these services so that Ontarians can receive the support they need, so that:

“(1) Decisions about home care services are made on the front lines where possible;

“(2) Patient transitions to long-term care are more efficient, reducing pressures on hospitals;

“(3) Ontario health teams are empowered to coordinate care for each and every patient....”

I proudly affix my signature, and I will give this to page Aditri.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): That concludes the time we have available for petitions this afternoon.

The government House leader is seeking a point of order.

Hon. Paul Calandra: I'm seeking unanimous consent to move a motion without notice.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): The government House leader is seeking the unanimous consent of the House to move a motion without notice. I heard a no.

**PRIVATE MEMBERS'
PUBLIC BUSINESS**

**SIKH GENOCIDE AWARENESS WEEK
ACT, 2020**

**LOI DE 2020 SUR LA SEMAINE
DE LA SENSIBILISATION AU GÉNOCIDE
DES SIKHS**

Mr. Singh moved second reading of the following bill:
Bill 177, An Act to proclaim Sikh Genocide Awareness Week / Projet de loi 177, Loi proclamant la Semaine de la sensibilisation au génocide des sikhs.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Pursuant to standing order 101, the member has 12 minutes for his presentation.

Mr. Gurratan Singh: Before I begin, I want to start by thanking all the people who made this bill possible. To Ms. Harpreet Kaur, a survivor of the Sikh genocide who lives in my riding: Thank you for your courage in sharing your story. I want to thank the human rights organization ENSAAF, the World Sikh Organization, the Sikh Research Institute and my good friend Amneet for putting in your time and energy in helping write this bill. And to all the gurdwaras, the committees, the councils and the community members who are here today, I say to you:

Remarks in Punjabi.

Thank you for being here today. Without your work and your dedication, this bill would not be possible.

But I do not stand here alone. The bill being put forward is because of the work of others: of countless activists who dedicated their lives to justice; to those far braver than me who are each brilliant lights, challenging the darkness of injustice and who have actually had to have their lives sacrificed for doing so; to the thousands of Sikhs who were murdered by the government of India, and the thousands of mothers who are still waiting for them to come home; to the Muslims, to the Hindus, to the Christians, and to the other communities who put their own lives at risk to help their Sikh neighbours; and to all those who literally gave their blood, their sweat and their tears for one simple goal: for truth.

That's why we stand here today: to create a time, to create a moment, to create an ability for us to be heard, to be acknowledged, to share our pains and our sorrow and to heal so that our community, which has suffered such unspeakable physical and sexual violence, can talk about it. We just want to share our stories. Because the foundation of healing, the medicine to trauma, is truth telling, and telling our story helps us heal.

In June 1984, Sikhs across the world experienced one of the most traumatic events that could ever have occurred to us. Our most central Sikh institution, the Harimandir Sahib, was attacked. Many of you may know this institution as the Golden Temple. It is akin to our Vatican, it is akin to our mecca. It is a place that is held sacred in the heart of every Sikh. As Sikhs gathered across Punjab to commemorate the sacrifice of our fifth guru, the Indian government chose to attack.

The result was devastating. Thousands of Sikhs were killed in Punjab. Punjab was put under a lockdown, a media blackout was put in place, and journalists were kicked out. Over 70 gurdwaras across Punjab were attacked. Our Akal Takht, the highest seat of authority to a Sikh, was destroyed. Our Sikh reference library, which had irreplaceable documents and historical artifacts, was burned and looted.

The attack shocked Sikhs across the world, including those here in Ontario. This was a time before the Internet, before mobile phones, before the transparency of what's available with the power of a telephone. Imagine the pain and the confusion of those Sikhs back then, who were but hearing pieces of information through distorted and bad-connection phone calls back home.

Then, when the dust settled, just as we thought the pain was over, in a matter of a few months, Sikhs were subjected to a campaign of violence once again, this time in the streets of Delhi, where orchestrated, government-organized mobs went door to door, at the direction of politicians and with the assistance of police, to attack and kill Sikhs and to attack our businesses and our places of worship.

Sikhs had tires placed around their necks and were doused in kerosene and set on fire; women were subjected to unspeakable sexual violence. Ms. Kaur, a constituent of my riding that I represent in Brampton East, was a survivor of this genocide. She fled this violence to start a new life here in Canada. She lost members of her own family in the November Sikh genocide. She described how she saw, with her own eyes, Sikhs lining the streets of Delhi, dead like animals. And this was all done at the direction of police and politicians. The very thing used to uphold democracy—voters lists—was used to identify Sikh households.

1340

And once again, Sikhs in Ontario huddled around phones, talking to relatives halfway around the world, trying to make sense of all this violence. How could Sikhs be killed in the capital of India, of what is known as the world's largest democracy? How could Sikhs be killed in a place where they're supposed to be safe and protected?

And once again, the violence ended, and Sikhs across the world held their breath and thought that maybe, finally, now, maybe the violence would end, maybe the trauma, the horrors of this genocide would be over. But the reality is that the Sikh community was about to face a sustained campaign of violence at a scale unimaginable.

Following the attacks of June 1984, India's security forces carried out a widespread, unlawful and systematic campaign of torture, killings and disappearances of Sikhs in Punjab and in other states throughout India. Sikhs were indiscriminately picked up, tortured and murdered by the government of India. Families and friends on a daily basis saw their loved ones disappear.

I remember this time. I remember sitting at my local gurdwara every Sunday as the families would come together to discuss the horrors that they were witnessing. I remember looking at the pictures that they would often show, often smuggled out of Punjab because of the attacks against journalism there. One image I can't have removed from my eyes, from my mind is an image of a tortured Sikh. It's not actually his lifeless eyes, it's not his broken body, the bones poking from his flesh that I remember, or the iron scorching the side of his stomach that is so vivid in my eyes. It's the young boy in the crowd watching, crying—helpless, confused, scared—feeling like how we all felt as a people, as a community.

That sense of helplessness is something that grips Sikhs across the world, and it was because of this lack of information that was coming forward. It wasn't until, finally, a truth-seeker came to Canada that we started to find out what was happening in Punjab. One of the most courageous souls our community has ever seen or has ever witnessed who risked his own life to share truth was Sardar

Jaswant Singh Khalra. Let his name never be forgotten. He worked in a bank in Punjab. He saw his relatives, his friends and his family being picked up and disappeared around him. He investigated what was happening, and he found incontrovertible evidence of Sikhs being secretly cremated.

He took this information and brought it to the world. He brought it to Canada. He came to Ontario. He brought it to Ottawa because Canada was known for its track record around human rights. He had his last speech at the Ontario Khalsa Darbar where he explained to Sikhs in Canada what was happening in Punjab. He described how, despite his uncovering the disappearances of Sikhs, he himself was being threatened; how an MLA from Punjab threatened him, "We have disappeared 25,000 Sikhs. What makes you think that you will not be one more to add to our list?"

Despite that, he went back to Punjab because he wanted to uncover the truth, and he said his work wasn't done. When he went back, he was picked up and disappeared. MP Colleen Beaumier wrote letters asking for his release. Canadians in Ontario advocated for his release. Ultimately it was found that he was tortured and he was murdered.

For more than a decade after 1984, this was the experience of Sikhs. From the attack on our most central Sikh institution to being murdered in the streets of our nation's capital to Sikhs being disappeared for more than a decade afterwards. These atrocity crimes, these crimes against humanity, these war crimes, the pain of this campaign of genocide carried out by the government of India is a pain that still stays with the Sikh community because, years later, Sikhs are still struggling for justice and recognition of this genocide, and to speak openly about it.

That's why this bill is so important. With the exception of our First Nation and Indigenous communities, for Canadians and Ontarians our story is made up by the vast collection of people from across the world who come here with their stories, some seeking opportunity, some seeking refuge. Our story cannot be separated from us. The promise of Canada is that we accept new Canadians with both their smiles and their scars.

Throughout the 1980s and 1990s, Ontario saw a wave of Sikh immigrants coming to start a new life here in Ontario, and they came fleeing this violence.

This is not just Sikh history. This is Canadian history. This is Ontario's history. This is a part of our fabric, a part of the mosaic which is this beautiful collection of all the different peoples who make us who we are.

To accept new Canadians is to accept every aspect of them. You can't cut one part from us; you take us whole.

This bill allows us to finally share our story, to create a space for us to heal, to create a space where we can just tell what has happened to us; to share our joys, our sorrows, our injustice, and, though it may be uncomfortable, to also share our truths.

So I ask every member of this House: Join us today. Join us in making this history. Join us in adding to the mosaic of Ontario and ensuring that the story of Sikh Canadians is brought into the story. Give the Sikh Canadians

a time, a moment, a place where we can share openly the traumas we've experienced, share openly the pain of the genocide we experienced at the hands of the Indian government. Give us a moment when we can come together with all communities, with all peoples collectively, and say that injustice, irrespective of who it is faced against, irrespective of who is subject to it, has no place in this world.

Let us pass this bill together and together make a more just and equitable Ontario.

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

Hon. Prabmeet Singh Sarkaria: Thank you for the opportunity to speak to this private member's bill.

I want to take this opportunity to recognize the individuals who are here today from across the province—survivors and family members who have been impacted by 1984.

The 1984 Sikh genocide is an important issue that matters to many. In November 1984, the Congress party organized, engaged and incited violence against the Sikh community. Thousands of Sikhs were taken out of their homes and burnt alive. Tires were put around their necks and lit on fire.

Madam Speaker, we must recognize that this is not a Sikh-versus-Hindu issue. Many Hindus protected and saved Sikhs by hiding them in their homes and businesses, risking their own lives.

In the time since 1984, Sikhs have tried to find ways to cope with what has happened. While nothing can really heal the pain of that time, we must continue to ensure that it never happens again.

Over the years, senior leaders in government and the courts have recognized and gone on record to denounce 1984 as a genocide.

India's current Union home minister, Rajnath Singh, said, "It was not riot, it was genocide instead. Hundreds of innocent people were killed. The pain of the kin of riot victims cannot be compensated by even paying crores of rupees."

In November 2018, the Delhi High Court, in a decision by Justice Gauba, recognized, "The large-scale rioting, mob violence, arson, plunder, genocide and looting has been duly proved and established."

The current government also undertook a fresh inquiry to look into November 1984. This has directly resulted in the creation of an SIT to reinvestigate some responsible for 1984. Justice Dhingra's report shows that the Congress protected those who were involved. This report led to Justice Dhingra short-listing 10 FIRs where he felt the government should file an appeal against the trial court verdict. These recommendations were accepted by the Solicitor General.

Madam Speaker, we must continue to hold those responsible for these crimes accountable.

Like similar bills brought forward in this House on other such genocides, remembering 1984 will help us ensure that it shall never repeat itself and that no community has to go through the same pain as the Sikh community.

1350

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

Ms. Rima Berns-McGown: As an academic and researcher, I have interviewed dozens of Sikh Canadians about the events of 1984 and afterwards. I have spoken with community members who were in India at the time, those who were here watching in horror as the genocide unfolded and those born afterwards who continue to live with intergenerational trauma.

As my colleague the member for Brampton East has shared in this House, the genocide sets a precedent for dangerous state interventions that violate India's very constitution and lead to intercommunity violence. Tragically, we have seen instances of it in recent days.

Community members in Canada continue to live with deep, life-shattering trauma. The stories and the pain run deep. Memories are still sharp, and every further incident of violence, even when it is directed at other communities, revives the anguish.

Community healing depends, in significant part, on the acknowledgment of others, especially of governments: first, that the genocide occurred; and, second, of the deep scars it left on the community and on individuals.

This acknowledgment is the first concrete step towards healing, and this is what Canada is capable of doing beautifully: allowing Canadians who have experienced trauma the space, understanding, acknowledgment and affirmation to heal from their pain as they find safety in Canada and weave their histories and perspectives into the social fabric—their whole histories, the anguish as well as the joy.

We, as a society, are stronger for their learnings and their wisdom. We all gain compassion and learn, if we pay attention, how to treat each other with care and respect. We can learn how to successfully and meaningfully combat racism, hate and discrimination, how to nurture equity and how to build a society that works for everyone who lives within it. My colleague's motion is a crucial step on that path.

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

Mr. Amarjot Sandhu: Madam Speaker, thank you for providing me with this opportunity to rise today and speak on private member's Bill 177, An Act to proclaim Sikh Genocide Awareness Week.

We all know it was horrific that, in 1984, a frenzied mob burned Sikh-owned stores to the ground, dragged them out of their homes, cars and trains, then clubbed them to death or set them aflame. Thousands of Sikhs were killed across the country.

Thirty-five years later, justice was delivered to some; however, many of those who survived the violence are still awaiting justice because many legal cases collapsed after powerful suspects allegedly threatened or intimidated witnesses. In other cases, poor investigation and tampering of evidence led to acquittals of the accused.

It's also worth noting that we should not try to explain this act of violence through the lens of religion, as we all

know that an act of violence has no race, caste or religion. There were several instances in which Hindus protected or hid Sikhs from homicidal mobs that began attacking Sikhs.

The present Indian government has been very vocal about this inhuman act that took place 35 years ago in India and has assured to provide all assistance required to the affected people and families.

Even Mr. Rajnath Singh, a Union minister in India, has also described this terrible act as genocide. However, perpetrators have yet to be charged and held accountable for their crimes, and many of the affected families continue to live in poverty and disenfranchisement to this day.

Mr. Rajnath Singh, as Union home minister, said, “In these incidents, there are several persons who are yet to be punished. I have faith in our judicial system, and these persons will definitely get punishment.”

Madam Speaker, I’m also pleased with the decision of the present Indian government wherein a blacklist of Sikh foreign nationals who have been barred from travelling to India for decades has been reduced from 314 to just two; also, for constituting a special investigation team under a retired judge to probe the heinous crime of 1984 and for opening the Kartarpur-Sahib corridor recently.

Such steps taken by the present political leadership in India would help in healing these wounds. It would enhance religious harmony, resolve disputes and conflicts, promote social harmony, and uphold peace in society.

Before I close, I must say that diversity is a natural characteristic of every society, and I’m proud to be part of a government that upholds and celebrates these values in words and deeds. Lest we forget 1984.

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

Ms. Andrea Horwath: I’m honoured to rise and speak to this bill.

As Ontarians, we are fortunate to live in a province with an incredible diversity of peoples, from the Haudenosaunee, the Anishinaabe, the Wendat, the Métis, and the Mississaugas of the Credit First Nation, whose territory this House stands on, to those who made Ontario home more recently.

An important part of being an Ontarian is learning about, understanding, and standing in solidarity with folks from different lived experiences, cultures and faiths. This is important, Speaker, because everyone in our province deserves to see themselves reflected and respected in this House and because making sure folks feel seen and understood is how we build common ground and move forward together.

Far too many Ontarians have been deeply impacted by the horrors of the Sikh genocide. We have seen them show tremendous courage by speaking about their pain and trying to work through their trauma, only to be met with barriers and spaces where they were not safe to share.

In fact, just a couple of weeks ago, Ms. Kaur, a survivor of the 1984 genocide who lost family to the state-organized mobs that terrorized Delhi, shared her story here in the Legislature’s media studio. One of the many

powerful things she shared was about the impact that the genocide has had on survivors like her. I am going to quote her: “The events of 1984 did not only take the lives of my family members,” she said; “it forced us to migrate, leaving behind our homes, our families and our lives. No matter how much time passes by I cannot forget the scenes of violence that still give me sleepless nights.”

The trauma experienced by Sikh Ontarians because of this genocide is real. Many of our Sikh friends and neighbours are here because they or their families fled these horrors. What they are asking for is very simple: They’re asking all of us in this House, both as Ontarians and as fellow human beings, to hear their stories, to acknowledge their pain and to have the courage to call the widespread targeted violence against Sikhs what it was: genocide.

Fully acknowledging that these atrocities happened is essential to making sure they never happen again, which is why Sikhs have been fighting for many years to be heard on this issue. Just under 10 years ago, I stood in this very chamber and named this genocide. And for the better part of a decade, New Democrat members, both Sikh and non-Sikh, have brought this issue to the attention of this House.

Sikh Ontarians hope that this time will be different, and so do I. This bill, which was proposed by my colleague the member for Brampton East, is a chance for all of us to show courage and empathy for our Sikh sisters and brothers. It’s a chance to not just name these atrocities but to provide a concrete space and time for Sikhs to heal from this trauma.

We can defy those who would try to divide us and instead grow closer as a community by acknowledging the bravery and compassion of the many Hindus, Muslims and Christians who, at great danger to themselves, helped Sikhs facing violence from the Indian state.

We can do this, Speaker. We can stand with our Sikh sisters and brothers who seek recognition and healing, and we can keep working together to build a brighter, more inclusive future. All of that can start right here, right now, by passing this bill.

Thank you, Speaker, for allowing me to speak to this bill. I look forward to hearing from the rest of the members who are going to speak to it this afternoon.

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

1400

Mrs. Nina Tangri: Good afternoon. I rise in this House today to speak to Bill 177, produced by the member from Brampton East. With your permission, Speaker, I would like to greet the many constituents from the Sikh faith in Ontario visiting us here today.

Remarks in Punjabi.

Today, here in Ontario, we enjoy freedom of speech and freedom to congregate, amongst other rights and privileges. Here in this House, many members were born in another country, including myself. I’m unaware of the member opposite’s visits to India and especially to the state of Punjab, but I can speak to my experience as a person of Indian descent. It is a well-known fact that Sikhs

have played and continue to play an honourable role in the protection and upholding of values we all hold dearly.

In the context of the riots in 1984, a horrific time in India's history, it is important to also identify a timeline of how events have transpired since that tragedy. In 2005, then-Prime Minister of India Dr. Manmohan Singh apologized in the Indian Parliament for the 1984 riots, offering financial assistance to the families of the victims. In 2006, the government announced a rehabilitation package to provide additional relief with financial outlay of about Can\$135.8 million. In 2014, additional funds were sanctioned to the next of kin to all persons who died during those 1984 riots. However, as this was not satisfactory, the current government constituted a fresh inquiry commission to readdress the crimes committed.

That being said, the events of 1984 should unanimously be denounced. Unequivocally, we must all condemn this violence. Most important is that justice be found for the victims of the riots by ensuring that those responsible are brought to justice and prosecuted.

This past November, I visited Sultanpur Lodhi in Punjab to celebrate the 550th birth anniversary of the first Sikh guru, Guru Nanak Dev Ji, followed by a very successful trade mission. Over the past 12 months, I have visited India three times, twice for charity work and once, as I mentioned, on a trade mission. I have directly asked the people of Punjab as to what their current concerns are. They are concerned about youth and education. As we all know, many of their youth are coming here to Canada as students. They are concerned about drug use and abuse, especially amongst their youth population, and how we must all come together to fight this epidemic.

In the gallery today, I would also like to mention that there are many of those who are very close to me, and I'm very, very grateful to them. As a Hindu of Punjabi descent, I ask that we work together to denounce this horrific part of history, to learn from it, that the correct and appropriate response be put into place and to ensure nothing ever like this happens again anywhere in the world.

In accordance with the teachings of Guru Nanak, I also ask that we look at each other as friends and colleagues, that we do not look at the colour of our skin, our gender, our race, our sexual orientation or our religion, that we understand that we are Ontarians and Canadians, and that we work together for our betterment and continue to make Ontario the best place to live, work and raise a family.

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

Mr. Kevin Yarde: First of all, I'd like to welcome all the members in the House today, all the members from the community who have come here today.

Remarks in Punjabi.

Not too long ago, we celebrated Black History Month, where we talked about the ups and downs in the Black community and the history of the Black community. That is why I stand here today to speak about Sikh Genocide Awareness Week and the importance of it, knowing that the history needs to be understood as well as talked about.

I welcome the tabling of An Act to proclaim Sikh Genocide Awareness Week by my colleague from Brampton East, which calls for the proclamation of the first seven days of November as Sikh Genocide Awareness Week. The bill recognizes that Sikhs continue to be impacted by the genocide and by other atrocities.

Madam Speaker, the passing of this bill will be deeply important to the Sikh community and to my community in Brampton North. This bill will create an opportunity for the community to talk about the trauma it has suffered and share stories and lessons about the Sikh genocide and other genocides that have occurred throughout the world. That is why I call on all MPPs, regardless of party, to support this bill.

Some people may ask why we need awareness days or awareness weeks. There are various awareness days for all types of issues around the world. Awareness can send a message, get attention and get people to talk about an issue. On one hand, it's an easy way to reach a lot of people, and it often amplifies the voices of the marginalized. Sikh Genocide Awareness Week will do just that.

What comes with raising awareness is a responsibility to do something about what you're aware of. It's not enough just to say, "This is a problem and we need to do something about it." There are, as we know, a lot of problems in the world that need doing something about. Our responsibility as informed people is to understand what happened and recognize the impact of the Sikh genocide today.

Let's also not forget to recognize that history has a tendency to repeat itself. There remains in our society a degree of antisemitism, Islamophobia, a fear of the traveling community, and of Black and Asian communities. We look around the world today and we see these prejudices appear to be on the rise. It is therefore important to remember the Sikh genocide, because it is an example of how these trends could evolve into something far more threatening. By spreading these testimonials, it is possible to ensure that the importance of the Sikh genocide is not forgotten, no matter how many years pass as memories are passed on to the next generation.

Madam Speaker, I wholeheartedly support this bill and I encourage all members of the Legislature to do the same.

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

Mr. Parm Gill: It's always a pleasure any time I get an opportunity to speak in this House. I also want to recognize and thank the member from Brampton East for his initiative. I also want to take the opportunity to welcome the members of the community. We've got many members of the Sikh, Hindu and also Muslim communities, so thank you for taking the time and being part of this.

Madam Speaker, let me just start by saying that I support the initiative introduced by the member from Brampton East and the intent of this bill in terms of creating an awareness week in the first week of November in order to educate the community as a whole in terms of the tragedy that took place and will never be forgotten.

Before being elected as the MPP for Milton, I was honoured to serve in the House of Commons as a member

of Parliament, as many members in this House know. I was then, as I am now, speaking about the tragic massacre of Sikhs that took place in 1984. I was just 10 years old at the time, and I remember it like it was just yesterday. Thousands of Sikhs—men, women and children—were tortured and brutally murdered. This massacre of Sikhs was a deliberate and calculated act by the perpetrators responsible.

Let me share what the New Delhi High Court claimed back in 2009: “Even though we boast of being the world’s largest democracy ... the sheer mention of the incidents of 1984 anti-Sikh riots in general and the role played by Delhi police and state machinery in particular makes our heads hang in shame.”

These were not just fundamental human rights issues. Sikhs around the world call for answers for the senseless killing and for justice for victims of this tragedy. As Prime Minister Singh stated in his apology on behalf of the nation back in 2009, “What took place in 1984 is the negation of the concept of nationhood enshrined in our constitution ... I bow my head in shame that such a thing took place.”

I know that I’m out of time, Madam Speaker. I want to thank all the members for taking the time and speaking to this important piece of legislation.

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

Ms. Sara Singh: It’s an honour to rise here today and to speak in support of my colleague from Brampton East’s bill, An Act to proclaim Sikh Genocide Awareness Week here in the province of Ontario.

1410

As a proud Sikh woman, I think that this bill is very important for our community, not only for the Sikh community but for all members here in this province to learn about the history of the Sikh genocide of 1984. As we’ve heard throughout the debate, the state of India carried out violent human rights abuses against the Sikh community in India.

A bill like this will help all community members acknowledge the trauma and the history, acknowledge what the Sikh community endured in 1984 but continues to endure up until today. A bill like this will help educate current generations about the history of our people and the hardships that we had to endure.

More importantly, Speaker, a bill like this will help us create space for dialogue, for healing, to acknowledge the truth, to seek reconciliation. A bill like this creates space to acknowledge the trauma, but allows us to start to move forward by educating each other, by sharing stories and by learning about those histories.

It is important that we have bills like this, not only for the Sikh community but for any community that has experienced trauma like what the Sikh community did in 1984. I am very proud to support this bill because I think it creates an opportunity to work toward closing those wounds and creating a space for healing. I hope that all members of this House will support this private member’s bill.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Jennifer K. French): The member for Brampton East has two minutes for his reply.

Mr. Gurratan Singh: I want to thank the members from Brampton South, Brampton West, Brampton North, Brampton Centre, Beaches–East York, Milton and Mississauga–Streetsville and the leader of the official opposition for your remarks today. Thank you.

I want to end with this note. It’s not enough just to pass this bill today; we need to bring this bill into royal assent. We need this bill to come into effect so Sikhs across Ontario and all communities can come and heal together.

I want to also end with a note on why it’s important to recognize injustices and genocides. In the last few weeks we saw violence grip Delhi—anti-Muslim violence. I’m going to read from an account from an article about someone who took part in this violence.

“The driver claimed he was armed with a gun and a sword. ‘The gun in my left hand and the sword in the right one,’ he said. ‘My aunt said she was reminded of my father. He would step out just like that during the 1984 riots....’

“‘At that time ... my father fed the sword with blood, this time I coloured it red.’”

Injustice against one is an injustice against all of us. We have seen history repeat itself, as early as three weeks ago. It was a matter of weeks ago. We must denounce this kind of injustice wherever it occurs in this world, be it against Sikhs, Muslims, Hindus, Christians, Jews—any minority, any community. We must denounce all forms of injustice against any community, because together, when we show a united front, when we show that collectively we stand against wrong, when we stand against injustice, when we stand against the evil of genocide, we show that this kind of world—our world—is better, and we are better because of it.

Please join me. Let’s pass this bill. Let’s bring it into effect and let’s create a space for us all to heal. Thank you.

FRANCO-ONTARIAN EMBLEM
AMENDMENT ACT, 2020

LOI DE 2020 MODIFIANT LA LOI
SUR L’EMBLÈME FRANCO-ONTARIEN

Ms. Kusendova moved second reading of the following bill:

Bill 182, An Act to amend the Franco-Ontarian Emblem Act, 2001 / Projet de loi 182, Loi modifiant la Loi de 2001 sur l’emblème franco-ontarien.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Jennifer K. French): Pursuant to standing order 101, the member has 12 minutes for her presentation.

M^{me} Natalia Kusendova: C’est un grand plaisir pour moi de me lever aujourd’hui dans cette Chambre pour parler de mon projet de loi, soit de reconnaître le drapeau franco-ontarien comme symbole de l’Ontario. Je suis particulièrement fière de pouvoir parler de ce projet de loi en français.

Je voudrais souhaiter la bienvenue aux membres de la communauté franco-ontarienne qui sont ici aujourd’hui

pour me soutenir : Alina Sklar, Barbara Gilbert, Patrick Venne, Stewart Kiff et Jean Grenier. Je remercie aussi mes collègues : l'honorable Michael Tibollo, le ministre associé délégué au dossier de la Santé mentale et de la Lutte contre les dépendances; Gila Martow, l'adjointe parlementaire à la ministre des Affaires francophones, qui est aussi ma maman parlementaire; et aussi, bien sûr, France Gélinas, la députée de Nickel Belt, pour nous avoir joint aujourd'hui pour une petite célébration.

La communauté francophone de l'Ontario occupe une place importante et unique dans le passé, le présent et l'avenir de notre province. Les contributions des francophones ici en Ontario à la culture, à l'économie et au sein de nos communautés à travers notre province sont inestimables et historiques, datant de 400 ans. Les francophones en Ontario ont des valeurs fortes qui sont profondément ancrées dans l'histoire de notre province. Ils ont oeuvré pendant des générations pour promouvoir et préserver leur belle culture et leur langue en Ontario, et poursuivent leurs efforts aujourd'hui.

Un peu d'histoire sur ce beau drapeau : le drapeau franco-ontarien a été hissé officiellement pour la première fois le 25 septembre 1975, à l'Université Laurentienne à Sudbury. Les deux créateurs du drapeau—les pères de ce drapeau, si vous voulez—étaient Gaétan Gervais, professeur d'histoire à l'Université Laurentienne, et Michel Dupuis, étudiant en science politique de première année à la même université. J'ai eu le plaisir de faire connaissance avec la soeur de Gaétan, M^{me} Gervais, pendant mon séjour à Sudbury.

Ce drapeau a été officiellement adopté par l'Association canadienne-française de l'Ontario, qui est aujourd'hui l'Association des communautés franco-ontariennes, en 1977. Et étant donné que ce drapeau représente et est le symbole qui représente une communauté importante, soit les francophones de l'Ontario et leurs contributions dans la passé, le présent et le futur de notre province, il est tout à fait juste et naturel que cette Assemblée législative reconnaisse, par le biais d'un projet de loi, ces contributions importantes en déclarant que ce drapeau est un symbole de l'Ontario.

S'il est adopté, ce projet de loi ferait en sorte que le drapeau franco-ontarien sera parmi l'améthyste, le huard, le pin blanc, le trillium, le tartan, le drapeau de l'Ontario et les armoiries comme symbole officiel de l'Ontario.

Depuis que nous sommes au gouvernement, nous travaillons fort pour les francophones de l'Ontario afin de reconnaître leurs contributions, mais aussi pour que nous puissions faire fleurir cette ressource importante pour l'économie de l'Ontario et des communautés à travers de notre province.

Je voudrais prendre quelques minutes pour vous parler des mesures concrètes de notre gouvernement pour les francophones de l'Ontario. Notre gouvernement livre des résultats, remet de l'ordre dans les finances publiques et bâtit un Ontario ouvert aux affaires dans les deux langues, le français et l'anglais. Je suis très fière de nos réalisations, et pour la première fois, notre gouvernement accorde la priorité au développement économique à titre de levier d'épanouissement de la francophonie ontarienne.

Voici quelques exemples de notre travail pour promouvoir les francophones en Ontario. L'Université de l'Ontario français : Nous comprenons que les francophones en Ontario veulent accéder à une éducation postsecondaire de qualité en français. C'est pourquoi nous avons signé avec le gouvernement fédéral, le 22 janvier, 2020, une entente historique afin d'assurer l'établissement de l'Université de l'Ontario français, la première université de langue française gouvernée par et pour les francophones de l'Ontario.

Cette université, je vous rappelle, gouvernée par et pour les francophones, verra le jour avec une première cohorte d'étudiants à Toronto en 2021. Un rêve depuis plusieurs décennies est maintenant une réalité tangible.

1420

Cette institution sera un grand levier de développement du capital humain francophone dans la métropole ontarienne. Sur huit ans, les deux gouvernements verseront à part égale 63 millions de dollars pour ce projet original et ambitieux, une université du XXI^e siècle qui aidera à combler les besoins d'un marché de travail désespéré pour les ressources humaines bilingues. Même dans mon bureau, j'ai eu de la difficulté à embaucher un employé vraiment bilingue qui parle les deux langues—français et anglais. Alors, cette université va veiller à ce que, au futur, on va avoir plusieurs ressources humaines qui sont très, très importantes.

Nous améliorons l'accès à la santé en français. Notre gouvernement a annoncé un investissement pouvant atteindre 75 millions de dollars dans le projet du Carrefour santé d'Orléans, qui regroupe les services bilingues et ouvrira ses portes à l'été, en 2021.

Notre Loi sur les soins de santé pour la population contient des dispositions qui respectent les rôles des francophones dans la planification et la prestation des soins. Les francophones méritent des services de santé en français. Nous travaillons en ce sens à chaque jour.

Nous améliorons l'accès à l'éducation francophone. En faveur de l'idée d'un continuum d'apprentissage en français, nous avons versé au Conseil scolaire Viamonde 10,2 millions de dollars pour l'achat de l'école Greenwood dans l'est de Toronto, qui pourra accueillir 501 élèves francophones de la septième à la 12^e année. De même, à Vaughan, nous avons alloué un financement de 22,6 millions de dollars en vue d'une nouvelle école secondaire catholique de langue française.

Au total, notre gouvernement a investi 1,79 million de dollars pour appuyer les programmes d'éducation en français. Ce ne sont que quelques exemples de notre appui pour l'éducation en français à travers l'Ontario.

Nous améliorons l'accès à la justice en français. Notre projet de loi 161, Loi de 2019 pour un système judiciaire plus efficace et plus solide, si adopté, aura un impact important pour les francophones. Notamment, Aide juridique Ontario ferait l'offre active de service en français, et les avis de recours collectifs seraient publiés et communiqués dans les deux langues officielles.

En mars dernier, notre gouvernement a établi un projet pilote en justice à Sudbury qui vise à améliorer les services

en français de tribunaux et des instances judiciaires. Depuis, les groupes de travail ont été formés pour identifier les obstacles que rencontrent les francophones lorsqu'ils veulent accéder à des services en français dans les diverses instances, soit criminelle, droit de famille, petites créances ou autres. Les groupes de travail se penchent sur l'identification et la mise en oeuvre de pistes de solutions pour remédier aux lacunes. Le travail se poursuit pour assurer que tous ceux qui se présentent à la cour connaissent leurs droits linguistiques.

La création et rétention d'emplois dans le Nord : nous offrons le Programme d'appui à la francophonie ontarienne augmenté d'un volet économique, d'une valeur d'un million de dollars, qui aide les entreprises et les organisations communautaires francophones à mettre en oeuvre des projets qui promeuvent la vitalité économique, communautaire et culturelle.

Notre gouvernement a octroyé au Centre culturel La Ronde un million de dollars par l'entremise de la Société de gestion du Fonds du patrimoine du Nord de l'Ontario pour construire un nouvel édifice moderne de 12 000 pieds carrés à l'emplacement de son ancien édifice dans le centre-ville de Timmins.

Aussi, on veut attirer les immigrants francophones. Chez moi, dans ma circonscription de Mississauga-Centre, je vois de plus en plus de nouveaux arrivants, des nouveaux Canadiens qui parlent français et qui veulent s'immiscer dans la culture franco-ontarienne. Alors, nous sommes conscients du fait critique que le maintien du poids démographique relatif des Franco-Ontariens dans la province dépend en grande partie de l'immigration francophone, non seulement à Toronto et à Ottawa, mais dans d'autres communautés à forte présence francophone, telles que Cornwall, mais Mississauga aussi.

L'an dernier, 7,7 % des candidats du Programme ontarien des candidats à l'immigration étaient francophones, en hausse par rapport à 2017, à 4,8 %.

En conclusion, notre gouvernement continuera de défendre les intérêts des francophones en Ontario en avançant de grands projets ayant pour but de dynamiser les communautés francophones à l'aide de plus d'échanges économiques, d'investissements et d'un accès au savoir accru, en particulier dans les domaines d'emplois bilingues hautement qualifiés.

Mon projet de loi et les mesures dont j'ai parlé ne sont qu'un début des mesures que les députés de ce côté de cette Chambre souhaitent mettre en place afin d'aider les francophones en Ontario. Nous travaillons chaque jour afin d'améliorer les services en français en plus de reconnaître les atouts de la francophonie ontarienne pour l'Ontario. J'espère que vous allez vous joindre à moi et appuyer mon projet de loi, une façon pour nous, comme députés, de reconnaître l'importance des francophones en Ontario, un petit geste de notre part pour dire merci pour ce qu'ils contribuent à cette province et au sein de nos communautés.

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

M. Guy Bourgouin: Tout d'abord, je veux remercier la députée de Mississauga-Centre pour ce projet de loi,

pour ce beau geste symbolique pour la communauté franco-ontarienne. Mais pour être franc, ce projet de loi n'affecte d'aucune façon les vies des francophones. J'aurais plutôt aimé parler au sujet de la modernisation de la Loi sur les services en français, une loi datant de 1986, sur laquelle la ministre des Affaires francophones a parlé à plusieurs reprises. Par exemple, le 25 septembre de 2018, la députée de Mississauga-Centre a demandé à la ministre, sur son projet visant à améliorer et à appuyer la communauté franco-ontarienne—et la ministre a répondu qu'elle souhaitait moderniser la Loi sur les services en français. Mais ça fait déjà un an et demi de cette annonce.

Si la députée de Mississauga-Centre et la ministre souhaitaient appuyer la francophonie en Ontario de façon plus concrète, elles pourraient alors améliorer l'accès aux services d'urgence 911 en français. Trop souvent, les francophones qui appellent le 911 se trouvent avec une réponse humiliante : « Sorry. I don't speak French. »

Elles pourraient aussi améliorer l'accès aux audiences de l'aide sociale en français dans les régions désignées par la loi. Tandis que la moyenne pour accéder à une audience en anglais est de trois à quatre mois, les francophones à faible revenu doivent attendre jusqu'à 18 mois—18 mois, madame la Présidente.

Également, elles pourraient, et devraient, améliorer l'accès aux tribunaux et aux services pénitenciers en français dans la région de Thunder Bay. À Thunder Bay, les accusés se trouvent sans procureurs de la Couronne bilingues, sans formulaires bilingues, avec des services pénitenciers complètement en anglais—et je pourrais continuer. Elles pourraient améliorer l'accès aux services de l'unité aux services en français de l'ombudsman, ou encore mieux, rétablir l'indépendance du commissaire aux services en français.

Je remercie encore la députée de Mississauga-Centre pour le geste nettement symbolique, mais ce gouvernement prend les francophones pour acquis. Nous avons besoin d'actions concrètes pour accéder aux services garantis par la loi. Bonne Semaine de la Francophonie.

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

M^{me} Goldie Ghamari: Je voudrais premièrement remercier la députée de la circonscription de Mississauga-Centre pour son projet de loi qui modifie la Loi de 2001 sur l'emblème franco-ontarien afin de reconnaître le drapeau franco-ontarien comme un emblème de l'Ontario.

Il y a environ 10 % des personnes dans ma circonscription de Carleton qui sont francophones ou francophiles. Je peux parler le français parce que je suis allée à l'école d'immersion. Mes parents, qui sont nés en Iran, ne peuvent pas parler ou comprendre la belle langue, mais quand ils sont arrivés au Canada, ils ont connu l'importance d'être bilingue, parce qu'il y a une culture et une histoire francophones en Ontario et dans tout le pays. Je pense que, pour ça, c'est important de reconnaître et de respecter l'histoire des Franco-Ontariens.

1430

Les francophones de l'Ontario peuvent retracer l'histoire de leur communauté sur plus de 400 ans. Dès 1613, l'explorateur français Samuel de Champlain a

silloné et cartographié différentes parties de l'Ontario. Son parcours a suivi les masses d'eau : la rivière des Outaouais, le lac Nipissing, les Grands Lacs et la baie Georgienne.

Le 1^{er} août 1615, Champlain, ses guides autochtones et ses alliés atteignirent les rives de la baie Georgienne, non loin de l'actuelle ville de Penetanguishene, où les accueillit le chef Aenon des Wendats.

Madame la Présidente, les premiers francophones qui se sont installés dans le territoire de l'Ontario furent les missionnaires qui établirent la mission de Sainte-Marie-au-pays-des-Hurons en 1639.

La communauté francophone de l'Ontario compose la communauté francophone la plus nombreuse au Canada après celle du Québec. Le français est l'une des langues officielles du Canada. En Ontario, il jouit du statut de langue officielle devant les tribunaux, dans l'éducation et à l'Assemblée législative.

Depuis près de 40 ans, la province de l'Ontario reconnaît l'importance de servir ses citoyens en français sur demande. C'est lorsque l'actuel article 5 de la Loi sur les services en français, loi qui est connue aussi comme la Loi 8, entre en vigueur en novembre 1949 que la province reconnaît que ses citoyens ont droit à ces services sur demande.

I just want to correct myself. It's 1989, not 1949.

Le drapeau franco-ontarien fut dévoilé pour la première fois le 25 septembre mille neuf cent seventy-five—je dois pratiquer mes numéros, désolée—à l'Université Laurentienne à Sudbury. Depuis ce temps-là, la communauté francophone de l'Ontario l'utilise de façon soutenue comme son emblème. Il convient maintenant de le reconnaître officiellement comme emblème de cette communauté, et il convient maintenant de le reconnaître officiellement comme emblème de l'Ontario. Et c'est pour ça que je suis fière de parler sur le projet de loi de la députée de Mississauga-Centre, et je vais écouter la discussion aujourd'hui. Merci.

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

I recognize the member from Algoma-Manitoulin.

M. Michael Mantha: Merci beaucoup, madame la Présidente. Si on peut prendre un moment, on va garder le silence. Je veux que vous écoutiez.

On entend les manifestations qu'il y a sur le gazon aujourd'hui. Et puis ça ne fait pas si longtemps que ça qu'on a eu des manifestations tellement grosses d'une bordure de la province de la communauté francophone dans cette province pour un gros sujet : le sujet, premièrement, de cancellation du projet pour avoir une université francophone et puis aussi en regard de la cancellation des services du commissaire aux services en français.

Je veux commencer par vous souligner que ceci ne devrait pas être une distraction des objectifs de ce gouvernement. C'est vraiment une distraction pour les gens de la communauté francophone en ce qui concerne ce qu'on fait avec ce projet de loi.

Je veux donner reconnaissance au membre de Mississauga-Centre d'avoir apporté le projet de loi devant.

Mais j'ai une grosse question à lui poser. Ton projet de loi n'est pas tellement gros : il a quatre ou cinq phrases et puis le drapeau, décrit à l'annexe de la présente loi, est reconnu comme à la fois l'emblème de la communauté francophone de l'Ontario et un emblème de l'Ontario. J'ai une question à lui poser : pourquoi les co-créateurs du drapeau franco-ontarien, MM. Gaétan Gervais et Michel Dupuis, ne sont pas mentionnés dans ton projet de loi? Pourquoi? C'est une grosse faille. C'est un essentiel.

Nous, comme Franco-Ontariens, c'est une fierté. Je le dis : « Je suis un fier Franco-Ontarien. » Je ne suis pas gêné de le dire. Quand ils m'adressent ici dans la Chambre, à chaque vote, ils m'adressent comme « monsieur Mantha ». C'est mon choix, comme Franco-Ontarien.

Les gens—je ne veux pas sortir de l'idée de ce qu'on est en train de faire ici. C'est un pas en avant, mais c'est un petit pas. C'est un petit pas. Il y a tellement d'autres choses qu'on pourrait faire. Le gouvernement Ford a éliminé le bureau du commissaire aux services en français. Explique donc ça à M^{me} Tremblay, qui avait des plaintes qu'elle avait mises envers le commissaire. Pourquoi est-elle en train d'aller aux services de santé dans sa communauté de Dubreuilville et ne peut pas recevoir des services en français? Elle ne pouvait pas recevoir un agent qui venait lui donner des services au domicile qui pourrait communiquer avec elle en français pour avoir la capacité d'expliquer aux gens ce que sont ses besoins : « C'est où que j'ai mal. C'est quoi que sont mes soins? » Ça, ce sont des affaires sur lesquelles ce gouvernement Ford devrait être en train de travailler.

La Loi sur les services en français n'a même pas été modernisée depuis 1986. Il n'y aucune proposition—

Mrs. Gila Martow: Point of order.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Jennifer K. French): Point of order.

M^{me} Gila Martow: Je regrette, madame la Présidente, mais on a une loi aujourd'hui sur l'emblème. Est-ce qu'on peut parler sur le sujet de la loi, s'il vous plaît, monsieur? C'est vraiment une « issue » non-partisane.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Jennifer K. French): I remind all members to keep their comments to the bill, and I return to the member from Algoma-Manitoulin.

M. Michael Mantha: Absolument. La fierté d'un francophone, c'est vraiment l'identité qu'ils ont, on va dire, comme l'emblème. Pour se donner notre emblème et puis parler de notre fierté, il faut qu'on continue à ne pas être distraits, comme ce qui vient juste d'arriver, par le gouvernement, mais de vraiment donner notre focus sur où on a besoin d'appliquer nos intentions. Puis nos intentions, c'est d'améliorer les services. Nos intentions, c'est de recevoir ce qui est actuellement notre identité. Puis, avec ça—

M. Guy Bourgoin: La fierté n'arrête pas au drapeau.

M. Michael Mantha: Merci. J'allais finir là-dessus. La fierté d'un francophone n'arrête pas au drapeau. C'est une partie de l'identité. Mais la fierté vient avec les services, les accommodations, la langue, la reconnaissance de la communauté francophone, l'université francophone, et

puis les services qui devraient être offerts envers et puis de l'office du commissaire aux services en français.

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

M. Sam Oosterhoff: C'est un véritable plaisir d'être ici pour parler en faveur du projet de loi du membre de Mississauga-Centre pour que le drapeau—comme elle dit, le beau drapeau—franco-ontarien soit reconnu officiellement comme un emblème de l'Ontario. Comme je dis chaque fois que je parle français ici et en public, je dis que je ne suis pas francophone, mais je suis un fier francophile.

Pour commencer, j'aimerais souligner les contributions remarquables des communautés francophones de l'Ontario depuis plus de 400 ans. Ils sont un peuple fondateur qui ont créé l'Ontario moderne. Avec plus de 600 000 francophones en Ontario, nous avons la plus grande communauté francophone au Canada, hors Québec.

Au ministère de l'Éducation, nous sommes très heureux de voir l'intérêt croissant envers le français dans notre province, ainsi que de la force de nos écoles de langue française. Pendant ces deux années en tant qu'adjoint parlementaire au ministre de l'Éducation, j'ai été ravi d'apprendre davantage au sujet de notre système unique de l'éducation francophone en Ontario, ainsi que de la communauté franco-ontarienne.

J'avais vu avec mes propres yeux le dévouement des parents et des enseignants et enseignantes pour promouvoir et soutenir l'éducation en français, et la joie des étudiants et étudiantes dans les couloirs et salles de classe. La trajectoire a été longue et parfois ardue, mais grâce à l'effort de la communauté francophone de l'Ontario, l'Ontario est un chef de file avec un système d'éducation complet en langue française en milieu minoritaire, de la petite enfance au postsecondaire.

L'éducation en langue française en Ontario est une expérience unique, d'excellente qualité, qui favorise le sentiment d'appartenance à la francophonie en Ontario et au Canada. Je suis particulièrement content d'avoir eu l'opportunité de visiter et célébrer la présence et les contributions des communautés francophones dans ma région de Niagara. Plus de 15 000 francophones vivent dans la région de Niagara

1440

La célébration de la journée des Franco-Ontariens et des Franco-Ontariennes ainsi que la levée du drapeau sont organisées annuellement à Welland, St. Catharines et à Niagara Falls.

Le bilinguisme a progressé aussi dans la région de Niagara jusqu'à presque 9 % de la population. Dans les programmes d'immersion française offerts dans les deux conseils scolaires anglophones à Niagara, les élèves sont encouragés à explorer la culture et les traditions françaises et à participer à de nombreuses activités sportives, musicales et artistiques.

Les communautés franco-ontariennes sont dynamiques et appréciées. Elles sont une partie essentielle, une richesse, de Niagara et de l'Ontario. C'est pourquoi j'appuie pleinement le projet de loi du membre de

Mississauga-Centre de faire du drapeau franco-ontarien officiellement un emblème de l'Ontario.

Merci à ma chère collègue, le membre pour Mississauga-Centre, pour cette bonne initiative.

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

M. Joel Harden: Je me présente aujourd'hui comme francophile. Je viens de la ville d'Ottawa, et, pour moi, c'est une question de fierté; c'est une question, pour moi, qui concerne les droits des francophones. Je suis très heureux aujourd'hui pour se lever sur la question du drapeau franco-ontarien. C'est bon; excellent.

Mais ce projet de loi, bien qu'important, demeure un effort incomplet, tristement. Les francophones de l'Ontario méritent un gouvernement qui non seulement reconnaît leur drapeau mais appuie le droit de vivre et de travailler en français.

Aujourd'hui je pense surtout aux milliers de gens dans ma ville d'Ottawa et dans l'Est ontarien qui vivent en français à tous les jours. Pour ces gens-là, les droits linguistiques, ce n'est pas une question abstraite; c'est un enjeu très réel. Quand le gouvernement a éliminé le Commissariat aux services en français en tant que bureau indépendant, les gens de ma région ont ressenti de réelles inquiétudes.

Ils ont peut-être pensé à un grand-parent qui doit être confiant de pouvoir communiquer avec son médecin. Pour plusieurs aînés à Ottawa, le financement de la programmation aux centres communautaires francophones fait la différence entre l'isolement social et la participation dans notre communauté.

Dans l'automne 2019, j'ai eu l'honneur d'assister à l'assemblée générale annuelle de Montfort Renaissance, un organisme francophone qui mène plusieurs programmes et services pour les aînés et les personnes handicapées à Ottawa. Grâce au financement du fonds Trillium, Montfort Renaissance a été en mesure de réhabiliter un édifice historique du marché By—le centre Guigues—et de le mettre au service de ses clients francophones.

Par contre, ils ont récemment perdu le financement du ministère des Services aux aînés et de l'Accessibilité qui leur permettait d'offrir le programme Mon Centre à distance. Ce programme offre aux personnes âgées francophones l'occasion de participer à des rencontres sociales par téléphone et donc d'éviter l'isolement s'ils ont la mobilité limitée. Le gouvernement fédéral a été obligé de combler la lacune que nous avons laissée, et nous espérons que le service sera disponible de nouveau immédiatement.

Mais nous avons besoin du commissaire aux services en français pour que le gouvernement prenne note de ces genres de lacunes-là—des lacunes réelles qui peuvent contribuer, par exemple, à l'isolement social des aînés dans la communauté franco-ontarienne.

Il faut également se rendre compte que la francophonie ontarienne n'est pas statique. Je ne pense pas seulement à nos aînés qui ont bâti la communauté en militant pour leurs droits depuis plusieurs décennies. Je pense aussi aux

nouveaux arrivants francophones, dont il y a plusieurs à Ottawa.

Dans mon bureau de circonscription, on travaille souvent en français avec des gens qui ont besoin d'appui dans des cas d'assurance-maladie, d'assistance sociale, de logement et dans d'autres domaines. Il faut que les services gouvernementaux soient facilement disponibles à ces gens-là dans la langue officielle de leur choix. Les immigrants francophones font des contributions importantes à la vie collective dans notre ville.

Il y a un an, madame la Présidente, que le gouvernement ici a tourné le dos envers les Franco-Ontariens. Il a l'occasion maintenant d'aller plus loin que les drapeaux, d'admettre son erreur et d'affirmer son appui pour les droits de la communauté. J'espère que mes collègues de l'autre côté, après ce projet de loi, feront la bonne décision. Ici, au NPD, nous savons de quel bord nous sommes et que nous serons.

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

M^{me} Gila Martow: Ça me fait un très grand plaisir de soutenir ma collègue la députée de Mississauga-Centre avec l'introduction de son projet de loi, Loi modifiant la Loi de 2001 sur l'emblème franco-ontarien.

Pour beaucoup d'années, les affaires francophones étaient et continuent d'être proches de mon cœur. Dans l'opposition, j'étais la porte-parole pour les Affaires francophones. J'ai soutenu et j'ai voté pour adopter la chanson « Notre Place », par Paul Demers, comme un hymne officiel de l'Ontario. Depuis, pour les deux dernières années, moi et la députée de Mississauga-Centre avons chanté la chanson avec les étudiants des écoles françaises ici à Queen's Park.

Cette année, nous fêtons le 45^e anniversaire de la première levée du drapeau franco-ontarien sur le campus de l'Université Laurentienne à Sudbury, et le cinquantenaire de la francophonie. Cependant, les francophones jouent un rôle important dans cette province depuis bien plus longtemps.

Le drapeau franco-ontarien met visuellement côte à côte la fleur de trille de l'Ontario et la fleur de lys des Canadiens français. En légiférant pour rendre le drapeau franco-ontarien un emblème de l'Ontario, on reconnaît l'importance de la contribution des Franco-Ontariens et Franco-Ontariennes, et ce, depuis la période précédant la Confédération.

La persévérance de la communauté franco-ontarienne au fil des années reflète parfaitement l'esprit battant des francophones partout au Canada depuis plusieurs siècles. Plusieurs organismes, institutions et individus de la communauté ont fait rayonner l'Ontario aux niveaux national et international.

Nous nous attaquons activement à la pénurie d'enseignants francophones. Les francophones veulent vivre ici. Les francophones veulent se sentir comme faisant partie de la province et pas juste une minorité.

Aujourd'hui, Barbara Gilbert est venue me rencontrer. Elle travaille au Labo, centre d'arts médiatiques francophone de Toronto, et elle m'a dit : « Étant donné

forte augmentation du nombre de francophones qui choisissent de vivre à Toronto, les ressources doivent croître afin de nous permettre de répondre aux besoins de cette communauté. Beaucoup de nouveaux arrivants francophones parlent très peu anglais, croyant que le Canada est un pays entièrement bilingue. Un emblème visuel les aidera à naviguer dans leur nouvelle ville. » Merci beaucoup, Barbara.

Les francophones sont une minorité avec une des plus grandes voix. Ce projet de loi est un projet qui marque le début d'une nouvelle occasion pour la communauté francophone de l'Ontario, non seulement d'être reconnue comme une communauté dans la province mais aussi comme faisant partie de la province. Je ne peux pas penser à un moment plus parfait pour ce projet de loi pour l'emblème que maintenant, parce que la semaine prochaine est la Semaine de la Francophonie.

C'est pour cela que je joins ma voix fièrement à celles de la députée de Mississauga-Centre et de mes collègues, ainsi qu'à celles des Franco-Ontariens et Franco-Ontariennes de tous les coins de la province pour voter en faveur de ce projet de loi. Merci beaucoup pour le temps, madame la Présidente, et merci à ma collègue. Elle m'appelle sa « mère parlementaire ». J'espère que c'est quelque chose de gentil. Je suis sûre qu'elle aime sa mère beaucoup, et je l'aime aussi.

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

M. Jamie West: Aujourd'hui, je parle pour la première fois sans papier. C'est un premier discours avant beaucoup de leçons en français. Je m'excuse pour la grammaire.

C'est mon plaisir parce que ma circonscription de Sudbury, c'est la place où le drapeau franco-ontarien a ses origines, par M. Gaétan Gervais. C'est un point de fierté de ma circonscription, de ma ville, ce symbole. C'est très important pour ma ville, mais ce n'est pas seulement les symboles, les choses symboliques. Pour les communautés franco-ontariennes, c'est important, aussi, l'argent pour les supports. Les symboles sont importants, mais aussi, c'est très important, l'argent pour les communautés, l'argent pour le système d'éducation et les autres choses. Ça, c'est important pour moi, pour ma circonscription, pour mes amis et ma famille qui parlent français aussi.

1450

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Jennifer K. French): The member for Mississauga Centre has two minutes for her reply.

M^{me} Natalia Kusendova: Merci à tous les députés pour vos discours aujourd'hui.

Je dois vous dire, madame la Présidente, que je suis aussi un peu déçue par le ton des députés de l'opposition, qui ne peuvent pas résister à politiser chaque question, même non-partisane, comme mon projet de loi.

Je remercie le député d'Algoma-Manitoulin pour sa suggestion d'inclure les noms des deux créateurs. C'est pourquoi nous avons un processus pour les projets de loi, et je serais heureuse de considérer cela en comité.

Comme le député de Niagara-Ouest, je suis une fière francophile. Quand je suis arrivée au Canada, je ne parlais

pas anglais, mais je parlais français. Cela m'a donné l'opportunité de parler aux autres élèves à l'école en français, en apprenant l'anglais en même temps.

Il y a 750 000 francophones ici en Ontario. Ils ont une histoire riche. Les symboles sont très importants pour eux, et pour nous ici.

Pour conclure, je voudrais lire une citation de Carol Jolin, le président de l'Assemblée de la francophonie de l'Ontario, qui était avec nous aujourd'hui : « En ce mois de mars, mois de la francophonie, c'est un geste fort que pose la députée Kusendova. Les symboles sont importants. La pleine reconnaissance de l'importance du drapeau franco-ontarien est un autre signe démontrant l'évolution de la relation entre » les élus provinciaux « et la population franco-ontarienne. Cela montre leur respect envers notre communauté », a déclaré Carol Jolin.

Alors, je voudrais conclure en disant : vive la francophonie de l'Ontario.

DITCH THE SWITCH ACT, 2020

LOI DE 2020 POUR REMETTRE LES PENDULES À L'HEURE

Mr. Paul Miller moved second reading of the following bill:

Bill 174, An Act to amend the Time Act / Projet de loi 174, Loi modifiant la Loi sur l'heure légale.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Jennifer K. French): Pursuant to standing order 101, the member has 12 minutes for his presentation.

Mr. Paul Miller: I rise today to discuss Bill 174, known as the Ditch the Switch Act, An Act to amend the Time Act.

The people of this province are tired. As their representatives, we must do what we can to help them with the fact of modern life. While everyone is busy with their day-to-day lives, often the small disruptions can create the largest impacts. Small changes can lead to serious negative effects on our routines, which can result in unexpected consequences. Disruptions to our sleep patterns can be the most devastating. Research has shown that a small change in just one night's sleep can lead to various health and safety concerns due to unexpected fatigue. If the loss of just one hour of sleep has such a negative impact across a whole population, then why do we continue to voluntarily expose ourselves to this experience en masse twice a year?

I'm speaking, of course, of the most prominent disruptions to our sleep schedules, when we biannually spring forward and fall back for daylight savings time, the time-honoured, yet frequently questioned, tradition of setting our clocks forward or back by one hour.

Madam Speaker, my bill seeks to do away with the outdated institution. It will standardize Ontario's time by making daylight savings time the only time observed in our province throughout the year.

The history of daylight savings goes back to the turn of the century in Canada. Port Arthur, now known as

Thunder Bay, became the first jurisdiction in Ontario to enact daylight savings on July 1, 1908.

While the idea of changing the clocks forward by one hour in order to extend the amount of daylight at the end of the workday had been around for decades prior to this decision, it was not long until the majority of the province began to implement the new light-saving strategy when the federal government officially adopted daylight savings time in 1918.

By artificially lengthening the amount of daylight in the evening, it was originally stated that people could enjoy more of their post-work lives, as people generally did not like to or could not perform certain activities after the sun set. Along with these benefits to people's recreational and personal lives, there was the belief that energy savings were possible, as employers were able to spend less on lighting and heating their buildings with gas, coal and electricity. It is difficult in the 21st century to look at the current practice of moving the clocks forward or backwards by an hour as energy efficient, as we have clearly changed our habits and our lifestyles since the days of coal heating and local neighbourhood shopping.

To this point, a recent study from the academic journal *Review of Economics and Statistics* titled *Does Daylight Savings Time Save Energy? Evidence from a Natural Experiment in Indiana* concludes by stating, "We find that the long-standing rationale for DST is questionable, and, if anything, the policy seems to have the opposite of the intended effect."

The study points out that the modern use of air-conditioning in most homes has offset any real energy-saving benefits from having daylight available in the evening. The study also argues that daylight savings time "increased opportunities for leisure, enhanced public health and safety, and economic growth." I agree with these findings and believe that a permanent shift to daylight savings time will maintain the positive elements of increased daylight in the evening hours while I also recognize that the older concern of energy savings is no longer relevant to the conversation of this topic.

I am sure that it can be debated about whether daylight savings time is superior to standard time, but the real reason I propose this bill is to stop the negative consequences of needlessly changing the clock by one hour each fall and each spring. What I am proposing is that we, as a province, stop tampering with the physical clocks in our homes and our cars. I'm actually more concerned about protecting the most important clock in our lives when it comes to our physical and mental health: our internal clock.

The human mind and body slowly adjust to the gradual increase and decrease of natural sunlight that wanes and waxes through the seasons, known as our circadian rhythm. Most people feel the need to be active when the sun is up and they also instinctively know that it's time to get ready to sleep after the sun has set. While modern society has found many ways around this natural cycle with indoor and outdoor lighting, for the vast majority of us, sleeping at night and working during the day is normally taken for granted.

The time of the year this routine is not taken for granted is when the television announcer reminds us that we will be losing an hour of sleep over the weekend as we all must set the clocks forward for daylight savings time, also known as DST. It is the sudden change of time when DST begins or ends that leads to substantial negative impacts on our physical and mental health. This has been proven statistically.

According to the Journal of Sleep Medicine, the sleep deprivation of the Monday following the shift to DST in the spring results in small increases in fatal accidents. The behavioural adaptation anticipating the longer day on Sunday of the shift from DST in the fall leads to an increased number of accidents, suggesting that an increase in late-night, early-Sunday-morning drinking-while-driving-related fatalities are highly possibly related to alcohol consumption and driving when you are sleepy. Put simply, more traffic accidents happen when we change the clock.

The Journal of Applied Psychology finds that “time phase changes that are intended to better align waking activating with daylight periods have a negative side effect on organizations. Following phase advances, employees slept 40 minutes less, had 5.7% more workplace injuries and lost 67.6 more workdays because of injuries than on a non-phase-change day.” Basically: Change the clock, and more people get hurt at work.

The Journal of Biological Rhythms has this to say about increased hospital visits after one hour of change in time: “An increase in accident and emergency visits and return visits (mostly white codes, resulting in discharges) was observed a few weeks after the enforcement of DST....” Again, to summarize: more trips to the hospital for a variety of different reasons due to clocks being changed by only one hour.

1500

I could go on with examples about how simply moving the clock forward or backward is similar to giving every man, woman and child a minor case of jet lag, but I believe everyone can remind themselves of their own experiences with changing the clocks. Whether it is the anxiety of waking up late after forgetting about the change, or the basic pain of going around your home physically resetting each and every digital device that has a time display on it, it is an easy case to simply say, “It is time to ditch the switch.”

It is hard to think of many positive things that will be lost when we decide to follow the lead of provinces like Saskatchewan, who rid themselves of daylight savings time in 1966.

While moving the clock back and forth has always been a handy reminder to check the batteries in your smoke detector, it is hard to argue that the process of changing the time by an hour is not causing more harm than good.

While I mentioned the great province of Saskatchewan and how they ended their adherence to the tradition of seasonal time manipulation, I must also mention that Yukon territory and the province of British Columbia are adopting it. Alberta is even looking at it. Recently, they

have all recently passed or have taken a look at these proposals.

After province-wide public consultation, British Columbia’s Premier, John Horgan, stated that British Columbians were “loud and clear that they want to do away with the practice of changing our clocks twice a year.” I’m sure that if this province conducted similar consultations the public would also have a lot to say on this matter.

Canadians are not the only ones asking whether or not we should lock the clock. As of 2019, in the United States, 36 states have introduced legislation to end or study the practice of switching clocks.

Many opponents of changing daylight savings time point to the fact that if one province changes its time regimen, it will be left out of sync with other major trading partners to the south. Well, with 36 states looking into choosing DST as a permanent time, we as Ontarians won’t want to be left behind if our largest trading partners decide to ditch the switch themselves.

Madam Speaker, I appreciate the time today to make my case about changing a long-held Ontario tradition. It is my belief that the tradition of falling back and springing forward has had its time. After years of academic studies, it is clear that the benefits do not outweigh the costs when you factor in the negative health and economic consequences of shifting forward or back one hour.

On a personal note, I believe many people in this province would prefer to forgo the hassle of running around the house and adjusting the dial of every watch, clock, radio, microwave and timepiece they own twice a year. I’m also sure that we all have had our moments of panic by sleeping in and ending up late for work because that was the year we forgot what weekend it was.

Madam Speaker, I believe it’s time to ditch the switch. Choose one time. Choose daylight savings time and stick with it for the rest of the year and for the foreseeable future.

Interjections.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Jennifer K. French): Order, please. The House will come to order. Thank you. Further debate?

Mr. Roman Baber: I’m pleased to rise and speak today to Bill 174, the Ditch the Switch Act. First, I want to thank the member from Hamilton East–Stoney Creek for introducing this measure. Until recently, the issue of eliminating the time change seemed to be politically off-limits, so I’m glad we’re bringing this issue to light.

But I’d like to speak to a specific feature of this bill, and not just the elimination of time change, but to fixing all time to daylight savings time, DST. Last Sunday, DST began for 70 countries. DST originates from different cultures and places around the world that came to the same conclusion: Preserving daylight has a positive effect on health, wellness, well-being and the community. Dating back to ancient Rome, Roman water clocks used different scales for different months of the year to adjust daily schedules to solar time.

There is no question that having an extra hour of light is a good thing. A permanent daylight savings time would

mean that people who work a standard day will get more daylight after work. Having DST all year round is also good for the economy. Research shows that longer days increase sales as people engage in leisure activities, take trips and have more time to shop.

The year-round DST would also benefit those who work indoors and don't see much sun during the short days of winter. The Canadian Mental Health Association estimates that approximately 3% of Canadians suffer from seasonal affective disorder every year. SAD is a type of depression that appears at certain times of the year and is linked to decreased levels of sunlight, so year-round DST would also promote mental health.

Another recent study showed that children get more exercise on days with later sunsets. It also appears that a permanent daylight savings time would decrease crime rates. A Stanford study found that outdoor robberies declined significantly during daylight savings time. There's also evidence that a year-round daylight savings time may reduce traffic-related fatalities, especially for pedestrians.

Between improved mental health, more family time, benefits to the economy, crime reduction and safety, moving to a permanent daylight savings time should be as clear as day. With all the benefits, folks wonder, "Why not ditch the switch?"

The reason why DST is currently only in effect part of the year is that some farmers can't work when it's dark out. Due to a late-rising winter sun, a year-round daylight savings time may mean that it would still be dark when farmers like to work. However, this is not true for all farmers. In fact, a lot of farmers oppose the actual time shift, rather than daylight savings time itself. Dairy farmers, for instance, say that a twice-annual time shift forces them to move milking times, which can be difficult for cows. So you see, a permanent DST can benefit animals as well. Having said all that, a year-round daylight savings time just makes sense.

Now, while I support the member's initiative today, there are some concerns about a unilateral change in Ontario. With the exception of Kenora, Ontario benefits from being a party to Eastern Standard Time. It shares Eastern Standard Time with the US east coast and Quebec, and there are undoubtedly many benefits to sharing time with the eastern seaboard. For instance, the Toronto Stock Exchange and the New York Stock Exchange and Nasdaq marketplace are in sync. The same with our TV and entertainment schedule.

Creating this unilateral change will create multiple time zones in the same geographical zones. This may result in us not just missing our favourite show; it may also disadvantage the province's economy. There would also be confusion in Ottawa with folks who live or work in Ottawa or Gatineau but essentially exist in two different time zones. This is why I'm of the view that while we need to eliminate the time change and specifically stick to daylight savings time, such a move should not be made without coordination with Quebec, New York state, and perhaps the federal government.

But I thank the member. This is a good first step, and I have been happy to be part of this debate.

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

Ms. Teresa J. Armstrong: I first want to congratulate the member from Hamilton East–Stoney Creek for bringing this bill forward. It's called Ditch the Switch. It's Bill 174. But I think it should also be known as the "Miller time" bill. This "Miller time" bill is talking about not changing the time, in order to keep things consistent.

Just recently, on March 4—and there was an update on March 5, here—there was an article that was printed from Yukon. Basically, the government said this Wednesday that the territory will keep the time change permanent, after hearing an overwhelming majority of residents say they would rather remain an hour ahead than switch back and forth in November. What the Yukon government did is they actually put out a call for residents to give their feedback. The territory asked residents to give their thoughts on giving up the seasonal time change between January 6 and February 16. More than 4,800 individuals and organizations responded to the online survey, along with 35 written submissions, marking it the highest public engagement in Yukon's history.

1510

I'll be honest; I didn't think this issue was something that people really had a particular concern about, but obviously when you're talking about 4,800 individuals engaging in Yukon, it is important, so I commend the member for bringing this forward.

In my riding, we did hear from a constituent, Jim. The member from Timiskaming–Cochrane will appreciate what Jim said. He said, "I have always wondered why we follow the practice of changing our clocks twice a year. It baffles my mind when I hear people say that we do it for the good of the farmers ... as this makes no sense at all—cows still get up at the same time because they can't tell time!!!! LOL!!!"

Interjections.

Ms. Teresa J. Armstrong: I thought the member would appreciate that.

All kidding aside, in a sense, there is a reason to change daylight savings time, not changing clocks and making this bill legislation.

In 2008, the US Department of Energy conducted a nationwide study on energy consumption during daylight savings time and found a decrease in energy use of about 0.5%, and really that's enough power, they said, for every dishwasher in every single home in the US for more than a week straight. That's how much conservation could come out of that.

Energy conservation is just one of the benefits of making daylight savings time permanent. An extra hour of sunlight in the evening rather than the morning allows more leisure time for Ontarians to spend with their families outdoors and does more to impact health and efficiency and safety.

We heard about the safety piece. We have heard that it will result in less car accidents, which is a good thing. Research has also shown that implementing daylight

savings time could save lives. A study by Rutgers estimates that 343 American lives, in fact, were actually saved by implementing that.

Again, one good reason is: When you have twice as many people driving in rush-hour traffic, it can cause problems in the morning, and if we keep the daylight savings time, that's going to reduce those accidents. That can, again, save lives, impact lives.

The member from Hamilton East–Stoney Creek gave us a lot of information, but there is another study. A 2013 British study found that improved lighting in evening hours could reduce, again, the crime rate by 20%. We're all looking for those things in our communities in order for that to happen.

I hope that we will take Miller time seriously in this Legislature and pass this bill.

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

Mr. Joel Harden: I have enjoyed the company of my friend from Hamilton East–Stoney Creek a lot. There are several things about this bill that are emblematic. Not only, as my colleague just mentioned, should we consider this to be Miller time and champion it as a province; I've often enjoyed my friend's singular heckle of the word "wow."

I'm wondering if you might help me; on the count of three, if we could all salute this proposal by saying the word "wow." Are we ready? One, two, three—

Interjections: Wow!

Mr. Percy Hatfield: Put some mustard on that baloney. *Interjections.*

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Jennifer K. French): Order. Order.

Mr. Joel Harden: Speaker, in the time that I have to talk about this—because my other colleagues want to mention it—I want to focus in on one particular constituent, Louise Lafond. Thank you, Louise, who has reached out to me about this particular issue before and asked me to raise it. When I mentioned that my colleague was raising it, she was very thrilled.

Louise and I have something in common. Louise works at a different Legislature—she works at the House of Commons—but she has little children. I can tell you right now, Speaker: Somewhere in this province, there is someone walking like a zombie, pushing a stroller, surviving a sleepless night, and they hate daylight savings time, perhaps more than those farmers or those cows that got brought up before.

Louise wrote me, exasperated. For anybody who has had to go through sleep training with your children, and you walk around your apartment or house like a ninja for fear of waking the child up, this is the worst thing you could do to parents. On behalf of Louise and on behalf of parents right across this province, I salute my friend for putting this forward. You're making a difference in their lives. And I invite my government friends to help MPP Miller do that.

Lastly, because MPP Baber raised it, I want to respond as someone from Ottawa. I can tell you this: If we in Ontario show leadership and those of us on our side of the

Ottawa River decide to adopt Miller time, je crois que mes amis de l'autre côté de la rivière vont dire : « Les anglos, eh bien! C'est bien pour nous autres aussi, OK? »

We can work together. In this case, Quebec has shown leadership on child care. Quebec has shown leadership on community health care. Let's show leadership on Miller time.

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

Ms. Suze Morrison: It's a pleasure to rise in the Legislature this afternoon to speak to this bill in support of my colleague the member from Hamilton East–Stoney Creek. This bill, the Ditch the Switch Act, or, as we've been colloquially referring to it, the Miller time bill, seeks to modernize our somewhat antiquated system in Ontario by eliminating the biannual changing of time for daylight saving time. We've heard today, through my colleagues, that we have several studies that show that this system can lead to increased vehicle and workplace accidents, as well as just general grogginess, as many of us experienced this past week, no doubt.

Speaker, I'd love to share a story about my own experiences with daylight savings time this week. I was actually late to our caucus meeting on Tuesday morning because I locked myself in my underground parking garage. In my dazed and confused state on Tuesday—because it was two days into daylight savings time and I still hadn't reset myself—I leave my apartment without my keys in my pocket. I go down my elevator into my underground parking, which is in the very, very bottom of our building. I exit the locking door, the door locks behind me, and I realize I now can't get into my car, I can't click my way out of my parking garage and I can't get back in the building. And there's no reception, because I'm on the very, very bottom, in the very last spot in the whole garage.

So I have to walk all the way up the twisting, winding ramps, several levels, all the way up to the top—it took me five minutes to get to the top—to call my husband to come and rescue me, because there is no way out of my garage at that point. The funniest part, though, was when he came back downstairs to get me. In his own state of confusedness, he brought my keys and then didn't bring his to let himself back in the building. So I'm halfway down the block and now I have to drive back and go rescue him. This is exactly what families go through at daylight savings time.

But the other piece that I did want to mention today was that there was another really important thing that happened this past weekend on the day of daylight savings time, and that's International Women's Day. I'd be remiss if I didn't mention the irony of the fact that the only day all year this year that we celebrated women only had 23 hours in it. If that's not shortchanging the women of Ontario, I don't know what is, Speaker.

I want to say to the organizers of the International Women's Day march here in Toronto: We had a fantastic time. We had a great event up at OISE, like we do every single year. It was an event that highlights women across Ontario. It was a great theme this year. It was, "The world

is on fire. We are rising. Indigenous justice, climate and economic justice, end to violence, end to war.” It was terrific to be able to spend our mere 23 hours together at such a great event, celebrating all the women across this province.

I’m happy to stand here today in support of my colleague. Let’s ditch the switch on daylight savings time and let’s celebrate Miller time in the province of Ontario.

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

Ms. Peggy Sattler: I also want to add my congratulations to my colleague the member for Hamilton East–Stoney Creek on his Ditch the Switch Act.

I’ve spoken before in this place about the fact that I was a policy researcher before I was elected, and I really appreciate evidence-based legislation like what my colleague has brought forward. We see far too little of that in this Legislature.

He brought, in his remarks, some of the research and the data and the evidence supporting the need for this change. I think that that is a really important thing that we do here: We look at evidence and we decide whether this is good policy or not.

1520

Certainly when he talked about the benefits, the increase in recreational activities, the decrease in motor vehicle accidents and workplace accidents, negative mental health outcomes—all of these things tell us that this is a wise and sound policy for Ontario to move forward with.

Of course, he mentioned the other jurisdictions—36 other states, a number of Canadian provinces—that are also looking to move to permanent daylight savings time, or at least create a single time zone. That tells us that other jurisdictions recognize the value of moving in this direction, so I’m pleased to support this bill, and I hope that we see this change soon in Ontario.

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

The member from Hamilton East–Stoney Creek has two minutes for his reply.

Mr. Paul Miller: I’d like to thank the members from York Centre, Ottawa Centre, Toronto Centre, London–Fanshawe and London West. To clarify the intention of my bill, I’m not saying that daylight savings time is inherently better than standard time. Simply put, as other jurisdictions have done or are strongly considering doing, we need simply to choose a time that works for Ontario and stick with it.

There are strong arguments for extra sunlight in the evening and in the morning. I believe I highlighted some of those pros and cons in my previous statements. Daylight savings time does, however, seem to be the choice nearly all of the states and provinces who are interested in going forward to ditch the switch have made.

It has only been five days since we last felt the impact of losing one hour of sleep when the people of Ontario were asked to spring forward. I’m sure that there are people in all of your home ridings who have reached out

to your offices to make a comment on their displeasure with the outdated tradition. They have definitely called my office.

Changes are on the horizon, though. The great territory of the Yukon is celebrating their recent decision to stop observing the switch of time. This past weekend was the last time the people of that territory were forced to reset their timepieces. British Columbia has voted for it. The western states of California and Oregon are moving in that direction quickly.

The decision was made after a survey result of 4,800 people—more than 15% of the total population of the Yukon—showed that 93% of the participants wanted seasonal time changes to stop, with 70% of those in favour of permanent daylight savings time.

Madam Speaker, under the leadership of Tommy Douglas, Saskatchewan led the way in developing the first form of public health care in the country. Soon after, the rest of the provinces followed suit. As the province that also led the way by ending seasonal time changes in 1966, maybe we should look at Saskatchewan again. They were right about health care, so it’s my strong belief, along with the Yukon, that it should happen.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Jennifer K. French): The time for private members’ public business has expired.

SIKH GENOCIDE AWARENESS WEEK ACT, 2020

LOI DE 2020 SUR LA SEMAINE DE LA SENSIBILISATION AU GÉNOCIDE DES SIKHS

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Jennifer K. French): We will deal first with ballot item number 5, standing in the name of Mr. Singh, Brampton East. Mr. Singh, Brampton East, has moved second reading of Bill 177, An Act to proclaim Sikh Genocide Awareness Week. Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? I declare the motion carried.

Second reading agreed to.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Jennifer K. French): To which committee?

Mr. Gurratan Singh: The standing committee on justice.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Jennifer K. French): On justice policy?

Mr. Gurratan Singh: Justice policy, yes, Speaker.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Jennifer K. French): Is the majority in favour of this bill being referred to the Standing Committee on Justice Policy? Agreed.

FRANCO-ONTARIAN EMBLEM AMENDMENT ACT, 2020

LOI DE 2020 MODIFIANT LA LOI SUR L’EMBLÈME FRANCO-ONTARIEN

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Jennifer K. French): Ms. Kusendova has moved second reading of Bill 182, An Act

to amend the Franco-Ontarian Emblem Act, 2001. Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? I declare the motion carried.

Second reading agreed to.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Jennifer K. French): Which committee?

M^{me} Natalia Kusendova: Le Comité permanent des règlements et des projets de loi d'intérêt privé.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Jennifer K. French): Is the majority in favour of this bill being referred to the Standing Committee on Regulations and Private Bills? Agreed.

DITCH THE SWITCH ACT, 2020
LOI DE 2020 POUR REMETTRE
LES PENDULES À L'HEURE

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Jennifer K. French): Mr. Miller, Hamilton East–Stoney Creek, has moved second reading of Bill 174, An Act to amend the Time Act. Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? I declare the motion carried.

Second reading agreed to.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Jennifer K. French): I return to the member. Which committee?

Interjections.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Jennifer K. French): It's the time to declare the committee.

Mr. Paul Miller: Referred to the regulations and private bills committee.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Jennifer K. French): Is the majority in favour of this bill referred to the Standing Committee on Regulations and Private Bills? Agreed.

HOUSE SITTINGS

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Jennifer K. French): I recognize the government House leader on an point of order.

Hon. Paul Calandra: Thank you very much, Madam Speaker. I seek unanimous consent to move a motion without notice.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Jennifer K. French): The government House leader is seeking unanimous consent to move a motion without notice? Agreed? Agreed.

Hon. Paul Calandra: I move that, during any time that the House is adjourned during the remainder of the 2020 spring sessional period, the government House leader may give written notice to the Speaker that the assembly shall not meet; and

The Speaker shall thereupon cause the assembly to remain adjourned accordingly until further notice is given to the Speaker in writing to convene the assembly; and

The provisions of this motion are in effect to 11:59 p.m. on Thursday, June 4, 2020 and expire at that time.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Jennifer K. French): Mr. Calandra has moved that, during any time that the House is adjourned during the remainder of the 2020 spring

sessional period, the government House leader may give written notice to the Speaker that the assembly shall not meet; and

The Speaker shall thereupon cause the assembly to remain adjourned accordingly until further notice is given to the Speaker in writing to convene the assembly; and

The provisions of this motion are in effect to 11:59 p.m. on Thursday, June 4, 2020 and expire at that time.

Is there debate on the motion? I return to the government House leader.

Hon. Paul Calandra: Thank you, Madam Speaker. I think the motion is, frankly, self-explanatory. The government has been working very closely with our partners across the country, with our municipal partners, in order to deal with a health care crisis that is clearly top of mind to the people of the province of Ontario and, frankly, across the globe. We've seen a number of very troubling issues with respect to COVID-19 recently.

As you know, Madam Speaker, the government announced some emergency measures just the other day. We are to understand that earlier today the first ministers' meeting was cancelled in Ottawa and that the Prime Minister and a number of other federal leaders have moved themselves into self-isolation.

This motion here, I think, is a prudent measure which allows parliamentarians to have the safety and knowledge—not only parliamentarians, but those who work in the parliamentary precinct, including security, the people who support us, Hansard and the press, to ensure that they can remain safe, should something occur over the next little while.

As you know, Madam Speaker, we are on a constituency week next week, so all of the members will be returning to their constituencies. The government would like to have the opportunity, should an emergency arise, in order to inform the Speaker that the House would not return as scheduled on Monday, March 23. The only option available to the government right now would be to prorogue the House should a situation arise, and that is something that the government does not want to do.

1530

Obviously there are a number of items that the government and parliamentarians on both sides of the House have been working very hard in order to put forward. This is a measure that we would only undertake in an emergency situation. It baffles me that we are actually debating this motion right now. I do want to thank the Liberal House leader and the leader of the Green Party, who previously agreed to this motion because they realized that it was in the best interest not only of parliamentarians but of all of the people who visit this place.

We want to ensure, and have been working very hard to make sure, that this is a non-partisan issue. The safety and security of the people of the province of Ontario should not be something that we disagree on. I would hope that the members opposite would agree on this point. This is not a motion that we take lightly, and it is certainly not something the government would do without first taking advice from the members opposite.

Having said that, Madam Speaker, we need to be in a position where we can put the safety and security of parliamentarians and the people who work here above all else. I certainly hope that the members opposite will use common sense and join with us, join with the other party leaders, in simply passing this motion so that we can ensure that all of us remain safe.

It is our intention to be back here on Monday, March 23. That is our intention, Madam Speaker. We want to continue the work. There is a lot of work that needs to be done, and we want to ensure that we can tell the people of the province of Ontario how parliamentarians are working together, not only to address the issues with respect to COVID-19 but to further address the issues that will come with respect to the economic challenges that this province will face going forward as a result of what has become a global pandemic.

So, again, I ask the opposition to join with us, to join with the leader of the Green Party and to join with the House leader for the Liberal Party in making this something that we can unanimously support so that we can again ensure that all of those people who work in this place can be safe and that the people who are dealing with this on the front lines can keep their focus on what matters: ensuring that people outside of this place are safe and secure.

Again, I'm dumbfounded that we're actually having a debate on this, Madam Speaker, but I certainly hope that when the opposition rises, it will simply be to express their support for this and to do what we have been doing at this point: working together to make sure that the people of the province of Ontario are well served by their parliamentarians and well served by the institutions that support us, and that we show the utmost support and respect for the people who are working on the front lines to keep the people of the province of Ontario safe.

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

Mr. Gilles Bisson: Madam Speaker, I just want to say at the beginning of this portion of debate—and I tell you now that we're not going to debate this all afternoon; it will get passed this afternoon.

We're not going to speak for very long, but a couple of things have to be said about this particular motion. First of all, we will support it, but there's a problem in the way that the government arrived at this, and some of the words that the government House leader just used quite frankly are somewhat opposite to what we talked about earlier today.

Is there an issue across the world, including Ontario, that we need to respond to? Absolutely. But one of the things that your own Premier has been saying, and certainly Andrea Horwath, the leader of the New Democrats, has been saying, is, "We need to listen to the experts." You're right: We can't make political decisions about what essentially are medical decisions about how the public deals with this whole pandemic that we see coming across the world. We need to listen to the experts.

One of the things that we asked you when we met with you after question period—we said, "We're okay with

going here." We actually suggested other language that actually covered some of the things that were unforeseen in the original motion. But we said, "We should have some sort of mechanism in the motion that makes it clearer that the only way that this motion could be kicked in is by way of having either the Chief Medical Officer of Health give us advice that, in fact, buildings such as this one, the Legislature of Ontario, shouldn't meet"—because those things may happen. The Chief Medical Officer of Health of Ontario may at one point say, "You can't meet with more than so many people in a room. Certain things will need to be closed" etc. So we said, "Listen, we believe it's important that we make it clear in the motion that this is only to be used in the event that something should happen where we need to shut the Legislature down for health and safety reasons," and the health and safety of the people who work here, but more importantly, the health and safety of the people we come in contact with as MPPs. We're all going back home. We've all been living in Toronto for the last week at least; some of us a little bit longer. A lot of us may have been in contact—we don't know. I don't have any symptoms. I don't know of anybody else who does at this point who's here today. But there's a danger that that may be an issue.

I understand that we have to do something, but we said to the government House leader this morning, and to the Liberal and Green leaders, "Let's make sure that this motion is worded in such a way that the only way it can be used is in the event that we need to do it, in order to deal with issues stemming from the pandemic." The government House leader kind of got mad at me and said, "Oh, my God. I can't believe you're politicizing this" etc. "That you're even raising this issue." It is our job as legislators on both sides of the House—on both sides of the House, yours and my side of the House—to look at things and look at how we can do them so that we achieve our stated objectives. In this particular case, we thought it was prudent to insert such wording into the motion.

The government House leader, by the end of the meeting, had said that no, he didn't want to do that. That's your right. I'm not arguing that you have to listen to me, but I certainly have a responsibility and the job of giving you advice from this side of the House. If you don't take it—

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Jennifer K. French): Stop the clock. Sorry to interrupt the member, but all remarks must be directed to and through the Chair. The across-the-room conversation is not helpful.

The member may continue, directing his remarks through the Chair. The member from Timmins.

Mr. Gilles Bisson: Through you, Madam Speaker: My point is the discussion that we had today was about making sure that this motion is worded in such a way that the only way it can be triggered is clear.

The way this is now written, the government could use it for other reasons. Up until June 4 of this year, the government could decide to recess the House for an indefinite period of time. Now, are they going to do that? I would hope not. The government House leader says no, and I'll

hold him to his word. But the language is written in such a way that you could. Do you blame any member of this assembly for coming to you and saying, “Let’s just make sure and make clear what this is all about”?

If the Liberals and Greens don’t want to take that responsibility, that’s up to them. I can’t speak for them. But I can tell you, I’ve been in this place for 30 years. I went through the SARS process that we had here at the Legislature. There were mechanisms—

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Jennifer K. French): Through the Chair.

Mr. Gilles Bisson: —Madam Speaker, that we could have dealt with in having to shut the House down, if that would have been necessary. The government House leader says, “Oh, well, the only tool that we have is to prorogue the House.” That is the tool that you could use if the House was adjourned next week and there was a reason not to call us back. It is a tool that you could have used, and it’s not the best tool; I agree with you. I’m not going to argue that you should prorogue the House. But the House could have come back on the Monday that we’re supposed to come back with a skeleton crew of members to pass a motion in order to deal with whatever. That would have been one way to deal with it—or you can do a motion such as this. I don’t have a particular problem doing this as a motion, but I think, at the very least, there should be some sort of clarification that this will only be used in the event of such and such a situation.

The government House leader is looking at me and kind of smiling and referring back to the conversation that we had earlier, that I should just trust him: “I would never do anything to play games with that.” Madam Speaker, when we had the meeting today, I said, “Okay, this motion will not be called until after private members’ so that we have a chance to do what we have to do.” “Yeah, not a problem. We won’t call it until after private members’.” What did the government do? They came in here at the end of—was it at the end of petitions or the beginning of petitions?

Mr. John Vanthof: At the end.

Mr. Gilles Bisson: At the end of petitions, the government tried to move unanimous consent. Well, if I can’t trust you to hold your word about when you’re going to call a motion, and you’re saying to all of Ontario to trust you, Madam Speaker—

Hon. Paul Calandra: Point of order.

1540

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Jennifer K. French): Stop the clock. I recognize the government House leader on a point of order.

Hon. Paul Calandra: I would ask the honourable member opposite to move back his—first of all, to withdraw what he just said with respect to whether I am to be trusted or not, because I think that it’s quite unparliamentary, and if he would revert back to the substance of what we’re talking to. Can the people of Ontario trust him to move forward on keeping them safe and secure?

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Jennifer K. French): I would ask that all members of the House bring the temperature down. That was not a point of order. But I will

remind all members to speak in a parliamentary fashion, to keep the temperature down, to direct all comments to and through the Chair, and, perhaps, stick to their own words and not use those on behalf of other people.

I return to the member from Timmins.

Mr. Gilles Bisson: Thank you very much, Madam Speaker. Through you, if there was any offence—I certainly don’t want to offend my honourable colleague; that is not the point.

The point that I’m making is, the government House leader said, “I would never use this in any way other than what we just discussed. I’m disgusted that you’re even thinking of this and you’re raising this issue.” He then promised that he wouldn’t call the motion until after private members’ public business, but he called a unanimous consent way before, outside the agreement that we had together. So if I can’t trust the—

Hon. Paul Calandra: Absolutely unbelievable.

Mr. Gilles Bisson: Well, it’s what happened. So you can get up and debate—

Interjection.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Jennifer K. French): Order. Stop the clock.

We’re not going to have the crosstalk in this Legislature. Right now, we are in the middle of debate. All members have the opportunity, during rotation, to speak. I would remind members to keep it parliamentary. I have not heard that things have been unparliamentary, but we are towing that line.

The member from Timmins, please direct your remarks through me, to me, only. Thank you.

Mr. Gilles Bisson: Yes, Madam Speaker. I will continue to do that.

My point is that we believe it was important to put wording inside that motion that just made it clearer that the only time you can use this would be that. Otherwise, this motion, quite frankly, gives the government powers beyond what it is that we’re saying we can do.

The fact is, if the government decided, they could adjourn the House next week, the following two constituency weeks, on weekends, or Fridays, should they decide to do so. I don’t think that’s what the government wanted to do, so why not clarify it? So we asked for the motion to be inserted.

I want to move an amendment to the main motion. I move that the motion be amended as follows:

In the first paragraph, after “leader,” add the text “on the recommendation of the Chief Medical Officer of Health.”

I will send a copy to the table and one to my honourable colleague the government House leader.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Jennifer K. French): Mr. Bisson has moved that the motion be amended as follows:

In the first paragraph, after “leader,” add the text “on the recommendation of the Chief Medical Officer of Health.”

I return to the member from Timmins for his comments on the motion.

Mr. Gilles Bisson: Madam Speaker, I'm about to wrap up. I'm not going to go much longer because I think I've made the point.

Do we all believe in this House that there needs to be a mechanism to deal with the possibility that we may have to adjourn the House for a period of time? Absolutely. I said to you at the beginning that we will vote for this motion. We understand what this is all about. But it just seems to us that, in fact, there should be checks and balances about how this motion could be used. That's the point we were trying to make, and that's why I moved that particular amendment.

I agree with the government House leader that this should be a non-partisan issue. I don't disagree with the government House leader. He's right. But let's be guided by what the experts also tell us to do. We have heard from the Premier; the Minister of Health; the Associate Minister of Health; Andrea Horwath, leader of the NDP; and others that we need to reach out to those people who understand and know what these issues are in order to guide us in all of our decisions about what our response is at the Ministry of Health, what our response is going to be in various ministries across the province and, yes, about what happens here in the Legislature.

It is up to us as legislators in this House only to determine what business we'll debate. If you notice the way that we've amended the motion, it's not saying that the Chief Medical Officer of Health has the power to do whatever. It's just upon recommendation.

I'm hoping that the government will support that amendment. I think that would just make this a lot clearer, so that people would understand that, in fact, what this is all about is what it's all about. That's the point that we're making.

With that, Madam Speaker, that concludes my comments.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Jennifer K. French): Further debate on the amendment to the motion?

Hon. Paul Calandra: I appreciate the opportunity to speak a little bit further to this. I suspect that the opposition House leader has a much different recollection of our meeting than I do, and I suspect it's a much different recollection of that meeting than that of the leader of the Green Party and the leader of the Liberal Party.

Only, of course, would the opposition NDP at this point be trying to politicize something by suggesting that the government is going to somehow use this motion as a way of avoiding accountability in the Legislature. The whole notion of that is absolutely asinine. It's crazy. When one considers what is happening—

Interjections.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Jennifer K. French): Stop the clock. As a reminder to all members, we're going to keep the language appropriate for the House. On the standing orders, we should not be using language that is known to cause disorder.

I return to the member to continue his remarks. Order from all members, please.

Hon. Paul Calandra: Madam Speaker, we are facing a global pandemic right now. This House remains supreme. Our medical officers of health have been very clear as to what Ontarians should do. We have all been very clear, on Twitter, on Facebook and in our communications with our communities, what it is that our constituents should do throughout this place. It is very clear what we should do, the precautions that we should take.

The government came forward, in consultation with the opposition—not something, by the way, Madam Speaker, that we just decided out of thin air. We worked together with the opposition, with all of the parties in this place, to come forward with a motion that we thought we could agree on, one that is a non-partisan issue, to deal with this place over the next couple of months, should an emergency arise.

For the opposition House leader to suggest that we would bring back people on Monday to deal with this motion is absolutely the wrong approach.

This motion here, the motion that we've put forward with the co-operation of at least two other parties in this chamber, would allow us, in an emergency situation, to inform the members of provincial Parliament, and to inform those who work here, that the House will continue its recess while we deal with a global pandemic.

It is obviously our intention to be back here on Monday, March 23, but we want to have the ability not to call back the Legislature, so that we can tell people that we are adjourning to deal with the pandemic. We want to have the tools to do it, and for us, proroguing of the House doesn't seem to be an effective tool. So we reached out. We reached out to get advice on what the best way to do this would be. That's why the motion is time-limited. It does not go on forever. It is a time-limited motion that, in essence, deals with the next three constituency weeks in the spring session, Madam Speaker. That's what it is we are trying to accomplish.

Surely, if the member says that they are going to support the motion that we put forward, I congratulate them on that. But to suggest that this is going to be used as a tool by the government, by the Greens and by the Liberal Party to somehow avoid accountability in this place—frankly, it's offensive to all of the people who have been working so hard to deal with this head-on.

The member opposite, the Leader of the Opposition, along with the leaders of the Greens and the Liberals, were just in a meeting yesterday with the Premier, the Minister of Health and the Minister of Finance. We have been keeping them up to date.

Again, I would just ask that the member opposite drop the partisanship on this. Let us put the interests of the people who work in this place first. Let us allow the medical officer of health, let us allow the health care professionals who are dealing with this on the front lines each and every day to focus on what matters—protecting the people of the province of Ontario—and let Parliament remain supreme in its own House. Let us be able to deal with the things that we deal with. Surely, parliamentarians—how do we expect Ontarians to deal with the

situation or to take our advice when we are debating a simple motion that would allow us, internally, to deal with how we return to this House, in the event of a pandemic reaching us here in this chamber?

So again, I would hope that the opposition will simply drop the partisanship that for some reason—and it's not been up until to this point, Madam Speaker. But I hope at this point, they would reconsider—

Interjection.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Jennifer K. French): Order.

Hon. Paul Calandra: I guess the opposition House leader is upset at that.

We've been working very closely, I think in a very co-operative fashion, with respect to what it is that the government is doing, what it is that we're doing for the people of Ontario: updates from the Chief Medical Officer of Health, updates from community leaders across this province, updates to the members opposite, updates to the press. We've been trying to do this in a non-partisan fashion. Surely, surely, on this one small piece, when you consider all that the people of the province of Ontario are faced with—be it COVID-19, be it financial difficulties that arise from this—surely to goodness, the members of this House can agree on this one item that, over the next number of weeks, should an issue arise here—that we do not put the people who work in this place at risk for our own selfish, partisan purposes.

With that, I would hope that the opposition will join with us, join with the Liberals and join with the Green Party in passing this motion.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Jennifer K. French): Further debate on the amendment to the motion? Further debate on the amendment? Okay.

Mr. Bisson has moved that the motion be amended as follows:

In the first paragraph, after “leader”, add the text “on the recommendation of the Chief Medical Officer of Health”.

Is it the pleasure of the House that the amendment to the motion carry? I heard a no.

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

All those opposed to the motion, please say “nay.”

In my opinion, the nays have it.

Mr. Gilles Bisson: On division.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Jennifer K. French): Lost, on division.

Returning to the main motion, further debate? Further debate?

Seeing none, Mr. Calandra has moved that during any time that the House is adjourned during the remainder of the 2020 spring sessional period, the government House leader may give written notice to the Speaker that the assembly shall not meet; and

The Speaker shall thereupon cause the assembly to remain adjourned accordingly until further notice is given to the Speaker in writing to convene the assembly; and

The provisions of this motion are in effect to 11:59 p.m. on Thursday, June 4, 2020, and expire at that time.

Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? I declare the motion carried.

Motion agreed to.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Jennifer K. French): Orders of the day?

Hon. Paul Calandra: No further business.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Jennifer K. French): There being no further business, this House stands adjourned until Monday, March 23, 2020.

The House adjourned at 1554.

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF ONTARIO
ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE DE L'ONTARIO

Lieutenant Governor / Lieutenante-gouverneure: Hon. / L'hon. Elizabeth Dowdeswell, OC, OOnt.
Speaker / Président: Hon. / L'hon. Ted Arnott
Clerk / Greffier: Todd Decker
Deputy Clerk / Sous-greffier: Trevor Day
Clerks-at-the-Table / Greffiers parlementaires: Tonia Grannum, Valerie Quioic Lim, William Short
Sergeant-at-Arms / Sergente d'armes: Jacquelyn Gordon

Member and Party / Député(e) et parti	Constituency / Circonscription	Other responsibilities / Autres responsabilités
Anand, Deepak (PC)	Mississauga—Malton	
Andrew, Jill (NDP)	Toronto—St. Paul's	
Armstrong, Teresa J. (NDP)	London—Fanshawe	
Arnott, Hon. / L'hon. Ted (PC)	Wellington—Halton Hills	Speaker / Président de l'Assemblée législative
Arthur, Ian (NDP)	Kingston and the Islands / Kingston et les Îles	
Baber, Roman (PC)	York Centre / York-Centre	
Babikian, Aris (PC)	Scarborough—Agincourt	
Bailey, Robert (PC)	Sarnia—Lambton	
Barrett, Toby (PC)	Haldimand—Norfolk	
Begum, Doly (NDP)	Scarborough Southwest / Scarborough-Sud-Ouest	
Bell, Jessica (NDP)	University—Rosedale	
Berns-McGown, Rima (NDP)	Beaches—East York / Beaches—East York	
Bethlenfalvy, Hon. / L'hon. Peter (PC)	Pickering—Uxbridge	President of the Treasury Board / Président du Conseil du Trésor
Bisson, Gilles (NDP)	Timmins	Opposition House Leader / Leader parlementaire de l'opposition officielle
Blais, Stephen (LIB)	Orléans	
Bouma, Will (PC)	Brantford—Brant	
Bourgouin, Guy (NDP)	Mushkegowuk—James Bay / Mushkegowuk—Baie James	
Burch, Jeff (NDP)	Niagara Centre / Niagara-Centre	
Calandra, Hon. / L'hon. Paul (PC)	Markham—Stouffville	Minister Without Portfolio / Ministre sans portefeuille Government House Leader / Leader parlementaire du gouvernement
Cho, Hon. / L'hon. Raymond Sung Joon (PC)	Scarborough North / Scarborough-Nord	Minister for Seniors and Accessibility / Ministre des Services aux aînés et de l'Accessibilité
Cho, Stan (PC)	Willowdale	
Clark, Hon. / L'hon. Steve (PC)	Leeds—Grenville—Thousand Islands and Rideau Lakes / Leeds—Grenville—Thousand Islands et Rideau Lakes	Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing / Ministre des Affaires municipales et du Logement
Coe, Lorne (PC)	Whitby	
Collard, Lucille (LIB)	Ottawa—Vanier	
Coteau, Michael (LIB)	Don Valley East / Don Valley-Est	
Crawford, Stephen (PC)	Oakville	
Cuzzetto, Rudy (PC)	Mississauga—Lakeshore	
Downey, Hon. / L'hon. Doug (PC)	Barrie—Springwater—Oro-Medonte	Attorney General / Procureur général
Dunlop, Hon. / L'hon. Jill (PC)	Simcoe North / Simcoe-Nord	Associate Minister of Children and Women's Issues / Ministre associée déléguée au dossier de l'Enfance et à la Condition féminine Minister Without Portfolio / Ministre sans portefeuille
Elliott, Hon. / L'hon. Christine (PC)	Newmarket—Aurora	Deputy Premier / Vice-première ministre Minister of Health / Ministre de la Santé
Fedeli, Hon. / L'hon. Victor (PC)	Nipissing	Chair of Cabinet / Président du Conseil des ministres Minister of Economic Development, Job Creation and Trade / Ministre du Développement économique, de la Création d'emplois et du Commerce
Fee, Amy (PC)	Kitchener South—Hespeler / Kitchener-Sud—Hespeler	
Fife, Catherine (NDP)	Waterloo	

Member and Party / Député(e) et parti	Constituency / Circonscription	Other responsibilities / Autres responsabilités
Ford, Hon. / L'hon. Doug (PC)	Etobicoke North / Etobicoke-Nord	Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs / Ministre des Affaires intergouvernementales Premier / Premier ministre
Fraser, John (LIB)	Ottawa South / Ottawa-Sud	
French, Jennifer K. (NDP)	Oshawa	Third Deputy Chair of the Committee of the Whole House / Troisième vice-présidente du comité plénier de l'Assemblée législative
Fullerton, Hon. / L'hon. Merrilee (PC)	Kanata—Carleton	Minister of Long-Term Care / Ministre des Soins de longue durée
Gates, Wayne (NDP)	Niagara Falls	
Gélinas, France (NDP)	Nickel Belt	
Ghamari, Goldie (PC)	Carleton	
Gill, Parm (PC)	Milton	
Glover, Chris (NDP)	Spadina—Fort York	
Gravelle, Michael (LIB)	Thunder Bay—Superior North / Thunder Bay—Supérieur-Nord	
Gretzky, Lisa (NDP)	Windsor West / Windsor-Ouest	First Deputy Chair of the Committee of the Whole House / Première vice-présidente du comité plénier de l'Assemblée
Hardeman, Hon. / L'hon. Ernie (PC)	Oxford	Minister of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs / Ministre de l'Agriculture, de l'Alimentation et des Affaires rurales
Harden, Joel (NDP)	Ottawa Centre / Ottawa-Centre	
Harris, Mike (PC)	Kitchener—Conestoga	
Hassan, Faisal (NDP)	York South—Weston / York-Sud—Weston	
Hatfield, Percy (NDP)	Windsor—Tecumseh	Second Deputy Chair of the Committee of the Whole House / Deuxième vice-président du comité plénier de l'Assemblée législative
Hillier, Randy (IND)	Lanark—Frontenac—Kingston	
Hogarth, Christine (PC)	Etobicoke—Lakeshore	
Horwath, Andrea (NDP)	Hamilton Centre / Hamilton-Centre	Leader, Official Opposition / Chef de l'opposition officielle
Hunter, Mitzie (LIB)	Scarborough—Guildwood	
Jones, Hon. / L'hon. Sylvia (PC)	Dufferin—Caledon	Solicitor General / Solliciteure générale
Kanapathi, Logan (PC)	Markham—Thornhill	
Karahalios, Belinda C. (PC)	Cambridge	
Karpoche, Bhutla (NDP)	Parkdale—High Park	
Ke, Vincent (PC)	Don Valley North / Don Valley-Nord	
Kernaghan, Terence (NDP)	London North Centre / London-Centre-Nord	
Khanjin, Andrea (PC)	Barrie—Innisfil	Deputy Government House Leader / Leader parlementaire adjointe du gouvernement
Kramp, Daryl (PC)	Hastings—Lennox and Addington	
Kusendova, Natalia (PC)	Mississauga Centre / Mississauga-Centre	
Lecce, Hon. / L'hon. Stephen (PC)	King—Vaughan	Minister of Education / Ministre de l'Éducation
Lindo, Laura Mae (NDP)	Kitchener Centre / Kitchener-Centre	
MacLeod, Hon. / L'hon. Lisa (PC)	Nepean	Minister of Heritage, Sport, Tourism and Culture Industries / ministre des Industries du patrimoine, du sport, du tourisme et de la culture
Mamakwa, Sol (NDP)	Kiiwetinoong	
Mantha, Michael (NDP)	Algoma—Manitoulin	
Martin, Robin (PC)	Eglinton—Lawrence	
Martow, Gila (PC)	Thornhill	
McDonell, Jim (PC)	Stormont—Dundas—South Glengarry	
McKenna, Jane (PC)	Burlington	
McNaughton, Hon. / L'hon. Monte (PC)	Lambton—Kent—Middlesex	Minister of Labour, Training and Skills Development / Ministre du Travail, de la Formation et du Développement des compétences
Miller, Norman (PC)	Parry Sound—Muskoka	
Miller, Paul (NDP)	Hamilton East—Stoney Creek / Hamilton-Est—Stoney Creek	
Mitas, Christina Maria (PC)	Scarborough Centre / Scarborough-Centre	
Monteith-Farrell, Judith (NDP)	Thunder Bay—Atikokan	
Morrison, Suze (NDP)	Toronto Centre / Toronto-Centre	
Mulroney, Hon. / L'hon. Caroline (PC)	York—Simcoe	Minister of Francophone Affairs / Ministre des Affaires francophones Minister of Transportation / Ministre des Transports

Member and Party / Député(e) et parti	Constituency / Circonscription	Other responsibilities / Autres responsabilités
Natyshak, Taras (NDP)	Essex	
Nicholls, Rick (PC)	Chatham-Kent—Leamington	Chair of the Committee of the Whole House / Président du comité plénier de l'Assemblée Deputy Speaker / Vice-président
Oosterhoff, Sam (PC)	Niagara West / Niagara-Ouest	
Pang, Billy (PC)	Markham—Unionville	
Park, Lindsey (PC)	Durham	
Parsa, Michael (PC)	Aurora—Oak Ridges—Richmond Hill	
Pettapiece, Randy (PC)	Perth—Wellington	
Phillips, Hon. / L'hon. Rod (PC)	Ajax	Minister of Finance / Ministre des Finances
Piccini, David (PC)	Northumberland—Peterborough South / Northumberland—Peterborough-Sud	
Rakocevic, Tom (NDP)	Humber River—Black Creek	
Rasheed, Kaleed (PC)	Mississauga East—Cooksville / Mississauga-Est—Cooksville	
Rickford, Hon. / L'hon. Greg (PC)	Kenora—Rainy River	Minister of Energy, Northern Development and Mines / Ministre de l'Énergie, du Développement du Nord et des Mines Minister of Indigenous Affairs / Ministre des Affaires autochtones
Roberts, Jeremy (PC)	Ottawa West—Nepean / Ottawa-Ouest—Nepean	
Romano, Hon. / L'hon. Ross (PC)	Sault Ste. Marie	Minister of Colleges and Universities / Ministre des Collèges et Universités
Sabawy, Sheref (PC)	Mississauga—Erin Mills	
Sandhu, Amarjot (PC)	Brampton West / Brampton-Ouest	
Sarkaria, Hon. / L'hon. Prabmeet Singh (PC)	Brampton South / Brampton-Sud	Associate Minister of Small Business and Red Tape Reduction / Ministre associé délégué au dossier des Petites Entreprises et de la Réduction des formalités administratives Minister Without Portfolio / Ministre sans portefeuille
Sattler, Peggy (NDP)	London West / London-Ouest	Deputy Opposition House Leader / Leader parlementaire adjointe de l'opposition officielle
Schreiner, Mike (GRN)	Guelph	
Scott, Hon. / L'hon. Laurie (PC)	Haliburton—Kawartha Lakes—Brock	Minister of Infrastructure
Shaw, Sandy (NDP)	Hamilton West—Ancaster—Dundas / Hamilton-Ouest—Ancaster—Dundas	
Simard, Amanda (LIB)	Glengarry—Prescott—Russell	
Singh, Gurratan (NDP)	Brampton East / Brampton-Est	
Singh, Sara (NDP)	Brampton Centre / Brampton-Centre	Deputy Leader, Official Opposition / Chef adjointe de l'opposition officielle
Skelly, Donna (PC)	Flamborough—Glanbrook	
Smith, Dave (PC)	Peterborough—Kawartha	
Smith, Hon. / L'hon. Todd (PC)	Bay of Quinte / Baie de Quinte	Minister of Children, Community and Social Services / Ministre des Services à l'enfance et des Services sociaux et communautaires
Stevens, Jennifer (Jennie) (NDP)	St. Catharines	
Stiles, Marit (NDP)	Davenport	
Surma, Hon. / L'hon. Kinga (PC)	Etobicoke Centre / Etobicoke-Centre	Associate Minister of Transportation (GTA) / Ministre associée des Transports (RGT) Minister Without Portfolio / Ministre sans portefeuille
Tabuns, Peter (NDP)	Toronto—Danforth	
Tangri, Nina (PC)	Mississauga—Streetsville	
Taylor, Monique (NDP)	Hamilton Mountain	
Thanigasalam, Vijay (PC)	Scarborough—Rouge Park	
Thompson, Hon. / L'hon. Lisa M. (PC)	Huron—Bruce	Minister of Government and Consumer Services / Ministre des Services gouvernementaux et des Services aux consommateurs
Tibollo, Hon. / L'hon. Michael A. (PC)	Vaughan—Woodbridge	Associate Minister of Mental Health and Addictions / Ministre associé délégué au dossier de la Santé mentale et de la Lutte contre les dépendances Minister Without Portfolio / Ministre sans portefeuille
Triantafilopoulos, Effie J. (PC)	Oakville North—Burlington / Oakville-Nord—Burlington	
Vanthof, John (NDP)	Timiskaming—Cochrane	Deputy Leader, Official Opposition / Chef adjoint de l'opposition officielle
Wai, Daisy (PC)	Richmond Hill	

Member and Party / Député(e) et parti	Constituency / Circonscription	Other responsibilities / Autres responsabilités
Walker, Hon. / L'hon. Bill (PC)	Bruce—Grey—Owen Sound	Associate Minister of Energy / Ministre associé de l'Énergie Minister Without Portfolio / Ministre sans portefeuille
West, Jamie (NDP)	Sudbury	
Wilson, Jim (IND)	Simcoe—Grey	
Wynne, Kathleen O. (LIB)	Don Valley West / Don Valley-Ouest	
Yakubski, Hon. / L'hon. John (PC)	Renfrew—Nipissing—Pembroke	Minister of Natural Resources and Forestry / Ministre des Richesses naturelles et des Forêts
Yarde, Kevin (NDP)	Brampton North / Brampton-Nord	
Yurek, Hon. / L'hon. Jeff (PC)	Elgin—Middlesex—London	Minister of the Environment, Conservation and Parks / Ministre de l'Environnement, de la Protection de la nature et des Parcs

**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
Lorne Coe, Wayne Gates
Randy Hillier, Andrea Khanjin
Jane McKenna, Judith Monteith-Farrell
Michael Parsa, Randy Pettapiece
Kaleed Rasheed, Peter Tabuns
Effie J. Triantafilopoulos
Committee Clerk / Greffier: Isaiah Thorning

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, Stan Cho
Sol Mamakwa, David Piccini
Jeremy Roberts, Amarjot Sandhu
Sandy Shaw, Donna Skelly
Dave Smith
Committee Clerk / Greffière: Julia Douglas

Standing Committee on General Government / Comité permanent des affaires gouvernementales

Chair / Présidente: Goldie Ghamari
Vice-Chair / Vice-président: Daryl Kramp
Robert Bailey, Jessica Bell
Goldie Ghamari, Chris Glover
Mike Harris, Daryl Kramp
Sheref Sabawy, Amarjot Sandhu
Mike Schreiner, Jennifer (Jennie) Stevens
Daisy Wai
Committee Clerk / Greffière: Jocelyn McCauley

Standing Committee on Government Agencies / Comité permanent des organismes gouvernementaux

Chair / Président: John Vanthof
Vice-Chair / Vice-président: Taras Natyshak
Will Bouma, Lorne Coe
Rudy Cuzzetto, Taras Natyshak
Rick Nicholls, Billy Pang
Marit Stiles, Nina Tangri
John Vanthof
Committee Clerk / Greffière: Jocelyn McCauley

Standing Committee on Justice Policy / Comité permanent de la justice

Chair / Président: Roman Baber
Vice-Chair / Vice-présidente: Effie J. Triantafilopoulos
Roman Baber, Will Bouma
Parm Gill, Natalia Kusendova
Suze Morrison, Lindsey Park
Gurratan Singh, Effie J. Triantafilopoulos
Kevin Yarde
Committee Clerk / Greffier: Christopher Tyrell

Standing Committee on the Legislative Assembly / Comité permanent de l'Assemblée législative

Chair / Président: Kaleed Rasheed
Vice-Chair / Vice-président: Vijay Thanigasalam
Rima Berns-McGown, Michael Coteau
Faisal Hassan, Logan Kanapathi
Jim McDonell, Christina Maria Mitas
Sam Oosterhoff, Kaleed Rasheed
Sara Singh, Donna Skelly
Vijay Thanigasalam
Committee Clerk / Greffière: Valerie Quioc Lim

Standing Committee on Public Accounts / Comité permanent des comptes publics

Chair / Présidente: Catherine Fife
Vice-Chair / Vice-présidente: France Gélinas
Deepak Anand, Jill Andrew
Toby Barrett, Stan Cho
Stephen Crawford, Catherine Fife
John Fraser, France Gélinas
Christine Hogarth, Norman Miller
Michael Parsa
Committee Clerk / Greffier: Christopher Tyrell

Standing Committee on Regulations and Private Bills / Comité permanent des règlements et des projets de loi d'intérêt privé

Chair / Président: Deepak Anand
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: Isaiah Thorning

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