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LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF ONTARIO

Wednesday 17 June 2020

ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE DE L'ONTARIO

Mercredi 17 juin 2020

Report continued from volume A.

PROTECTING SMALL BUSINESS ACT, 2020

LOI DE 2020 VISANT À PROTÉGER LES PETITES ENTREPRISES

Mr. Clark moved second reading of the following bill:
Bill 192, An Act to amend the Commercial Tenancies Act / Projet de loi 192, Loi modifiant la Loi sur la location commerciale.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): I look to the minister to lead off debate.

Hon. Steve Clark: Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank the tens of thousands of small businesses across Ontario for everything they've done to make the province an outstanding place to live, work and play. We know that COVID-19 has had significant impact on small businesses, who are the backbone of our economy, and yet these businesses haven't given up. Rather, they've risen to the challenge.

I've seen small businesses in my community turn on a dime—like Limestone and Ivy, who opened an online store to sell their fashion and footwear; or the Noshery, a restaurant in downtown Brockville that didn't just turn to takeout and delivery, but also started selling groceries at cost to help people who have been laid off or lost their jobs. Now they're building a patio to offer outdoor dining.

Brewers and distillers retooled to produce much-needed hand sanitizer to keep our front-line workers safe. Restaurants cooked incredible meals and donated them to exhausted doctors, nurses and personal support workers. Veterinary clinics donated masks, gloves and other desperately needed PPE to local hospitals. Ontario's small businesses may be small in size, but they have incredibly big hearts. In fact, small businesses are the heart of communities across our province.

I'd also like to thank landlords. Life under COVID-19 hasn't been easy for them either. Like the rest of us, they've had to adapt quickly and improvise. They have to protect and pay their employees, as well as cover their mortgages, insurance and property taxes—all while facing increased costs to keep their buildings safe, secure and clean for their tenants. They're innovative and they're looking ahead, exploring technology like touchless door openers and better filters for heating and cooling systems. I appreciate how commercial landlords and tenants, like residential landlords and tenants, are coming together in these difficult times and showing the Ontario spirit.

Mr. Speaker, small businesses are essential to Ontario's economy.

Monsieur le Président, les petites entreprises sont essentielles à l'économie ontarienne.

1750

Statistics Canada says that more than 87% of private sector employees work for small or medium-sized businesses, and that rises to 95% in accommodation and food services, wholesale and retail trade, and construction. Of course, Ontario's small business owners are not just employers; they are leaders in our communities. They sponsor the local kids' soccer team. They participate in their neighbourhood business improvement association or their local chamber of commerce. They donate to those in need. They make our streets vibrant. And they pay their rent on time.

But we know the last couple of months have made it harder for everyone. We also know that many of our small businesses are paying what they can, even if they can't pay their whole rent. But we're also hearing about evictions. Much-loved restaurants and bars, cafés, corner stores and galleries are worried about evictions, and they've asked for our help. We know that even as most of Ontario is already in stage 2 of the recovery process, it will take time to get back to the new normal. In the meantime, bills are going to continue to pile up.

Mr. Speaker, we are a government that listens. Ontario has partnered with the government of Canada to deliver the Canada Emergency Commercial Rent Assistance program for small businesses. I'd like to thank the federal government for stepping up to the plate and working with us to help small businesses and commercial landlords experiencing financial difficulties during the coronavirus pandemic. And I'd like to thank our Minister of Finance, the Honourable Rod Phillips, for working with the federal government to protect our businesses. Our government has committed \$241 million to this program, which is providing more than \$900 million in support for small businesses and their landlords.

Speaker, let me quickly tell you how the program works. It provides forgivable loans to eligible landlords. This allows them to reduce their rent for their small business tenants by at least 75% for three months so that they can stay in business as we safely and gradually reopen Ontario's economy. If the landlord reduces the tenant's rent by 75%, the tenant pays 25% and the Ontario and federal governments share the remaining 50%. So if a tenant normally pays \$10,000 a month in rent, the landlord would get \$7,500. That's \$2,500 from the tenant and \$5,000 from the government. The landlord would forgo

the \$2,500, the same amount as their tenant. So long as the landlord complies with the program rules, and that includes not trying to recoup the reduced rent after the program ends, the government's loans are completely forgivable.

The program also requires the landlord to temporarily suspend evictions. The program helps small business tenants, including non-profits and charities, if they meet three main criteria:

- (1) They pay no more than \$50,000 in rent per month.
- (2) They have annual revenues of \$20 million or less.
- (3) They experience at least a 70% drop in revenues compared with before COVID-19.

But we've heard that some landlords are not willing to participate in the program, which has caused anxiety for many small businesses. Mr. Speaker, as we've said before, small businesses are essential to Ontario's recovery and they need our help. That's why our government is proposing a pause on commercial evictions for businesses eligible for the Canada Emergency Commercial Rent Assistance program for small businesses. We want to help Ontario's small, family-run businesses survive.

Nous voulons aider les petites entreprises familiales de l'Ontario à survivre.

Since we announced the eviction pause, we've heard support from all corners. Toronto's deputy mayor, Ana Bailão, called it "amazing news" on Twitter. She said, "Protecting our main street businesses is important for both our recovery and the vibrancy of our communities."

Tourism companies have also been hit hard during the pandemic. I know in my own riding that many events have been cancelled, including Oktoberfest and the 1000 Islands Regatta. So it was good to hear the Tourism Industry Association of Ontario say that they were delighted with our plans to ban commercial rent evictions—and I want to thank our Minister of Heritage, Sport, Tourism and Culture Industries, the Honourable Lisa MacLeod, for everything that she has done to promote Ontario's thriving tourism sector.

The Canadian Federation of Independent Business, which has 110,000 members across the country, also issued a statement in support of a commercial evictions ban that said, "We are relieved that no more struggling small businesses will find locks on their doors because their landlords are unwilling or unable to participate in the Canada Emergency Commercial Rent Assistance (CECRA) program."

Most landlords want to help their tenants. They want to see successful businesses and a growing economy as much as anyone.

La plupart des propriétaires veulent aider leurs locataires. Comme tout le monde, ils souhaitent la prospérité des entreprises et la croissance de l'économie.

I think Jane Domenico, senior vice-president and national lead of retail services at Colliers, put it well when she told the Real Estate News Exchange, "Our assets are only as good as our retail tenants...."

"Throughout this process, we've been trying to work with our tenants and I would say most landlords and most ownerships out there are trying to work with the tenants. It's not going to change our day-to-day plans.

"At the end of the day, the importance is our landlords and tenants working together."

Michael Kehoe, lead ambassador in Canada for the International Council of Shopping Centers, echoed that sentiment when he said, "Everyone in the commercial real estate transactional chain should be working together at this critical time to avoid jeopardizing the survival of small business."

And, Speaker, it's not just big firms saying that. A small Toronto landlord with five properties and 30 tenants said, "There's no one to move in. It doesn't make business sense for a landlord to evict a tenant." She has applied for the rent assistance program.

I want to point out that this commercial eviction pause is temporary; it's only until the end of August. We recognize that landlords have mortgages and bills to pay too. Pausing evictions in the short term balances the needs of commercial landlords and tenants. It encourages landlords to apply to the rent assistance program, which is also retroactive. They can get support for unpaid rent in April, May and June. It gives tenants who were forced to close time to get back on their feet. As parts of the province enter stage 2 of our reopening plan, small businesses may begin to generate more revenue, but they may still have trouble paying rent if they're operating at a reduced capacity and having increased costs to protect public health.

The longer-term solution is to get Ontario small businesses going again, to help them make money, to help them pay their bills, create jobs and provide the goods and services Ontarians want and need.

Our government is taking a gradual, staged approach to reopening the province, restarting the economy and easing the restrictions put in place to stop the spread of the COVID-19 outbreak.

Stage 1 of our plan helped more people safely get back to work and enjoy a return to some everyday recreational activities.

Informed by public health advice and workplace safety guidance, and with help from businesses, workers and families to limit the spread of the virus, we're now starting to move into stage 2.

People in the House know that stage 2 takes a regional approach to reopening more businesses, with proper health and safety measures in place.

I want to emphasize that public health remains our government's top priority. Ontarians have demonstrated that they are willing to do whatever is necessary to contain the spread of COVID-19. Employers and businesses across the province must also do their part by continuing to follow public health advice and implementing workplace safety measures to protect their staff, their customers and the public to make stage 2 a success. That's why we're giving businesses, including small businesses, guidelines to help them prepare.

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Together with our health and safety association partners, we have released more than 100 guidance documents, and we will produce more as the province moves through the next stages of reopening and recovery.

I want to thank Minister Monte McNaughton for all the work he and his ministry are doing on the guidelines for those workplaces. With these measures, the province can gradually and safely reopen workplaces and public spaces, and rebuild our economy.

The Canadian Federation of Independent Business said that they welcome “the details provided ... on stage 2 business reopenings. After months of decreased revenues and mounting bills, retail businesses in malls, the personal services sector, and bars and restaurants in most regions in Ontario will finally start down the long road to economic recovery.”

While we’re working to restart Ontario’s economy, we’re also helping businesses to adapt and survive.

Speaker, earlier in my address, I talked about the fact that our government is committing \$241 million to the Canada Emergency Commercial Rent Assistance program for small businesses. But that’s only a portion of our investment in Ontario’s economy. Ontario’s Action Plan: Responding to COVID-19 includes making available \$10 billion for people and businesses to improve cash flows. It provides a five-month penalty- and interest-free period for making payments for the majority of provincially administered taxes. It defers the upcoming quarterly municipal remittance of the education property tax. And it provides up to \$1.9 billion in financial relief by allowing employers to defer Workplace Safety and Insurance Board payments for up to six months.

We are partnering with the federal government to help small businesses reach more customers through the very innovative Digital Main Street platform. This is a \$57-million program which will help up to 22,900 Ontario businesses create, and also enhance, their online presence and generate jobs for more than 1,400 students.

Speaker, we’re also investing \$150 million in a new program that, when leveraged with partner funding, has the potential to result in a total investment of \$500 million to improve broadband and cellular coverage in underserved or unserved communities. This investment is part of our \$315-million action plan to improve broadband and cellular service, which has the potential, with partner funding, to result in up to \$1 billion in broadband infrastructure investments.

Whether it’s cutting red tape, changing burdensome laws or providing financial support, our government is stepping up to help small businesses across the province endure and prevail over COVID-19.

We’ve asked landlords to work with their tenants and to apply to the Canada Emergency Commercial Rent Assistance program for small businesses—but what we’re hearing about too many commercial evictions happening includes small, family-run businesses. That’s why we want to pause commercial evictions of businesses that are eligible for the federal-provincial rent assistance.

I want to emphasize: Commercial tenants who can pay their rent must continue to do so.

The eviction freeze is temporary. It gives landlords time to work with tenants and apply for the rent assistance

program. It gives tenants time to recover their revenues as the province starts to reopen.

Tenants and landlords can learn who is eligible for this program and how to apply at Ontario.ca/rentassistance. The application deadline is August 31.

I’ve spoken about what government can do and what landlords can do and what tenants can do. I’d like to ask Ontarians to help too. It’s hard to be a small business owner even when times are good. Now with COVID-19, many businesses are really struggling. Today, more than ever, we need to support our small businesses. So please, when you shop, remember those small businesses. They’re your friends, your neighbours and your family.

Aujourd’hui, plus que jamais, nous devons soutenir nos petites entreprises. Quand vous faites des achats, n’oubliez pas ces petites entreprises, car ce sont vos amis, vos voisins, des membres de votre famille.

Think of those small businesses who turn small-town main streets into tourism destinations. Next time you’re shopping, whether in the stores or online, please support your small businesses and buy local.

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

Ms. Andrea Horwath: I’m proud to be here to talk to this piece of legislation.

I do want to start out by saying that regardless of the story that was told by the government House leader, New Democrats have been desperately trying to get this government to engage us in real, meaningful discussions about what we can be doing better for the people of Ontario to help them through the COVID-19 crisis. Sadly, the government has spurned us at every attempt, including literally yesterday, or rather Monday, kicking my House leader’s team out of a meeting to discuss this very bill after just 45 seconds on the Zoom call. So again, I think people need to take a very big grain of salt with everything that comes from the government House leader’s description of events.

But having said that, the more important thing is that unfortunately here we are with a bill that still continues to leave 60% or more of businesses out of the equation when it comes to protection from eviction during COVID-19. And you know what? New Democrats just don’t think that that’s good enough. We think Ontario can do much, much better to save main street and to save our small businesses. In fact, we have an excellent plan, which I’m sure our critic the member for Waterloo will be describing in great detail.

I think the bottom line is that no business should be facing an eviction during a pandemic—plain and simple, not a single business. We have to support small business. Why? Because supporting small business is in fact supporting Ontario. It’s supporting neighbourhoods. It’s supporting communities. It’s supporting people who actually work 24/7 to try to make a difference, yes, in their own capacity as business owners, but they make a difference in people’s lives, they make a difference in workers’ lives, they make a difference in the community, and they’re so vital.

It's really easy for people like the Conservative government and the Liberal government before to crow about how small business is the backbone of Ontario and the backbone of our economy. I agree; it's the backbone. So shore up that backbone from top to bottom, not just a few inches. From top to bottom, we have to shore up that backbone.

If businesses are evicted during COVID-19, Speaker, Ontarians will lose their jobs. They will not have jobs to go back to, and they then will lose their opportunity, their ability to put food on the table for their families.

The government likes to talk about coming out of the pandemic and making sure we rebuild Ontario's economy. Well, if you drive Ontario's economy into the ground because you're not shoring up the small business community, then you have a huge hill to climb to be able to bring the economy back online, get people back to work and have some recovery happening here in the province.

I just want to say really quickly that the shame of where we are now is this government has put forward a half-baked plan that's going to leave at least 60% of businesses out of it, because the very complicated description that you may have heard from the minister responsible is one that's too complicated. Landlords just aren't bothering to enlist in the federal program, thereby disqualifying, as I said, 60% of businesses. This is a figure coming from the Canadian Federation of Independent Business.

The point being, when we have that situation, we end up hurting pretty much everyone. We were not taking the responsible path when it comes to shoring up our economy. And so, when we say that we can do things differently, we know that we can. We know that other provinces have, and that's why, sadly, very recently, Ontario job numbers continue to show a decline in employment, where other provinces that have done things differently are seeing a small increase in the number of people who are working again. That's a pretty big indicator that Ontario's doing something wrong by not shoring up small business and not getting people back to work.

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Again, this is a missed opportunity for the government to do the right thing by small business, but more importantly, it's a missed opportunity to help Ontario get back on its feet, and it's going to create devastation for those hard-working business owners who have done so much good for our neighbourhoods and our communities.

This legislation comes so late. Here we are again; we're in the middle of June. I think it was even the Premier acknowledging just today that we've now been three months in COVID-19. It was in the middle of March when this government, rightly so—and we supported that move—shut down businesses across Ontario. So why are we here, three months later, when the government finally has a eureka moment that they're going to try to do something to help small business? Well, it's a little bit late. We know that a lot of small businesses have already gone under, have already gone belly up, and what we're hearing is that that doesn't only mean that the business closes its doors. That also means that some families are literally

going bankrupt because this government has dragged its feet and not been there for small business from day one.

Then they table a bill, or they attempt to table a bill—they were going to table a bill the other day—that made the retroactivity of the eviction ban for small business to June 3. Well, big deal. June 3 is two weeks ago. What about March 16? Whoa—big concession by the government. Now they're retroactive to May 1. Well, big deal. What about all those businesses that have been evicted as of the middle of March or the beginning of April? Too bad, so sad, I guess, as far as the Conservatives care or as far as the Conservatives are concerned.

I will wrap this up, I promise. I'm going off my notes here, but I just find it astounding—astounding—that this government that claims to be supportive of business has failed so badly in actually stepping up to the plate and doing the right thing here.

We know that since the middle of March, small business owners have been laying awake at night just trying to figure out how they're going to pay the rent. That wasn't just on April 1 and it wasn't just on May 1; it's been month after month. The clauses in some of the lease agreements that these businesses are tied to are brutal in terms of the impacts of breaking those leases. Let's hope the government has the insight to understand exactly how challenged these folks are and how worried they are about how they're going to stay afloat and get over this pandemic. But look, what have they been doing? They've been taking on debt. They've been trying to do everything they can to avoid laying off their staff.

I spoke to a small business owner that has two small businesses in my riding. One was a brand new tattoo shop that had just opened and, 30 days later, literally, COVID-19 hit and he had to shut the doors. The other business, thankfully, is more of an organic food type of business, and do you know what he did with that? He kept going as much as he could. He's still providing product and services to the community, still employing people, and he's using whatever he can from that business to still pay his tattoo artists from the other business that he has because he knows what it means to actually help people get through tough times. This government does not. So good on him for doing that.

On Monday, we sent the government two critical amendments to this bill, and it's shameful that they didn't actually follow through on what would have been actually a collaborative effort, which would have been an engagement in discussion on what we can do together to help small businesses. Again, the government tale is one thing; reality is something else. What we asked for was to make this bill retroactive to mid-March. Of course, as I've already said, the problem that we had with the original bill is that it just encouraged bad actors to backdate eviction notices to April and be off the hook. We're still somewhat in that situation now.

What we also wanted is for the government to take a step back and acknowledge and recognize that—I know that, thus far, in many, many ways when the government talks about various things that they're doing during the

COVID-19 crisis to try to give assistance here and there, what they are always really doing is throwing it back to the federal government. Much of what's been happening in Ontario hasn't been the Conservative government; it's actually been the federal government. I don't know how many times people have seen the Premier at the podium talking about, "We're just going to have to ask the federal government for this. We're just going to have to ask the federal government for that." In fact, I think he said today, if I'm not mistaken, that the reason why they can't provide more support is because the federal government's just not giving them any more money; the money's dried up. You know what? Ontario taxpayers pay taxes, too. It's their money, and they want us to save their small businesses, they want us to save their renters and they want us to do the right thing to shore people up.

We wanted them, in the second amendment—the first, retroactive to the day the pandemic hit, and the second was to actually make the decision around who qualifies not be tied to the federal government's program, because we know that the federal government's program is an abject failure. The vast majority of landlords are not taking up the call that was described by the minister because it's too complicated, it's too messy, and they don't want to bother. For some strange reason, both the provincial Conservatives and the federal Liberals think that it's okay to tell the landlords that they get to decide which small business operators get to survive. That's just wrong. Why should it be the landlord who decides that a small business can live or die? It shouldn't be that way.

So that's one of the things that we wanted to see. And I can tell you, we have been consulting extensively with chambers of commerce, with BIAs, with BIA associations, with all kinds of small business groups who have all been saying the same thing: "The federal program stinks. It's not working. We need direct support from our provincial government." That's something that New Democrats actually wanted, and again, I think the member for Waterloo will describe that in much more detail.

The bottom line is, put it retroactive to when this whole thing started, make sure that every small business that wants to have protection from eviction is able to get that protection instead of tying it to a flawed program, and make sure that we don't abandon over 60% of the small businesses in Ontario. I don't think that's a lot to ask for. In fact, I think that was the very thoughtful and wise path to take. Certainly that's what businesses were asking us to do, so we reflected their voice and tried to get the government to do the right thing.

Unfortunately, they didn't, so now here we are in a situation where the bill is before us, it doesn't do what it needs to do to protect the majority of small businesses here in Ontario, and so what's going to happen? These businesses are going to fail, through no fault of their own, because their government decided it was politically better to abandon them instead of to come up to the plate and provide a program that actually protected them. So we're going to lose those businesses.

Ontario does need rebuilding. Its economy does need rebuilding. That might be something that I agree on with

the minister in terms of his remarks. But what that means is we need these businesses more than ever. We need to find the right way forward to protect small business, and this bill just doesn't cut it. So I'm very, very disappointed in the government. I'm very, very upset by their callous disregard for the number of businesses that are going to go under because of the government's choice to put forward a bill that is not even half a loaf. We're so used to half a loaf around here as the opposition. We used to get half-a-loaf bills from the Liberals all the time. Now we have a bill that's not even half a loaf; it's actually a quarter of a loaf. But the sad thing about it is that they are going to in fact lose an opportunity to shore up our economy, get people back to work and help small businesses survive COVID-19.

But I'm going to tell you this: We are not going to give up. New Democrats are going to continue to fight, we're going to continue to listen to small businesses, and we're going to try to do our best to push this government to make sure that the deal that they struck with the independents, the Liberals and the Green—is not something that's good enough, and we're going to make sure that we continue to put their voices out there and try to get the government to help shore up small business instead of this pittance of a piece of legislation that's before us right now.

1820

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

Mr. John Fraser: I want to start with something a little bit different. Good news travels fast. The other thing is, my father used to say, "Every baby born means new hope for the world." This morning in Zurich, Switzerland, at 11:29 a.m., Xavier Phillippe Fraser-Drouin—seven pounds, 2.8 ounces—was born to parents Jennifer and Paul. I just want to say congratulations to them—first child; a very important thing.

This bill is also a very important thing, and I have to start out by saying this: Today I know I felt like this, and I think my colleague from the Green Party has felt this way—like we're the meat in this sandwich between the government and the opposition. You've been chewing us up and spitting us out all day long.

I appreciate very much the correction from the government House leader. I'm looking forward to the subsequent apology. I'm not going to wait that long.

But here's the reality: Do you want to know who the meat in the sandwich is? It's businesses who need this. The greatest imperfection with this bill—we all know this; we all say it—is the fact that we're actually debating it tonight, two months later. So we can be the meat in the sandwich; I don't care. But what I do know is we're debating this bill tonight, and what I do know is the date is moved back and more people will be able to access that program.

Whatever happens tonight, the government is going to pass the bill; I know that. We're going to get it done. That's what people out there want us to do. That's what we should have been doing two months ago. Now the Premier has said—I'm going to say this again, not because I enjoy saying it, but it literally sounds like how I used to

talk to my kids. The Premier was saying, “If you guys don’t do this, I’m going to get you. I’m coming upstairs, and just wait until I get up there. Just wait until I get up there.”

To be frank, this bill is late. We could have done better, but we’ve got to take action. This tough talk—I’m going to be unkind here.

Mr. Gilles Bisson: Oh, no.

Mr. John Fraser: Yes, I know it’s uncharacteristic.

Has anybody seen the Wizard of Oz? Who has seen the Wizard of Oz? Can we raise a hand? I know some of you young ‘uns haven’t seen it. Does anybody remember the Cowardly Lion? Do you remember how he talks tough and then the little dog scares the heck out of him? That’s kind of like what—you have to be careful about saying things like, “The buck stops here.” Because if you’re getting pandemic pay, what you’re hearing now is, “The cheque is in the mail.”

So all this tough talk over the last couple of months—and here’s the bill that we have. We’re going to get it passed tonight, and it’s going to help some people—more people than we would have helped had we done it a week later or two weeks later.

I appreciate that the government has priorities. I think this should have been—we all believe this should have been—a bigger priority for the government. We’re now going through a gigantic programming motion with some bills that we don’t need to be doing right now. Bill 175: In the middle of a pandemic, we’re trying to talk to people in community care about how the future looks. They’re worried about right now. They’re trying to cope with right now. Why are we doing that? We could have debated this bill with this time, had a lengthier debate.

Businesses don’t have time for us to mess around with this stuff. We’ve waited long enough. Speaker, let’s not overstate this bill. It is imperfect. The most important thing right now is that it needs to get done, and I’m glad that we’re having this debate tonight.

I do want to make a comment with regard to the Minister of Municipal Affairs talking about a \$10-billion investment. It’s a deferral; you’re not investing \$10 billion. It’s a good thing, but it’s not a great thing. We still know that we need to do things for businesses, more than what’s happening. That’s why we’re doing this. That’s why we should have done this two months ago. So what are the next things that we’re going to have to do?

I look forward to the rest of the debate tonight. I appreciate very much the fact that the government did move back to May 1. It’s going to make more businesses eligible. Do we want more? Yes. The thing we wanted most, and we should all want most, and what our businesses are asking us for is to get it done. The government has the votes; they have the power. We know that. We have to deal with that reality. But we shouldn’t spend too much time not actually facing that reality and having debates and discussions that we know are not going to serve the purpose of the people that we serve.

We could have had more time to debate this bill, had the government chosen to introduce it two months ago or chosen not to do Bill 175 or Bill 161, the legal aid bill.

Why do we need to be doing that right now? I thought we’re supposed to be doing COVID-19 stuff. This is the most important stuff. We’re having a shorter debate about this when we could have had a longer debate. I get that. But let’s not get caught up in it so that we don’t actually do what we did tonight.

I’m glad that we’re having this debate. I’m glad that the unanimous consent was granted and that we’re all here. I appreciate that very much. But the process to get here, it just stunk. Sorry, folks. I think that’s parliamentary, or on the edge or something like that. I don’t think it’s that bad.

I look forward to seeing this bill move forward, and the government setting as a higher priority the support for small business. Waiting a couple of months isn’t setting it as a high priority.

I thank you for your time, Speaker.

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

Mr. Parm Gill: It’s always an honour and a pleasure any time there’s an opportunity to rise and speak on behalf of my constituents in the great riding of Milton.

Let me begin by thanking the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing for introducing this very important piece of legislation. The minister has asked me to highlight the importance of this legislation and why our government has decided to take this action as well. I appreciate the opportunity, as his parliamentary assistant to housing.

We all know the last number of months have been very, very challenging for all Ontarians, Canadians and, I would say, most of the world. We’re all living in an incredibly challenging time. COVID-19 has affected all aspects of our lives—not only our health, but even our most basic habits. It’s changed what we do and how we do it.

To every Ontarian who has stayed home, kept their distance from friends and loved ones, washed their hands and tried their best not to touch their faces, I say thank you. It’s been hard on individuals who live alone and on families trying to juggle working from home, home schooling and child care. And yet, as hard as it is, I urge everyone to continue to exercise caution and continue to follow public health advice. Because while we’re making progress, we’re not out of the woods yet. Stay at home and away from others, especially if you’re feeling ill. Continue to wash your hands frequently with soap and water or use the alcohol-based hand sanitizers. Maintain physical distancing. Stay at least two metres away from other people, and if you can’t, wear a mask. Don’t touch your face, and cover any time you have to cough or sneeze. Clean frequently touched surfaces.

1830

I also want to remind everyone to get tested if you have any symptoms of COVID-19 or if you have been in contact with someone who has COVID-19.

Of course, COVID-19 has not only affected our day-to-day lives; it has also affected our economy, not just in Ontario and across Canada, but also around the world. We have to work together to overcome COVID-19. We have to innovate, collaborate and support one another.

I’ve seen the people in my great community of Milton not just stay at home and practise physical distancing, but

proactively offer to help others. I've seen small businesses in my community go the extra mile. My office has worked with the Milton Chamber of Commerce to create a local made-in-Milton PPE portal. Through this portal, we have connected local suppliers of non-medical personal protective equipment with local businesses and community organizations in need. These businesses include Auto 8000 wholesalers, Matador eye care and Ford Village, and community organizations like Community Living North Halton, Bob Rumball Canadian Centre of Excellence for the Deaf, Meals on Wheels and Halton Women's Place.

Mr. Speaker, I couldn't be more proud of our community of Milton during these challenging times. Throughout this pandemic, small businesses in Milton have been innovative and quick to adapt to new business practices. Yet, despite their creativity, small businesses are still struggling. That's why we've worked with the federal government to offer the Canada Emergency Commercial Rent Assistance program for small businesses. We've invested \$241 million to help small businesses and commercial landlords, for a combined investment of \$900 million in commercial rent support across Ontario.

The idea behind the program is that everyone works together: Tenants pay 25% of their rent, landlords pay 25% and the government picks up the rest, the 50%. Landlords, of course, have to apply for the program and must not evict their tenant while the agreement is in place. Yet we know not everyone is taking up this offer. Tenants have told us their landlords, in some cases, have not applied. Small businesses run by our neighbours, our friends, and our families are worried about evictions. At a time when we're coming together and showing the Ontario spirit, that's not okay. And that's why the Protecting Small Business Act is before us in this chamber today.

Let me start by explaining what the Commercial Tenancies Act allows. It's different from the Residential Tenancies Act as it primarily relies on common law and on the lease agreement between the landlord and the tenant. When a tenant doesn't pay their rent on time, a landlord has the ability to seize and sell their assets and use the proceeds to cover the rent arrears, or they can change the locks on the rental unit and evict the tenant. They can also go to court to get an eviction order and compensation. These are private agreements, often between two businesses.

We are proposing a series of amendments to the Commercial Tenancies Act which, if passed, would protect small businesses. From May 1 to August 31 of this year, landlords would not be able to change the locks and evict a tenant, and they would not be able to seize the tenant's assets. If a landlord has evicted a tenant or seized their goods between May 1 and royal assent of this piece of legislation, they would have to return any unsold goods and let the tenant back into the unit. If the landlord had already sold the goods, the proceeds would have to go towards an unpaid rent. If they re-rented the unit, they would have to pay the tenant damages.

These proposed changes are temporary, of course, to help small businesses struggling during COVID-19 so

they have the time to catch up. They would only apply to businesses that are eligible for Canada Emergency Commercial Rent Assistance for small businesses. They wouldn't apply to landlords and small businesses who are participating in the program, because it already suspends evictions.

Let me emphasize that tenants who can pay their rent must continue to do so, and let me encourage landlords to work with their tenants to come to an agreement and to apply to the federal-provincial rent assistance program. We want commercial landlords and tenants working together, especially during these very challenging times, because we all have to support one another to overcome the challenges of COVID-19. That's true not just for protecting public health, but also for protecting our economy and our way of life.

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

Mr. Mike Schreiner: I appreciate the opportunity to rise to speak on this bill tonight. I have to say that I appreciated the words from the member from Ottawa South. I have felt like—I was going to say “in a vegetable grinder,” but I guess he said “a sandwich” today. We have been a bit of a ping-pong ball between the official opposition and the government today, but I'm glad we're having the opportunity to finally debate this bill.

I will disagree with one thing that the member from Ottawa South said. He said that we should have been debating this bill two months ago. I'd argue we should have been debating it two and a half months ago, but I'm glad that this issue is finally on the government's radar, that we're finally taking some small steps to protect small businesses in this province. The bottom line is, if we don't stand up for small businesses in Ontario, Ontario's downtowns and neighbourhoods will be ghost towns as we come out of COVID-19, and we simply cannot allow that to happen. That is why we must not only act to ban commercial evictions, but we also must act to provide small businesses with the financial supports they need to be able to reopen safely. I believe the provincial government has a responsibility to do that.

If the House will indulge me, I'd like to do a bit of a history lesson for a few seconds here. I want to remind the government that way back on March 17, the Canadian Federation of Independent Business was already reporting that small businesses were experiencing a drop in sales. A week later, on March 24, they reported that one third of businesses would not be able to survive for another month because of the pandemic shutdown. On March 30, they reported that 25% of small businesses would not be able to pay April rent. It was at that time that two provinces acted. New Brunswick and Nova Scotia brought in a commercial eviction ban.

Things got worse in Ontario in April. On April 7, 40% of small businesses expressed worry about permanent closure if conditions didn't change. That was when many businesses and many opposition parties, including myself, started pushing this government to act, because we knew that a commercial ban on evictions and a rent support payment program were essential to saving small businesses, saving the jobs they create, saving the people who

have invested their life savings in them, and saving the vibrancy and vitality of our downtowns, which are so essential.

1840

Even after April 16, when the CFIB announced that if governments did not add additional financial support, commercial tenants would start being evicted due to COVID-19—it was then in May that it started to become absolutely clear that the program that the provincial and federal governments worked out together was not going to work.

Some of us were kind of excited when the program was announced at first. As a matter of fact, many small businesses said, “Thankfully, something has been announced.” I pointed out on May 13 in question period that only 10% of small businesses both qualified for the program and their landlord was going to participate, and I recall the government’s response in question period was, “Let’s wait and see.” Well, small businesses can’t wait and see. They needed a government that was going to act quickly and decisively to stand up for them.

It was then on May 19 that the CFIB once again pointed out to the government that it’s the federal government that’s doing most of the heavy lifting, not the provincial government. And then, in June—June is when we really started getting the warnings of the potential catastrophe that we were facing, when only 7,000 of Ontario’s 418,000 small businesses had signed up and were going to participate in the program.

I can tell you, Speaker, in addition to feeling like a bit of a Ping-Pong ball between the government and the official opposition, I felt the same way between the province and the federal government. I was saying to my federal colleagues, “This program doesn’t work,” and they were saying, “Blame it on the province.” And I would say to my provincial colleagues, “This program isn’t working,” and they would say, “Blame it on the federal government.”

Well, the bottom line is, the program still isn’t working and this bill’s not going to fix that. It will not be fixed until two key criteria are met. First of all, it needs to be tenant-driven. The tenant should apply, not the landlord. Tenants should not be at the mercy of their landlords. The second key revision needs to be that the drop in sales needs to be 20%, which is what the CFIB is calling for, not 70%, which is a threshold that’s far too high.

Then, on the weekend, we received a copy of this bill. I can tell you that when the Premier first announced there was going to be some sort of a ban on commercial evictions, people were pretty excited; I was too, actually. Then I read the bill and I saw the shortcomings in the bill, so I called the head of the Downtown Guelph Business Association, Marty Williams, who’s also the vice-president of the Ontario Business Improvement Area Association. I said, “Marty, what can we do to improve this bill?” And so he suggested three things, which is what I brought to the government later that day, when we were supposed to meet, on Monday at 4:30.

I basically said, “You need to make this retroactive back to at least April 1, because that’s when businesses

started feeling the pinch.” The second thing I said is that you either need to ban all commercial evictions or you need to follow the Canadian Federation of Independent Business’ lead and lower the threshold to 20%. And the third thing I said is that I felt businesses needed a longer runway to escape from the program.

Interruption.

Mr. Mike Schreiner: Sorry, my phone just went off there. Sorry about that. If you’ve noticed, Speaker, today I’ve been coming in and out of the House a lot because I’ve had a lot of small businesses reach out to me, and I’ve been consulting with them on this bill.

I have to say that I used my leverage as one member—and it can be kind of hard, sometimes, to be the first Green member, a caucus of one—to at least get the government to make the retroactive period go back to May 1.

Michael Smith, who is one of the co-founders of Save Small Business, contacted me and said, “You know what? May 1, that concession was huge. That was a big benefit, because there were a few businesses that weren’t able to pay their rent on April 1, but that number went way up, starting May 1. So getting it back to May 1 was an important use of your leverage. It still isn’t perfect, but it was an important use of your leverage.”

I then met with members of our downtown business association yesterday to ask them what I should do. Should I just deny unanimous consent on this bill, or should I say I would support it so it would go forward for debate? And each one of them said, “Even if the bill is imperfect, do whatever you can to get something passed this week, because small businesses can’t wait anymore. We needed this bill back in April, on April 1—end of March, beginning of April. We can’t wait any longer for something. There’s got to be a signal sent to landlords in this province that the Premier’s empty words are actually going to have some financial backing.”

So this morning I told the government House leader that I would not be opposing unanimous consent to bring this bill forward, even though it’s an imperfect bill, because it’s essential that something get done this week. I’ve made it part of my mantra during the COVID-19 crisis that I would quarantine partisanship if it meant that you could deliver some progress.

I said to the media today that I’m not in full support of this bill, but I’m not going to let perfection get in the way of progress. Sometimes you have to stand up and say we can move the ball a little bit further down the field. That’s what this bill does. I think the leader of the official opposition was right: It’s a quarter loaf. More needs to be done. A quarter loaf is better than no loaf.

I’m calling on the government today to go to their federal colleagues and fix the commercial rent program. Work with them, make it tenant-driven, lower the threshold. We have to stand up for small businesses in this province. And then once we fix the rent program, we need to develop a program that provides support for small businesses to help them open up, to help them access and buy PPE, to help them meet public health guidelines. That’s what we’re hearing over and over again in the

SCOFEA committee, in the economic recovery committee: that businesses need help with rent and they need help with the costs of reopening.

The Premier likes to say Ontario is open for business. Well, I can guarantee you that if we don't come to the plate and go to bat for small businesses in this province, they won't be able to reopen, they won't be open for business, and the responsibility for that will rest with the government. The question is: Are you going to work with the opposition? Are you going to work with business leaders in this province to deliver a program that not only works for rent, but works with helping them cover reopening costs? That's what they're expecting of us, and they're expecting all of us to not engage in the kinds of political games we saw this week, when it comes to helping people and putting the people of this province first during this pandemic. So I call on all of my colleagues, regardless of party, to not play the political games that were played this week and to actually deliver legislation that works for people.

1850

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

Mr. Ian Arthur: It's an honour to rise and contribute to this debate, in particular. It's close to my heart. We need to support the small businesses of Ontario.

I used to help run a small business and when you do you learn how to be adaptive. You're a bit of an HR specialist; you're a tiny bit of a plumber; you do an odd bit of accounting. You do whatever you need to get your business through. And that is exactly what the small businesses of Ontario have done since this pandemic began.

One of the first things that I did—or that they did—when PPE was running out in Kingston, I called all my old co-workers and all the people I knew in the restaurant industry in Kingston, because we have a lot of gloves. We use them all the time. But those restaurants were shut down. They had no income; they weren't doing anything. They were trying to figure out how to keep their staff on the payroll. And every single owner that I called came through and donated PPE to our hospital. They did what they needed to do and they adapted, and that is an incredible thing.

I also joined a business call every day at 4 p.m. while this was unravelling, while COVID-19 was happening, to hear what their needs were, to talk to them about what they needed to get through this. It started with apprehension and it moved to fear, and now it's panic, because they're facing losing their businesses. They have done everything right. They have done everything that government asked them to, and now they're asking for a meaningful level of support and a better program so they can help continue to be the backbone of our economy here in Ontario.

This bill does not strengthen it enough. I think most of the members on the government side actually know that. They know that the commercial rent relief program is flawed, by having the landlords responsible for the application and not the tenants themselves.

One of the biggest landholders in Kingston—and there's not many; there are three major landholders in

Kingston—is just completely refusing to play ball. I know this legislation is aiming at fixing that, but there are so many properties and businesses where the property simply doesn't fall within the jurisdictions of this broken program. What are they going to do when their landlords tell them that they're locking the doors, that they're seizing their goods, that they're taking the life's work of these small businesses and throwing it away? They need more. It has to be more.

They're facing a summer with no tourists, which is a really big deal in Kingston. Then they're facing a fall with no students. Labour Day weekend at the restaurant I worked at was the biggest weekend of the year. We would earn more on the three days of Labour Day weekend than we would earn for the rest of September, because every parent bringing their child to Queen's or St. Lawrence or RMC wanted to take their kid to dinner at Chez Piggy—which was an honour, and we were so happy to serve them, but we're not going to have that this year. What are we going to do? What are those business owners going to do when they don't have that, stacked on top of this summer?

I would urge the government to use this legislation as a first step—it's a small measure—but to understand that they need to put in place a program that is fundamentally going to support those businesses. Because when those tax deferrals come due, when the back rent that they couldn't afford comes due after this eviction ban ends, they're not going to be okay. The repercussions of this crisis are going to last years, and we have to design a program that supports those businesses to get through those years so we can once again be the economic driver of Canada and allow this province and country to flourish.

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

Ms. Mitzie Hunter: It's an honour, as always, to rise in the House and to address this very important bill. It is an issue that we've been hearing constantly for the last three months, certainly—in terms of the impact of this sudden economic shutdown on commercial landlords and on businesses, particularly on small businesses.

I would say that, today being the three-month anniversary of the emergency shutdowns, this is good news indeed for small businesses in Ontario. Finally, they have legislated protection against evictions in this province. It's been something that people have been calling on the government to do consistently, and it has taken three months in order for us to get there, but better late than never.

I would also say that in the last three months, we've seen unprecedented times in our province. It's a shutdown of the economy that was done by order of governments federally, provincially and municipally, so that we can protect lives and do what is right in the face of a health care pandemic. But in that time, as a result of the stay-at-home measures, 2.2 million people have lost jobs or seen a reduction in their hours.

The FAO says that \$23 billion has been wiped out from the economy—a 9% decline in GDP—and this is really just the start. The road to recovery is going to be a long road. We're not seeing an increase in GDP until 2021. So

the fact that we're only now just getting around to this legislation responding to the needs of those small businesses is really disheartening.

Many small business owners—I've done round tables in my riding of Scarborough—Guildwood. I've done two so far where I've talked to small businesses and I've talked to sector-specific businesses, such as the restaurant sector. They are feeling vulnerable. These are creative individuals. They put their heart and their soul into their businesses, yet they're unsure. They're uncertain. They don't know if, when they finally get the chance to reopen, customers will come back. They don't even actually know if their employees will come back. What they do know is that their costs are increasing, and they are not certain if their sales and their revenue models are going to work. They don't know if the space in which they occupy—if they will be able to continue to operate profitably in those locations.

One small business owner said to me—he is the owner of the Olde Stone Cottage Pub, a very famous local pub in Scarborough—that he has multiple landlords. He has different landlords for different locations, and the response of the landlords to the programs that are available are very different. They're not the same; they're not consistent. What this bill does is that it adds a measure of consistency in terms of how the rules are applied. I think that that's what my colleague the member from Ottawa South was trying to say—that we can't just talk about doing the right thing; we actually have to put legislation in place that ensures that everyone has a level and an even and a fair playing field when it comes to the business environment.

I support the change in the date to May 1, as requested by the Greens and by the Ontario Liberals—to make sure that there's a retroactive effective date of May 1. But I think that five months is not enough. I would really encourage the government members to listen to those witnesses and those individuals that are coming forward to the Standing Committee on Finance and Economic Affairs. They are telling us that it's not a short-term uncertainty that they face as business owners. They don't know if they're going to make it through the next three months.

I've surveyed businesses as part of the consultation. We asked the question specifically: "Do you believe that you will survive for the next three months?" Many of them say, "We don't know." So providing this peace of mind that there would not be any evictions by doing additional measures to encourage landlords to participate in the program, the CECRA program that is available—only 2% of the program has been spent so far. That's not very much. So we need to do things to encourage these landlords to apply for this program.

1900

Also, one of the recommendations that I would put forward is that we look at the Quebec model, because in Quebec they're not just urging landlords to do the right thing; they are actually putting money behind their message. For the CECRA program, they have actually stepped in to provide a further 50% reduction in the amount that is typically forgone by landlords, and so the

landlords are now only required to contribute 12.5%. So they're encouraged to contribute 12.5%, and the government of Quebec is putting in an additional 12.5%, because they want businesses to survive.

I think that's something we have to pay attention to here—that we are at risk of many businesses not coming back, just disappearing altogether. Why come out with a program after the fact? We need to be proactive, and we need to support businesses so that they survive. I would encourage the government to do all that it can to fight for the businesses and to make sure that they survive.

The minister, when he was speaking—and I was listening to him just to make sure this was something that they were doing in earnest. One of the things that he said was that—I'm trying to find my written notes here, Speaker, because I want to quote what he said. He said that he's not sure if they will thrive, and I know that that is a reality, but as the individual who is meant to champion this recovery on that side of the House—I think that it is up to us to work together with the business community, particularly the small business community, to make sure that they recover as best as possible and that our neighbourhoods and our communities are actually thriving.

I believe that we should be setting up a business support responsive helpline, a hub of information that is accessible to businesses, to give them the information that they need to help them through any application processes. I was a small business owner myself, Speaker. I started a small business in the midst of a recession. Sometimes small businesses really struggle with the forms and the red tape and accessing the information that they need. We should be doing more to make it easier for them.

Today I spoke with a landlord—and I have to say this particular landlord is not the easiest to deal with, and I know because I have negotiated our lease with this landlord—and he said that every landlord should be forced to participate in this program, and he was referring to the CECRA program. He said it wasn't until he actually went through the completion process of filling out the forms that he recognized the value in the process and the value in how the government has responded in support of businesses through this, and including landlords through this.

So this is something that I feel is essential. We need to make sure that no small business is lost in the recovery process because we didn't act and act quickly enough. It is incumbent on us, because behind all of these small businesses are jobs and wages and employment. In many instances, we're seeing some of our most iconic businesses who are not making it; they're closing their doors. So whatever measure we can do, we need to do it as quickly as possible and for as long as we're able to do it so that we can provide as much certainty and support to the small business community in every part of Ontario, in our northern communities, in our rural main streets, towns and cities, and in our large urban centres.

I want to say thank you, Speaker, for the opportunity to speak to this very important bill. We should have acted much sooner, but the fact that we're doing it here today and we're staying as a House to do this debate this evening I think is very important.

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

Mr. Stephen Blais: Today, the Premier marked three months since declaring an emergency in Ontario. That's three months—three months most small business owners have had their shops closed. That's three months without income to support their families, three months of dipping into savings to pay their rent—and that's if they had savings.

For months, we've been calling on this government to take concrete action to support small business owners. But like in long-term care, the government has been slow out of the gate. Now, three months after declaring an emergency, the government wants us to believe that they're there to support small business owners.

But it's been clear for some time that the rent relief program hasn't been working. The finance minister told us not to worry; it was a new program. "Don't judge it. Give it some time." Most of us could see clearly what the finance minister couldn't: It wasn't good enough. All he had to do was to ask some of the small business owners he says he's been trying to help, and he would have gotten a clear answer.

I joined my member of Parliament and our city councillors to write landlords in Orléans and urge them to participate in the rent relief program. What did we hear? It was crickets, Mr. Speaker. With rare exceptions, landlords were not participating in the program. So for months, instead of taking concrete action, the government has been hoping for a miracle. For months, small business owners have been telling them that the miracle isn't coming—small business owners like Joanne. After nearly 25 years in business, Joanne is being forced to close her doors. Without support from this government, Joanne couldn't pay her rent, and like many landlords, Joanne's wouldn't budge.

Instead of supporting small business owners like Joanne, the Premier thought his tough talk would be enough. But it didn't work. Instead of working with Joanne, her landlord locked her out. So Joanne, in business for 25 years and approaching retirement, is now facing financial ruin. In addition to losing three months of revenue, because her landlord locked her out, she lost thousands of dollars of product; not because the landlord sold it, but because it spoiled.

For Joanne and so many small business owners across Ontario, today's legislation isn't going to help much. That being said, we are fortunate that some small business owners have been able to weather the storm. They've held on, many going into personal debt to continue to pay their rent and other expenses. But those business owners will never get back the three months of anxiety, the three months of sleepless nights, not knowing if tomorrow was the day they would get the letter saying, "You're done." They'll never get that time back, Mr. Speaker.

This bill isn't perfect. I think that's abundantly clear. It's late and it doesn't address the root of the problem. But for those small business owners who have weathered the storm, these measures might—might—be enough to keep them afloat a little bit longer. It might let them sleep a little

bit better tonight and tomorrow. But more action is needed. The government can't rely on the rent relief program, which is so clearly failing. I'm urging them to take additional action to support small business owners.

1910

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

Ms. Catherine Fife: I have to say that I'm really surprised that this piece of legislation is on the floor of this Legislature during this particular time in the history of our province. As I stand here, after three months of listening to businesses, I want to honour the voices of the folks who really have built this province, and that's the small and medium-sized businesses, who employ 80% of the people in this province.

I've talked to my colleagues—all of us in this House, I'm sure, have spoken to businesses, but we are so late. It is so late to bring in this legislation, this incomplete, insufficient, weak piece of legislation, during this time. It's too late for Basecamp Climbing gym, for Rolltation in University–Rosedale. It's too late for SASS Fitness in St. Catharines. It's too late for the businesses that have been locked out, like Fitness Works for Women in Beaches–East York and Shore Leave and Yoka and Robert's cakes.

It's really too late for BE Catering in Peterborough, who posted an absolutely heart-breaking note that they had invested their entire life into this business. It was who they are; it is who they were. They were an anchor in the Peterborough community, and what did they get from this government? Nothing. They got deferred WSIB payments; they got deferred employee health tax. They got nothing. They got tough talk from the Premier, Mr. Speaker. So I'm thinking of BE Catering in Peterborough.

I'm thinking of Henry's camera in Sudbury, who shut their doors because they couldn't make a go of it and because nothing came from this government. I'm thinking of Jiffy Grill and Golden Star Restaurant in Kingston and the Islands. I'm thinking of the companies and the small businesses that are led by very strong female entrepreneurs in Waterloo, like Durrell Communications and Jane Bond, who are just holding on. They need hope from this government. This piece of legislation doesn't give them hope. It even has an expiry date of August 31, when they can officially go out of business, Mr. Speaker.

This whole process of how this legislation had been crafted—beginning on Monday, when we first had an inkling of what the government was going to do. It's interesting to hear the independent members talk about that process and how they feel pushed and pulled. Well, we should have just pushed together. That's what we wanted to do.

You can have a government like this PC government that just steamrolls all over you and all over businesses, but at least we could have fought together against this piece of legislation. There would have been some dignity and some integrity in the process—and that's what businesses want from us as legislators, Mr. Speaker.

I have to say that the May 1 deadline for evictions—there's no good rationale that has been given for this date;

nothing. It's like they just pulled it out of thin air. And I have to say, when I think of all the organizations that have reached out to us, and they have been so strong—from the Ontario Chamber of Commerce, the Canadian Federation of Independent Business, to TABIA, who really have put forth some strong ideas, some tangible plans, just like our plan to save Main Street. Mr. Speaker, imagine: When we as Her Majesty's official opposition put forward our Save Main Street strategy to this government—it did fall. It fell by the wayside. They were not interested. But we had proposed a 75% commercial rent subsidy of up to \$10,000 a month for three months so businesses would have been able to use this time to retool—because we also proposed a remote work set-up fund so that they could acclimatize to this changing economy, so that they could change their business model to an online model. They could have bought laptops and software and they could have adapted, because they were ready to adapt. They were ready to show up for the people of this province.

We had also proposed a utility payment freeze. And we had also proposed something that was very popular in the GTHA and Brampton areas: an auto insurance grace period for taxis and car sharing. We brought forward tangible ideas to this government. You did not listen. These were the ideas that came from the entrepreneurs across this province, who wanted to see leadership from this government to ensure that they could stay viable as businesses. Because they told us, and you know this, that if they go out of business, the recovery for this province will be delayed, it will be slowed, and in many cases, it will not happen. Why did it take so long for this government to come forward, even with the language around banning evictions, and why did they tie it to a flawed federal program? This is really quite amazing to me, Mr. Speaker.

I have to say that the Ontario Business Improvement Area Association, for instance, had said that tying this plan retroactively to—for commercial evictions, it was too late. "It really should be retroactive to March 15"—this is Kay Matthews. "That's when" businesses "stopped making revenue." They had no revenue coming in. The province had to shut them down. The responsibility for shutting down should be a shared responsibility between the provincial, federal, and the business community, Mr. Speaker. But that's not what this government has come up with.

Several business groups have written many letters to all of us, calling for a ban on commercial evictions for tenants who were in good standing with their landlords prior to the COVID-19 pandemic. There are many businesses that were in that situation. What does this government do? It brings forward a piece of legislation which is tied to the CECRA program, which is the federal strategy. I sit on the economic development committee, the finance committee, and we're listening to businesses from across the province. Businesses already right now are crippled by debt load.

Why does this matter, Mr. Speaker? I'll quote TABIA: "Relying on debt is an insufficient solution to the current shutdown. Business owners report that their revenues

would not support increased debt loads in normal times, and they are already being pushed to debt to address other costs that have not been relieved." And this is the important part: "For businesses that are unsure whether they will reopen, additional debt tips the scales toward permanent closure. More than half of businesses surveyed in" Ontario "are concerned they will be insolvent or unable to restart their business ... Debt solutions"—which is actually what this government has offered. You have offered to push debt down the line to six months. So that debt is still there. It's still waiting for businesses.

Even this piece of legislation that you've brought forward has an expiry date of August 31. You've basically said, "We're only going to protect you to August," even when this city, the GTA is still under full lockdown, Mr. Speaker.

Interjection: No, it's not.

Ms. Catherine Fife: Well, we haven't opened to phase 2.

"Debt solutions also fail a fairness test. As businesses have been shut down by government requests and orders to keep communities safe, it is unfair to ask them to bear the costs with revenue they will never recover."

Mr. Speaker, the businesses that I quoted at the very beginning of these comments have done everything they can to stay viable. When the state itself closes down their business and makes revenue generation impossible, the onus is on the government to come to the table and offer a real solution. What this piece of legislation does hardly meets that call. And I want to point out, why would the government knowingly tie a piece of legislation—which they pretend will save businesses, even when 60% of the businesses will be left out of this equation—to a federal plan that doesn't work?

Now, this is coming from the Canadian Federation of Independent Businesses, the Ontario Chamber of Commerce, the Ontario Restaurant Hotel and Motel Association, Restaurants Canada and the Retail Council of Canada. This is what they say about the federal program: "Since the Canada Emergency Commercial Rent Assistance (CECRA) program was announced, we have been hearing from numerous small and medium-sized businesses that many improvements are desperately needed to make it work. Even though the program just officially started"—and we've heard that only 2% of an uptake of the money has been spent; that's how much of an epic fail it is—"we already know from our members that many landlords will not apply, meaning that their tenants will not be able to access the program and the commercial tenant eviction protection it includes. To make matters worse, it is extremely easy for a landlord to evict a commercial tenant in Ontario." This is the legacy of the former government.

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"Businesses that were forced to close entirely by government order to help stop the spread of COVID-19 have been generating zero revenues. Businesses like restaurants or retailers in malls that were forced to restrict their operations by government order have seen unsustainable revenue declines."

This is their call: “Put in place temporary commercial eviction protection for tenants who were in good standing with their landlords prior to the COVID-19 pandemic.” Don’t tie it to a plan that will not open the door for that possibility. Why, Mr. Speaker? Why would the government do that?

I have to say, there was an article that really spoke to me. It was in Maclean’s—where is it? It was by author Jon Shell. He points to, really, the disconnect that this government now has with the business community. I understand it’s very destabilizing for this government to hear from businesses saying, “Why aren’t you listening to us? Why aren’t you paying attention to the direct need that we have, which is rent abatement?” This is why we proposed a direct rent subsidy, to see these businesses through these first three months to ensure that they remain viable.

What do we get from this Premier? We get tough talk—and this is a direct quote: “The day before many Ontario ... businesses would be exposed to eviction for non-payment of May rent, Premier Doug Ford begged commercial landlords for leniency. ‘The tenants, my heart breaks for them; give them a break,’ Ford said. ‘To all the big landlords out there: ‘have a heart.’” Then, on Tuesday, he came out even stronger, threatening to come down on landlords ‘like they’ve never seen before.’”

Well, Mr. Speaker, this is an individual who claims to understand business in the province of Ontario. This tough talk actually created more evictions because landlords heard that tough talk—we heard this at committee; it’s matter of public record, and it’s part of the Hansard—and that tough talk scared landlords into actually accelerating evictions and locking up businesses. That is how irresponsible this government has been on this file.

Jon Shell goes on to say, “They were strange comments from someone with the power to stop evictions.” Indeed. The Premier has the power to stop evictions. He has the power to prevent businesses from going out of business and to ensure that they have the resources they need to stay viable so that our economy can recover. But what does he do? He threatens and waves his fist at landlords.

We all know in this province that there is a significant power imbalance between tenants and landlords. Quite honestly, the tenants have been crying for rent relief, but I want to point out that landlords have asked for it, too. Landlords have mortgages. Landlords wanted to see the government come to the table with a shared compromise, if you will, Mr. Speaker.

“In Save Small Business’s recent survey of over 2,000 business owners, 66% said rent relief was the most important government support....” Does this bill have that? No. The stable loan and the wage subsidies fall far behind. “Fifty-two per cent said that without rent relief, their business would not survive.” Did this government bring forward a bill that has rent relief and rent abatement as a key part of it? No, they did not.

In fact, this theme of always deferring to the federal government has been consistent through the finance committee. In fact, the independent members put forward a motion, which we supported, to actually evaluate and

have the Financial Accountability Officer peel back the layers on who’s spending what. I’ve always said, if you follow the money in this place, you’ll follow the true priorities.

The FAO is going to be looking into how much money the federal government has done for Ontario versus the provincial government, because he also called into question, as you will know, the claim that this government has spent \$17 billion to help businesses. He said very clearly in committee, when we had an opportunity to question the finance minister and the FAO, “You can’t really say that a deferred bill is actually spending.”

This government and these members used to understand that, Mr. Speaker. You can’t actually put that money in the hands of a business especially when, six months down the line, you’re going to ask for that money back. So we side with the Financial Accountability Officer on this: A deferred payment is not spending; a deferred revenue stream is not spending. In fact, what you’ve done is, basically, pushed down the bankruptcies and the evictions six months. On August 31, when you renege on your full responsibility, as I would argue you have done pretty consistently throughout this pandemic, there will be massive bankruptcies. How will we as a province recover from that? Once those doors are closed, once those locks are attached to those doors, it is so difficult to get back.

Just going back to BE Catering in Peterborough: All of their equipment is out of that space; it is all in storage. Their dreams are on hold, and they have no clear path to see how they will ever start again, because there is no leadership from the PC government on supporting businesses. Ontario is not open for business under this government.

In fact, this bill will actually accelerate evictions as of August 31. It is financially irresponsible to bring forward such a flawed piece of legislation during an emergency measure, a pandemic, and then say to the official opposition, “This is all you’re getting,” and essentially, “Better than nothing, so take it or leave it.” That’s the messaging from this government.

We believe, as our leader has said and as we put forward in our Save Main Street Ontario proposal, that there are tangible financial direct supports that could be given to businesses which would see them through, provide some consistency and actually benefit the entire economy as businesses could retool and redesign and adapt. Quite honestly, that did not happen.

It’s very interesting to be on this finance committee and to hear that tourism and heritage and culture—small and medium-sized businesses are the last to come to that committee, Mr. Speaker. They are the last to come. They are the most desperate right now for leadership, and this government has pushed them down. We also would love the agriculture sector to come to that committee and talk about how we’re going to ensure food security, which is a major factor in this province. You know as well as I do that with 600 migrant workers now COVID-19-positive, that food chain is directly at risk. So really, at the finance committee, to see that small and medium-sized businesses,

when they have their seven minutes to say, “This is what I need: rent abatement, a rent subsidy, direct funding”—they’ve even gone so far as to talk about procurement: Can the government retool and look at local businesses as part of that economic chain? And what do they get back from this government? “We’ll talk to the small and medium-sized businesses, maybe sometime at the end of August.” The report is going to come out in October 2020. Honestly, how many businesses are going to be out of business by October 2020? It’s quite shocking.

How I would like to end this conversation is by telling you that businesses cannot take on any more debt. You have brought forward a piece of legislation which does not address the core problem. In order to solve a problem, you actually have to admit what the problem is. Right now, tying a ban on commercial evictions to the federal plan, which is so deeply flawed—every organization that has your ear has told you how flawed it is, and the uptake is a very good sign of that; you don’t even have to take our word for it. You have tied it to a failed federal plan. You have made it retroactive only to May 1 when I’ve already mentioned how many businesses went out of business and were evicted in April. You say that this is good enough? Well, it’s not. It’s not good enough for the people of this province and it’s not good enough for the businesses. We are going to continue to fight because businesses deserve so much better than this government.

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

Hon. Paul Calandra: I appreciate the opportunity to add my voice to this debate today. As has been mentioned by a number of the people in the chamber, it’s very important that we get to this today and that we have the opportunity to debate this, so I do thank all members of the House for giving us this opportunity today.

I just wanted to speak a little bit about some of the things that we heard. I know the member for Waterloo in her remarks talked about the process of getting towards this debate today and that somehow we sprung this on them on Monday. Well, I think, as the leader of the Green Party and the House leader for the Liberal Party mentioned, they received this bill, as did the official opposition, on Saturday. They received a copy of this bill on Saturday, and there were to be comments with respect to what should be in this bill, what did they want to see, any suggestions on the bill, and we set up a process, as we have done for everything else since COVID-19 started, whereby we would have a House leaders’ meeting at 4:30 on Monday.

Of course, that’s not what happened, as I mentioned earlier. The NDP released contents of the bill at 12:30 and a whole series of recommendations—I’ll give them credit for that. They released a whole number of recommendations four hours ahead of the meeting, without letting us know and without letting the independents and the Liberals and the Greens know.

I hear the opposition House leader clapping—because, of course, that’s the way the NDP behave all the time. The fact that they breached a confidence—this government

went out of it’s way to make sure that they had a copy of the bill because this is an important piece of legislation, and, as we’ve done on everything, we have shared it with the members opposite. When it comes to COVID-19, we said, “Let’s sit down. Let’s see what we can agree upon, if we can agree upon things, and let’s move forward.”

But what did they do? They broke the confidence that the government had put in them; they broke the confidence of the opposition Green and Liberal and independent members. Not one other member breached the confidence that this government put in them. When you look back on COVID-19-related matters—what have we done? We gave them a briefing on the finance statement that the Minister of Finance presented to this House. We gave them a briefing in advance and showed them what was in that bill ahead of time. Thankfully, they voted in favour of it.

We have had unanimous consent from this Legislature for many of the things that we’ve done on COVID-19 since this crisis began, and I appreciate the fact that the NDP have agreed with many of the things that we have done on this. As I’ve said on a number of occasions, at no point should members have the illusion that there hasn’t been vigorous debate behind closed doors. Just because we get unanimous consent doesn’t mean that there hasn’t been vigorous debate, because there has been. Often there has been vigorous debate, but we have moved forward.

The opposition NDP—for them, the only constructive debate is when you take every single thing they say. Then they talk about working together, but only if you accept every single thing that they say. If you don’t agree with something they say, then you’re not working constructively with them.

I’ll remind the members that there was an election, and the members on this side of the House were returned to government with a mandate by the people of the province of Ontario, but we have gone out of our way to make sure during COVID-19 that we worked together as best as we possibly could. But at no point did we ever think that we would be setting aside the mandate that the people of the province of Ontario gave to us.

I will say to my honourable colleague from Orléans who gave a speech, it is astonishing to me to hear members of the Liberal Party talk about a failed Liberal federal program. I would say to the member for Orléans that it’s not enough to speak to your local business people. You’re in Ottawa. Go speak to the Liberal members of Parliament who delayed this program from coming into force. Having said that, it is an important program that we want to work on behalf of landlords and on behalf of tenants.

The leader of the NDP had the audacity to come into this chamber moments ago and suggest that everything that the people of Ontario have done during this COVID-19 crisis is not enough. The billions of dollars that the people of the province of Ontario have given us the authority to invest, whether it’s in health care, whether it’s in direct support to small, medium, and large enterprises—that it’s not enough, that it’s useless. Well, I would remind—

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): I apologize to the government House leader.

There's a cacophony of noise in here. I'd ask you all to stop heckling and allow the government House leader to continue his remarks.

Hon. Paul Calandra: Thank you, sir. It's not abnormal, Mr. Speaker. I say this every time I get to rise in this House—that the moment you corner the NDP, they go personal, they go low, and they start to heckle, right? That's what they do.

Interjection.

Hon. Paul Calandra: And you hear the clapping from the opposition House leader. They have nothing to offer, the NDP. That's the reality. They have nothing to offer, and that's why they lose election after election after election, Mr. Speaker—because the people of the province of Ontario will never trust them to come back to this side of the House.

We have worked together when we could work together, but nobody should be under the illusion—and to my colleague the leader of the Green Party: I don't ever want to come to this chamber when we don't have differences of opinion. That's not what this place is for. This place isn't for us all to have the same opinion all of the time. We're going to disagree. We're going to disagree on a lot of things. That's why we vote: because we have disagreements. There's no point in coming here—people don't send us to the Legislature knowing that we're all going to have agreements. I don't agree, often, with some of the things that the members opposite talk about, but I'll fight for the things that I believe in, because that's why people sent me here.

When you talk about landlords and tenants, Mr. Speaker, we know how important this is. We know how important this sector is. My father came to this country in the 1960s, and what did he do? We didn't go on vacations as a family. My vacation as a kid was to go to one of the buildings that my dad, a hairdresser, bought, and paint an apartment at Bayview and Eglinton. I would get dropped off with my brother, and I would go there and I would paint that apartment. And every month, we would panic at the end of the month: "Is the tenant going to be able to pay us? Yes or no?" We didn't go on vacations; that was our vacation. Every penny that we had went into paying for those properties. When my father passed away at 48 years of age, and my mother was only 38 at the time, we were able to continue on because of the hard work that they did.

So for the opposition to suggest, as they often do, that somehow landlords are bad people—I can tell them just the opposite. Landlords are like my mom and dad. Landlords are like my uncle. They have mortgages to pay, they have bills to pay, and we understand how important that sector is to the overall health of the economy.

We have a program that's in place. We're working closely with the federal government. The Leader of the Opposition doesn't like the fact that we're working with the federal government. Imagine that. Somehow we should be upset—

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Order.

Hon. Paul Calandra: Somehow the people of the province of Ontario, the people of Canada, should be working, isolated amongst ourselves. Well, we said no right from the beginning and that we had to work together across this country; we needed a pan-Canadian solution to dealing with the COVID-19 crisis, and we have done that. The Premier has worked very hard, whether it was with Prime Minister Trudeau, whether it was with Premier Legault, whether it was with the BC Premier. We worked across party lines to make sure that the first thing that mattered was the health and safety of the people of the province of Ontario and the people of Canada.

So what did we do? We worked closely, and we said to the federal government that our responsibility has to be the health care during the COVID-19 crisis. That has to be our responsibility. And the federal government said, "We agree."

Interjection.

Hon. Paul Calandra: The member from St. Catharines finds it funny that the province of Ontario focused on health care. I will say to the member for St. Catharines that she should remember how important tourism is to her part of the country. This is a party that was so desperate to get out of here last week, Mr. Speaker—they would have done anything to be out of here. Like their colleagues in Ottawa, they wanted to be out of here and they wanted to go run and hide and close down the Legislature, and we said, "No, we're coming back and we're going to deal with things."

They talked about the standing committee on finance. Mr. Speaker, we want to have multiple sectors and talk to people. We have 140 people presenting to tourism alone. The member for St. Catharines might not think that's important, but we do. They wanted a study that encompassed all sectors in a month. And they wanted to then go on vacation, Mr. Speaker. We said, "No, not good enough. All sectors deserve better than that. We're going to sit here at the standing committee on finance and we're going to hear what people have to say."

We've dealt with health care the best that we possibly could, Mr. Speaker. Could more be done? Absolutely, and that's what we're going to continue to focus on. But we moved quickly. We've kept this Legislature working because we know how important it is to the people of the province of Ontario that—we might not necessarily always get it right, but we're going to do our jobs.

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As government we have a responsibility to get things moving, to get the economy moving, to make sure we have proper health care and to do our best to reach out as often as we can. And when we can do that, we will.

That's why the NDP voted for a Conservative budget for the first time that I know of in history, in March. They voted for it, but now all of the sudden it's not enough. It was enough in March when they voted in favour of it, but now all of a sudden it's not enough. Every single measure that we've done, they voted for, and we're very proud of that.

As we move forward we are going to continue to focus on the things that matter to the people of the province of Ontario. We know how hard people are working. We know how hard people work.

The member for St. Catharines, who has nothing productive to add in this debate, who has not stood up and talked about anything in this debate, says—

Interjection.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Order.

Hon. Paul Calandra: —“Oh, you’re so angry.” You’re darn right I’m angry. I’m angry for the people of the province of Ontario who aren’t working right now and who are relying on us to get the economy going. I’m angry for the small businesses that you voted against when we said we were going to reduce their taxes—

Interjection.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): The member for St. Catharines, come to order.

Hon. Paul Calandra: —I’m angry for them. I’m angry for all of those people who are relying on this place to get the job done on their behalf. We won’t stop, no matter what kind of nonsense the NDP puts forward. We have a responsibility and we take that responsibility seriously. I’m very happy and I’m very proud of the fact that the minister has brought a good bill forward. They may say it’s not perfect but I say it certainly helps those small, medium, and large enterprises who are relying on us.

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): The House will come to order. Further debate?

M. Gilles Bisson: Je pense que le chef parlementaire du gouvernement a certains problèmes—le concept qu’un chef parlementaire est supposé travailler avec les membres de tous les bords de l’Assemblée pour être capable de trouver un consensus sur comment on est capable d’avancer la législation. C’est nous, les néo-démocrates, qui avons dit au gouvernement, quand il nous a amené le projet de loi samedi, qu’il y avait besoin d’avoir des changements. Le gouvernement a décidé : « Non, on ne va pas faire les changements qui sont nécessaires pour s’assurer que les locataires à travers la province ont les protections dont ils ont besoin pour s’assurer qu’ils ne vont pas être jetés en dehors de la porte une fois que le propriétaire décide qu’il va faire ce qu’il va faire. » So donc, premièrement, c’est le gouvernement qui a besoin de réaliser ses propres paroles.

Quand le chef parlementaire nous dit, « Écoute, c’est important qu’on travaille ensemble; c’est important qu’on reconnaîsse qu’il y a des différences », ça veut dire, comme chef parlementaire, que vous avez besoin d’accepter certaines différences et, des fois, vous avez besoin d’être capable de travailler avec l’opposition et de faire certains changements au projet de loi.

M^{me} Horwath a été claire : elle vous a demandé de changer, que tous les locataires soient sujets à ce projet de loi pour qu’ils ne se fassent pas jeter dehors, et elle vous a demandé de reculer la date quand ça vient à la rétroactivité, de repousser ça et d’aller jusqu’au début de

la pandémie. Vous avez décidé que non, et vous avez travaillé avec les autres partis indépendants pour arriver à cette position.

Nous, les néo-démocrates, sommes clairs : il faut s’assurer que la survie des petites entreprises dans cette province soit assurée, et une grosse partie de la survie c’est de payer le loyer. Quand on a un chef parlementaire puis un gouvernement qui ne veulent pas écouter non seulement l’opposition—mais t’as pas écouté les petits propriétaires de toutes les petites entreprises qui sont venus ici à Queen’s Park nous parler au comité puis nous dire un après l’autre que ce n’était pas acceptable, le programme fédéral, et qu’ils avaient besoin d’avoir des protections—

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Government House leader, come to order.

M. Gilles Bisson: Le chef parlementaire décide de jouer à la politique. So je dit au gouvernement : regardez dans le miroir. C’est vous qui faites partie du problème, et le plus vite que vous êtes capables d’arriver à la conclusion que vous faites partie de la solution, avec tous les membres de l’opposition et la population Ontarienne, le mieux qu’on va être.

Mr. Terence Kernaghan: Point of order.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Point of order: the member for London North Centre.

Mr. Terence Kernaghan: Thank you, Speaker. Earlier, I indicated that private industry takes on the risks of P3 projects in British Columbia. My record should read that P3 arrangements in British Columbia share the risks between private and public sector partners.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): He corrected his own record. It is a valid point of order. Thank you very much.

Mr. Clark has moved second reading of Bill 192, An Act to amend the Commercial Tenancies Act. Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? I heard a no.

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

All those opposed will please say “nay.”

In my opinion, the ayes have it.

A recorded vote being required, unless I receive a deferral slip in the next few seconds, the bells will ring for 30 minutes, during which time members may cast their votes. I would ask the Clerks to once again prepare the lobbies.

The division bells rang from 1946 to 2016.

The Clerk of the Assembly (Mr. Todd Decker): The ayes are 39; the nays are 13.

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

Second reading agreed to.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Pursuant to the order of the House passed earlier today, the bill is ordered for third reading.

PROTECTING SMALL BUSINESS
ACT, 2020

LOI DE 2020 VISANT À PROTÉGER
LES PETITES ENTREPRISES

Mr. Clark moved third reading of the following bill:
Bill 192, An Act to amend the Commercial Tenancies
Act / Projet de loi 192, Loi modifiant la Loi sur la location
commerciale.

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

Interjection: Same vote.

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

The Clerk of the Assembly (Mr. Todd Decker): The
ayes are 39; the nays are 13.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): 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): Orders of the day.
The government House leader.

Hon. Paul Calandra: No further business.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): There being no
further business, this House stands adjourned until
Tuesday, June 23, at 9 a.m.

The House adjourned at 2019.

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF ONTARIO
ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE DE L'ONTARIO

Lieutenant Governor / Lieutenant-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 Quioc 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	
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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	
Cho, Hon. / L'hon. Raymond Sung Joon (PC)	Scarborough North / Scarborough-Nord	Minister Without Portfolio / Ministre sans portefeuille
Cho, Stan (PC)	Willowdale	Government House Leader / Leader parlementaire du gouvernement
Clark, Hon. / L'hon. Steve (PC)	Leeds—Grenville—Thousand Islands and Rideau Lakes / Leeds—Grenville—Thousand Islands et Rideau Lakes	Minister for Seniors and Accessibility / Ministre des Services aux aînés et de l'Accessibilité
Coe, Lorne (PC)	Whitby	Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing / Ministre des Affaires municipales et du Logement
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
Elliott, Hon. / L'hon. Christine (PC)	Newmarket—Aurora	Minister Without Portfolio / Ministre sans portefeuille
Fedeli, Hon. / L'hon. Victor (PC)	Nipissing	Deputy Premier / Vice-première ministre
Fee, Amy (PC)	Kitchener South—Hespeler / Kitchener-Sud—Hespeler	Minister of Health / Ministre de la Santé
Fife, Catherine (NDP)	Waterloo	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

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) French, Jennifer K. (NDP)	Ottawa South / Ottawa-Sud 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) Gates, Wayne (NDP) Gélinas, France (NDP) Ghamari, Goldie (PC) Gill, Parm (PC) Glover, Chris (NDP) Gravelle, Michael (LIB)	Kanata—Carleton Niagara Falls Nickel Belt Carleton Milton Spadina—Fort York Thunder Bay—Superior North / Thunder Bay—Supérieur-Nord Windsor West / Windsor-Ouest	Minister of Long-Term Care / Ministre des Soins de longue durée
Gretzky, Lisa (NDP)	Oxford	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) Harden, Joel (NDP) Harris, Mike (PC) Hassan, Faisal (NDP)	Ottawa Centre / Ottawa-Centre Kitchener—Conestoga York South—Weston / York-Sud-Weston	Minister of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs / Ministre de l'Agriculture, de l'Alimentation et des Affaires rurales
Hatfield, Percy (NDP) Hillier, Randy (IND) Hogarth, Christine (PC) Horwath, Andrea (NDP) Hunter, Mitzie (LIB)	Windsor—Tecumseh Lanark—Frontenac—Kingston Etobicoke—Lakeshore Hamilton Centre / Hamilton-Centre Scarborough—Guildwood	Second Deputy Chair of the Committee of the Whole House / Deuxième vice-président du comité plénier de l'Assemblée législative
Jones, Hon. / L'hon. Sylvia (PC) Kanapathi, Logan (PC) Karahalios, Belinda C. (PC) Karpoche, Bhutila (NDP) Ke, Vincent (PC) Kernaghan, Terence (NDP)	Dufferin—Caledon Markham—Thornhill Cambridge Parkdale—High Park Don Valley North / Don Valley-Nord London North Centre / London-Centre-Nord Barrie—Innisfil	Leader, Official Opposition / Chef de l'opposition officielle Solicitor General / Solliciteur générale
Khanjin, Andrea (PC) Kramp, Daryl (PC) Kusendova, Natalia (PC)	Hastings—Lennox and Addington Mississauga Centre / Mississauga-Centre	Deputy Government House Leader / Leader parlementaire adjointe du gouvernement
Lecce, Hon. / L'hon. Stephen (PC) Lindo, Laura Mae (NDP)	King—Vaughan Kitchener Centre / Kitchener-Centre	Minister of Education / Ministre de l'Éducation
MacLeod, Hon. / L'hon. Lisa (PC) Mamakwa, Sol (NDP) Mantha, Michael (NDP) Martin, Robin (PC) Martow, Gila (PC) McDonell, Jim (PC) McKenna, Jane (PC)	Nepean Kiiwetinoong Algoma—Manitoulin Eglinton—Lawrence Thornhill Stormont—Dundas—South Glengarry Burlington Lambton—Kent—Middlesex	Minister of Heritage, Sport, Tourism and Culture Industries / ministre des Industries du patrimoine, du sport, du tourisme et de la culture
McNaughton, Hon. / L'hon. Monte (PC) Miller, Norman (PC) Miller, Paul (NDP)	Parry Sound—Muskoka Hamilton East—Stoney Creek / Hamilton-Est—Stoney Creek Scarborough Centre / Scarborough-Centre	Minister of Labour, Training and Skills Development / Ministre du Travail, de la Formation et du Développement des compétences
Mitas, Christina Maria (PC) Monteith-Farrell, Judith (NDP) Morrison, Suze (NDP)	Thunder Bay—Atikokan 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	
Yakabuski, Hon. / L'hon. John (PC)	Renfrew—Nipissing—Pembroke	Minister of Natural Resources and Forestry / Ministre des Richesses naturelles et des Forêts
Yarde, Kevin (NDP)	Brampton North / Brampton-Nord	
Yurek, Hon. / L'hon. Jeff (PC)	Elgin—Middlesex—London	Minister of the Environment, Conservation and Parks / Ministre de l'Environnement, de la Protection de la nature et des Parcs

**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, Stephen Blais
Stan Cho, Stephen Crawford
Catherine Fife, Randy Hillier
Mitzie Hunter, Andrea Khanjin
Laura Mae Lindo, Sol Mamakwa
David Piccini
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: Valerie Quioc Lim

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, Robin Martin
Taras Natyshak, Rick Nicholls
Billy Pang, Amanda Simard
Marit Stiles, Nina Tangri
John Vanthof
Committee Clerk / Greffier: William Short

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
Lucille Collard, Parm Gill
Natalia Kusendova, Suze Morrison
Lindsey Park, Gurratan Singh
Nina Tangri, 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
Stephen Blais, Will Bouma
Stephen Crawford, 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 / Greffière: Tonia Grannum